



January 2025 AFTERWORDS

Newsletter of Active Retired
Members
Chapter 11

This photo is from a top secret location in Canada. If this faucet is turned off, water will flow freely to California. This faucet keeps water flowing into the Pacific Ocean. All Canadians are sworn to secrecy about its location.



It's Sunday evening, the day before another inauguration in the USA, and the prospect makes me miserable—and frightened. On the dais with a convicted felon will be tech oligarchs who have promised to remove pesky fact-checking from their social media sites— and watching from home are people who live in information “deserts” - whose news has come from populist sources and major journalism now owned by many of those oligarchs. Information—and its clear, truthful transmission—has suddenly become a crisis that the billionaires on that dais are not willing to protect. We, as former teachers, no matter what subject we taught, are champions of truth. We are going to be needed!

AfterWords is the official publication of the Active Retired Members of OSSTF, Chapter 11 Thames Valley (ARM C11). Opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of ARM C11 or OSSTF.

In this issue:

- True?! After Biden's farewell speech, warning Americans against oligarchy, Google was snowed under by people looking for the meaning! I asked Perplexity— and value both its definition and the links to other significant reading matter.
- Despite frequent sound bites, Pierre P has not given lengthy interviews to respected news sources. He DID, however, spend two hours with Jordan Peterson. I've reprinted a “fact-check” of that interview by a Canadian PhD student. We're not going to find fact-checks on X or Facebook any more!
- Think you didn't know any potential oligarchs up here? CCPA tells you otherwise.
- Will we become the 51st state? What are you willing to raise your hockey stick and fight for?
- Our OTIP friends instruct us on how to protect our personal identities.

My books have been banned simply because they are imaginative – science-fiction, fantasy, what have you. The imagination is considered dangerous and of course, it is. These people are right. The imagination is truly the enemy of bigotry and dogma.

Ursula Le Guin



Your editor is trying to learn how to use AI carefully but effectively– so I joined the millions who asked Google about “oligarchy” after Joe Biden used the word in his farewell speech to the nation.

I’ll be “transparent” - here’s what I posed to Perplexity:

I am writing for educated teachers in a newsletter that will be a warning about upcoming elections in the USA and Canada. I know Google was deluged by people looking for an explanation of "oligarchy". Can you find or create an explanation of the word that contains a warning against this kind of government, economy, method of control?

“ As educators, it's crucial to understand and convey the concept of oligarchy to our students, especially in light of upcoming elections in the USA and Canada. An oligarchy is a system of government or control where power is concentrated in the hands of a small, elite group of individuals, often characterized by their wealth, corporate influence, or political connections[1][4].

Understanding Oligarchy

Oligarchy, derived from Greek words meaning "rule by the few," stands in stark contrast to democratic ideals. In an oligarchic system:

- A small group of powerful individuals exerts disproportionate influence over governmental decisions and policies[1][4].
- Economic and political power becomes increasingly concentrated, leading to a shrinking middle class and widening income inequality[1].
- The interests of the elite few often take precedence over the needs of the general population[2].

Warning Signs and Consequences

It's important to be vigilant about the potential emergence of oligarchic tendencies in our societies:

1. ****Erosion of Democratic Processes****: Oligarchs may use their wealth and influence to manipulate elections, fund political campaigns, or control media narratives[3][4].
2. ****Economic Imbalance****: An oligarchic system tends to funnel wealth towards the already-rich, exacerbating income inequality and reducing economic mobility for the majority[1].
3. ****Barrier to Entry****: Oligarchies often create significant entry barriers for new entrepreneurs and businesses, stifling innovation and economic growth[2][5].
4. ****Reduced Social Mobility****: As power concentrates, opportunities for advancement become limited for those outside the elite circle[1].
5. ****Threat to Basic Rights****: In extreme cases, oligarchic control can lead to the erosion of fundamental rights and freedoms[6].

Safeguarding Democracy

To protect against oligarchic tendencies, we must:

- Encourage critical thinking and civic engagement among our students.
- Promote transparency in political processes and campaign financing.
- Support policies that aim to reduce wealth concentration and promote economic equality.
- Emphasize the importance of diverse representation in government and business.

By understanding the dangers of oligarchy, we can better appreciate and protect the democratic values that form the foundation of our societies. As educators, we play a crucial role in fostering an informed and engaged citizenry capable of recognizing and resisting oligarchic influences.



Citations:

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PP has given one of his FEW public interviews to Jordan Peterson.



Remember the guy? ...

Jordan Peterson, a controversial Canadian psychologist, has recently moved to the United States, citing personal and professional reasons[1]. His views and statements have indeed turned many people against him. Here are some of his controversial positions:

1. Gender pronouns: Peterson gained notoriety for refusing to use gender-neutral pronouns for students while teaching at the University of Toronto.
 2. Transphobic comments: He has made derogatory remarks about transgender individuals, including comparing gender-affirming care to Nazi medical experiments.
 3. Misogynistic rhetoric: Peterson has claimed that the historical oppression of women is "an appalling theory" and that feminists have "an unconscious wish for brutal male domination".
- Etc. Etc. Etc.



So why don't we let the young 'uns do a commentary on the interview?
Noah Fry is a PhD candidate in Political Science at McMaster University
And we can read it without having to mark it!

From dog whistles to blaring horns, Poilievre makes his case

Published: January 16, 2025 4.57pm EST

Author [Noah Fry](#) PhD Candidate, Political Science, McMaster University

Pierre Poilievre's recent 100-minute interview with the psychologist and right-wing media commentator Jordan Peterson provided some clues about the Conservative leader's political ideology heading into a federal election year.

[Peterson's podcast episode, hosted by DailyWire](#), was a rare opportunity to learn about Poilievre, currently the overwhelming favourite to win the election.

To date, Poilievre [hasn't done many media interviews](#). Like United States president-elect Donald Trump, [Poilievre views mainstream media as an adversary](#). His interviews are selective and infrequent, often on friendly platforms.

Peterson's podcast apparently qualified. Throughout the interview, Poilievre made a series of questionable claims and received little to no pushback from Peterson.

Fact-checking Poilievre

The Conservative leader [made reference to "anglo-saxon language" – a term many experts consider a nod to racial grievances pitched especially to white men](#).

Poilievre also claimed Canada has among the "highest taxes in the world." [In terms of the tax-to-GDP ratio in 2023](#), however, Canada actually ranked 20th out of 38 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.

He accused Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of advancing "authoritarian socialism" where the state "controls every aspect of your life" and "all of industries." However, even the [Fraser Institute](#), a right-wing think tank, ranks Canada as among the world's 10 most economically free countries.

Poilievre also alleged Trudeau deprives "single mothers of food for their kids." While [on the upswing](#), Canada's child poverty rates remain lower today than they were during Stephen Harper's Conservative government. The same can be said for [children with single mothers](#).

He argued socialist policies "redistribute to the wealthy" and he "can prove it." Peterson did not press him to do so. It raised questions about whether Poilievre was making reference to Medicare and what that could mean for the Canada Health Act.

Race in Canada

Poilievre was also critical of so-called "wokeism," urging society to "put aside ...this obsession with race." While he correctly identified a [sharp rise in race-related hate crimes](#), he placed the blame for that rise on "wokeism" – a heightened awareness of social justice and racism.

In fact, [experts point to](#) a rise in populist rhetoric, anti-immigrant sentiments and the COVID-19 pandemic as reasons for the rise in hate crimes.



Poillievre argued wokeism “invented in many ways” race. It “seeks to divide people into different groups.” This was a follow-up comment to Peterson saying race “was imported” to Canada. Poillievre did not refute this.

But race and racism is a part of Canada’s story. Canada’s growth as a country was a direct result of Indigenous dispossession. This dispossession was reinforced through treaties and legislation like the Indian Act, which exists to this day.

As British colonies, pre-Confederation Canada benefited from imperialism. [Thousands of slaves](#) were a part of that story.

This story continues after Confederation. [Up until 1962](#), Canada’s immigration system explicitly used race to discriminate.

As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report outlined, residential schools facilitated the “[cultural genocide](#)” of Indigenous Peoples. The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Commission’s report also concluded that Canada was sponsoring an [ongoing genocide](#).

Today, many in Canada are still reeling from the [discovery of Indigenous children’s unmarked graves](#).

There is much more to the story of race in Canada. Readers may want to consult accounts like Pamela Palmater’s [Warrior Life](#), Debra Thompson’s [The Long Road Home](#) or *Don’t Call Me Resilient*’s [episode on unmarked graves in Kamloops, B.C.](#)

Keep your stories, lose your politics

Poillievre also promised to reduce immigration. He wants immigrants to “leave the war behind” when they come, and to “bring your tradition and stories but leave your problems at the door.” He added: “We’re going to be grateful again.” Poillievre did not identify who he believes is ungrateful.

Both in the interview and elsewhere, Poillievre has committed to reducing immigration. But he was also a key voice in the Harper government, which increased immigration targets [by 15 per cent](#) from 2007 to 2015.

The Harper government has a challenged legacy on race. As one element of that legacy, the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act identified particular cultural practices as barbaric. The policy notably targeted Muslim immigrants. The government proposed [a hotline](#) in 2015 that would allow concerned citizens to report their neighbours.

Nostalgia and grievance conservatism

Poillievre’s ideas aren’t in fact very new. They advance [globalism ideals that Poillievre claims to reject](#). His main pitch is to “unleash the power of the free market.” Poillievre argues the state needs to get out of the way and favours free trade.

Where he differs from his predecessors is his identity politics. Poillievre mobilizes nostalgia to galvanize voters.

He has said “[everything is broken in this country right now](#),” suggesting it was better before. Donald Trump offers a similar appeal in “Make America Great Again.”



Nostalgia, as a political tactic, often requires erasure. The past is much less attractive if we acknowledge historical injustices.

Poillievre's and Trump's brand of nostalgia takes aim at marginalized groups. It rears its head in anti-DEI and anti-immigrant sentiments. It also blames elites, though rarely holds them accountable.

Dog whistling allows grievance politicians to express these sentiments while maintaining plausible deniability. But at some point, it stops being subtle. Trump's [appeals](#) ring loud like a blaring horn. There are many examples to choose from, including [his false claims about the Vice-President's racial identity](#).

In Poillievre's case, he doesn't need to appeal to racial grievances. He could win without it. He chooses to embrace it anyway. And that's loud enough.



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And in case you don't subscribe to CCPA—the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives—you might want to check out how Canada's richest CEO's are doing these days ...

<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/company-men/>

Here's *only* the Summary ...

Following two blistering years of all-time high compensation, Canada's 100 highest-paid CEOs pocketed \$13.2 million, on average, in 2023—the third biggest haul since we've been tracking CEO pay. On average, these 100 CEOs were paid 210 times more than the average worker's wage in 2023—from its high of over 240 times more pay in the previous two years. This ratio is the fourth highest since we've been tracking CEO pay.

It's hard to conceive of income gaps that large. By the first working day of the year, January 2 at 10:54 a.m., these 100 CEOs already made, on average, \$62,661. It took the average Canadian worker all year long to earn that amount.

CEOs have always made more than the average worker, but the gap is growing. In 1998, the ratio was 104 times. It was closer to 150 times in 2009 and now is comfortably over 210 times, even though it was down in 2023.

This report notes several trends and busts key myths about CEO pay and their worth:

Company men: The top 100 CEO list remains an old boys club of almost entirely men—with only three women on this list. Remarkably, there are more CEOs named Scott or Micheal than women on this list. But there's more. The mythology is that CEOs are parachuted into the top job like plucking gods from heaven. Without pay packages that are in the stratosphere, companies wouldn't be able to obtain and retain these god-like figures to ensure success for their companies—or so the myth goes. The truth of the matter is much more mundane: 76 percent of the highest-paid CEOs have been promoted from within the company and worked with the company for 21 years, on average. In other words, these aren't gods plucked from heaven requiring heavenly pay packages, they're internal hires who have spent over half their careers at a single company. In other words, they are company men.

Justifying extreme pay: The value of these CEOs isn't a god-like quality that allows them, and only them, to run a large company. Their value is in having spent their career in that company, knowing it, its businesses and its industry, inside and out. As a result, they aren't interchangeable with other CEOs. Therefore, the competition between companies to hire CEOs is itself a myth. Extreme competition is used to justify extreme pay. But if companies are hiring internally because they need internal expertise, they aren't competing against other companies for a rarified group of perfect substitutes.

Juicy bonuses: The major reason why CEO pay is growing so much more rapidly than worker pay isn't their salary, pension or benefits—it's their juicy bonuses. Average variable compensation is, on average, \$10.7 million per CEO. This isn't the average workers' holiday bonus. In theory, bonuses are supposed to be tied to how well the company is doing. That's a myth. In practice, CEO bonuses just keep rising, regardless of performance.

Diminishing reliance on salaries and pensions: These recognizable two pay areas only make up 12 per cent of the average CEOs' pay package. The average salary is nothing to sneeze at: it stood at \$1.3 million in 2023 for the 100 highest-paid CEOs. The salary line has remained remarkably constant over time, at roughly one million dollars, particularly after adjusting for inflation.

You want to know, don't you? Well, here's just one SUNCOR CEO under the headings of

Name	Salary	Share-based awards	Option-based awards	Non-equity Incentive
RM Kruger	\$970,000	\$31,990,752	\$2,193,752	\$1,633,000

Policy wins: The CCPA has been tracking CEO pay since 2007, pushing for fairer taxes as one tool in the kit to reduce the extreme pay gap between CEOs and the average worker. That pay gap is still stratospherically high, but there are two policy wins:

1. **Capping the stock option deduction:** On July 1, 2021, the federal government capped the stock option deductions at \$200,000 a year. Previously, when CEOs were paid in stock options, they were taxed as if this was a profit on a long-held stock, not just working income, which it clearly is. Almost certainly because the federal government capped this tax loophole, the proportion that CEOs make from stock options compared to their overall pay has been cut in half since 2021.
2. **Treating stock profits slightly more like working income:** The 2024 federal budget increased the inclusion of capital gains to 66 per cent. For comparison, the inclusion rate on salaries and wages is 100 per cent. Of particular importance for CEOs is that this applies to profits made in a single year that are more than \$250,000. Most Canadians are never going to have stock profits of a quarter of a million dollars in a single year. This change will affect the rare few—including company men on this highest-paid 100 CEOs list, who hold an astounding \$45.2 billion in shares in their own companies. The 2024 federal budget change would raise a stunning \$955 million in tax from just 100 CEOs.

What are YOUR memories about Canada that you'd share with the world?



London Artists' Studio Tour

IT'S COMING...

2025 Art Tour!

Friday, April 25, 2025 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm
Saturday, April 26, 2025 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
Sunday, April 27, 2025 12 noon - 5:00 pm

Visit the homes and studios of over 30 local London, Ontario Artists.

www.londonstudiotour.ca



And now, helpful words from the insurers
that take such good care of us!

Simple ways to protect yourself against identity theft

Identity theft involves stealing someone's personal information with the intent to commit a crime, most often for financial gain. From drained bank accounts to poor credit ratings and even legal issues, identity theft can have profound implications. You can outsmart fraudsters by understanding the kinds of information they're looking for and taking some simple yet effective steps to prevent identity theft.

What kind of information is targeted by thieves?

Identity thieves are looking for as much personal information as they can find, but according to the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#), they're especially interested in your:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- Full address
- Mother's maiden name
- Online usernames and passwords
- Driver's licence number
- Personal identification numbers (PINs)
- Credit card information
- Bank account numbers
- Signature
- Passport number

How is identity theft used to commit insurance fraud?

Along with the [rise in car theft across Canada](#), fraudsters steal identities to apply for auto loans, finance vehicles, and take out insurance policies. They may go one step further and use the victim's personal information to open a new bank account and commit cheque fraud or money laundering.

Once the thief has purchased a new vehicle, they'll ship it overseas or try to re-VIN it and sell it to an unsuspecting buyer. After selling the vehicle, the criminals report it to their insurer as stolen and use the funds from their insurance claim to finance other criminal activities.

This form of identity theft creates many victims—including the individual whose identity was used to take out the fraudulent loan and insurance policy, the buyer of the stolen vehicle, and the broader community. Simply put, more fraud equals more claim payouts, which equals higher insurance premiums for everyone.

How to avoid becoming a target of identity fraud

Here are a few easy ways you can protect your personal information from fraudsters:

1. **Keep track of your bank accounts.** Carefully review your credit card and bank statements monthly (or more often if you do online banking). If you see a transaction you don't recognize, contact your bank right away so they can investigate and prevent further charges to your card.
2. **Cancel lost or unused cards.** If you lose your debit or credit card or suspect it has been stolen, notify the bank or financial institution that issued your card as soon as possible. Most card issuers have a 24/7 customer service line for this purpose. They can track your recent transactions and determine if anything looks suspicious. They'll likely deactivate your card and mail you a new one with a different number. Consider cancelling cards you rarely use.
3. **Shred private documents.** Bank statements, credit card receipts, and anything else containing personal information or your signature should be shredded before they reach the side of the road.
4. **Create strong passwords.** It's a good idea to create a password at least 12 characters or longer with a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols to spell out a memorable phrase (e.g., 6MonkeysRLooking^) and update your passwords often. To take this a step further, avoid saving your usernames and passwords on your browser—saving them can make it easier for someone to access your online accounts if they get their hands on your devices.

Keep your phone on lockdown. Change your cell phone's passcode or unlock pattern often, or opt for a model with a fingerprint scanner or face ID technology. Enabling biometric authentication on your phone can make it less tempting to thieves, and keeping your phone locked can prevent your personal information from getting into the wrong hands.

1. **Empty your mailbox (or go paperless).** If your mailbox is accessible from outside your home, empty it daily to protect personal documents like bank statements and bills. Better yet, go paperless and receive mail containing personal information via email.


Don't overshare to strangers. Always think twice before providing your personal information over unsolicited phone calls, emails, or texts.

How to recognize potential identity theft scams

There are plenty of scams out there specifically designed to intimidate you into providing your personal information for fraudulent purposes. Here are a few common scams that should raise red flags if you encounter them on the phone:


- Someone who claims to work for the CRA and insists you owe the government money (or you could face jail time!).
- Someone who says they're opening a lawsuit against you, and you must call them back immediately.
- Someone who asks you to turn on your computer because they "discovered it has a virus" and they want to "help you remove it."
- A caller that's imitating someone you know and is asking you to provide personal information.

Generally, banks, government agencies, and other reputable organizations never call, email, or text to request personal information. If you receive a phone call asking for personal information, hang up and call the bank or agency to report it immediately. Check out these tips from the [Government of Canada](#) to protect yourself against common cybersecurity scams.



Unfortunately, sometimes identity theft happens despite your best efforts to prevent it — and that's why many home, condo, and tenant insurance policies include coverage for some of the expenses that tend to follow identity theft. While coverage can vary, some insurance carriers offer additional optional coverage for identity theft and the costs incurred to restore your identity, such as correspondence, notarizing documents, lost income, and legal fees. Others also provide 24-hour hotlines for assistance from qualified professionals to support you through a cyber loss.

If you're a current OTIP policyholder, contact us at [1-833-615-9329](tel:1-833-615-9329) to review your existing home insurance policy and discuss additional identity theft coverage. If you're not insured with OTIP and are shopping for home insurance, call us at [1-833-494-0085](tel:1-833-494-0085) to get a quote and receive a \$20 gift card of your choice!



"Agree to disagree" is reserved for things like "I don't like coffee."

**NOT racism, homophobia, sexism.
Not basic common decency.
Not human rights.**

Not the right to be treated equally regardless of race, religion, color, creed or sexual orientation.

**We do not have a difference of opinion.
We have a difference in morality.**

