

<https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2024/10/21/liberals-conservatives-target-base-with-early-election-warnings-in-facebook-ads/438254/>

‘Get election ready’: Liberals, Conservatives target base with early election warnings in Facebook ads

The efforts made to reach supporters with a message that an election could come at any time reflects the more unpredictable nature of this Parliament since the fall sitting began.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre are focusing primarily on their parties' own policies in digital ads, instead of purely attacking their opponents. *Images courtesy of Meta Ad Library/Liberal Party and Conservative Party*

News | BY [STEPHEN JEFFERY](#) | October 21, 2024

Both the Liberals and Conservatives are readying their supporters for an election, using their advertising on Facebook and Instagram to stress that instability in the minority Parliament could result in Canadians going to the polls at any time.

“With [Conservative Leader] Pierre Poilievre pushing for a campaign and [NDP Leader] Jagmeet Singh abandoning progressive policies—an election could happen anytime,” reads a Liberal Party advertisement that began running on Oct. 1. “Our Liberal team needs to know if we can count on you to help win.”

 **Liberal Party of Canada | Parti libéral du Canada**
Sponsored • Paid for by Liberal Party of Canada | Parti libéral du Canada ...
Library ID: 1065515985177847

In a minority Parliament, a campaign can happen at any moment.
Our Liberal team needs to know if we can count on you to help win.



WE'RE DELIVERING
for Canadians

 Authorized by the registered agent for the Liberal Party of Canada

NOT AFFILIATED WITH META
Progress over politics
Keep us moving forward

[Donate Now](#)

An example of a Liberal Party ad warning that an election could happen at any time. *Screenshot courtesy of Meta Ad Library*

“An election could be called at any time,” reads a series of Conservative Party advertisements that first began running in May, but continued into as recently as last week. “Are you with us? Show your support by pre-ordering an election sign today!”

Of the two parties, only the Conservatives seemed to be encouraging an early trip to the polls with seven separate ads asking supporters whether they “want a carbon tax election.” But the efforts made to reach supporters with a message that an election could come at any time reflects the more unpredictable nature of Parliament since it returned from the summer break.

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Since NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) ended his party's supply-and-confidence agreement with the government just before the fall sitting began, the Liberals are no longer guaranteed support that would keep the minority government in power until at least next summer.

Instead, the Liberals must negotiate with any one of the three official opposition parties—Conservatives, NDP, and Bloc Québécois—to survive confidence votes in the House. The 152-member caucus—not including Speaker Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Que.)—can generally rely on Liberal-turned-Independent MPs Han Dong (Don Valley North, Ont.) and Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Que.) to back them in such motions, but the governing party currently requires at least 15 more parliamentarians to stay afloat.



**Conservative Party of Canada - Parti conservateur
du Canada**

Sponsored • Paid for by Conservative Party of Canada - Parti
conservateur du Canada

Library ID: 1124886242092964

An election could be called at any time.

Are you with us? Show your support by pre-ordering an election sign
today!



GET ELECTION READY

RESERVE YOUR LAWN SIGN NOW

CLICK HERE

CONSERVATIVE.CA

Order Your Lawn Sign

Our Conservative movement is powered by people
like you - we can't do it alone.

[Learn more](#)

An example of a Conservative Party ad encouraging supporters to buy party lawn signs. *Screenshot courtesy of Meta Ad Library*

However, that parliamentary calculus has become more complicated since the House returned. After two failed non-confidence motions, the Conservatives under Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) have launched a privilege debate that has ground House business to a halt.

The debate, concerning the government's failure to provide records related to the Sustainable Development Technology Canada, takes precedence over most House business, including the debate of government bills, meaning the Lower Chamber has been effectively gridlocked since Sept. 26.

Compounding the issue is a deadline issued by Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, Que.) on two pieces of legislation he wants passed in exchange for his party's support in confidence motions. The first, Bill C-319, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (amount of full pension), is unlikely to proceed, with all but five Liberal MPs voting against a motion for a royal recommendation on the bill. The private member's bill requires cabinet approval to spend government funds.


The second, Bill C-282, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management), is currently being considered by the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee.




Justin Trudeau, left, and Pierre Poilievre. Trudeau's Liberals have been polling about 20 points behind the Conservatives for months. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

Blanchet has given the government until Oct. 29 to support the royal recommendation and back Bill C-282, otherwise he says he will begin negotiations with both the Conservatives and NDP to end Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's (Papineau, Que.) government.

Parties mostly focus on their own policies

 **Liberal Party of Canada | Parti libéral du Canada**
Sponsored · Paid for by Liberal Party of Canada | Parti libéral du Canada ...
Library ID: 1947533462342729

With Pierre Poilievre and his Conservatives threatening to roll back our progress, your input is as crucial as ever.



Which program are you most concerned the Conservatives would cut?

- \$10-a-day child care
- Canada Carbon Rebate
- Investments to build more homes
- Dental Care
- Pharmacare

Authorized by the registered agent for the Liberal Party of Canada.

Answer our quick survey
2024 Priorities for Parliament

[Learn More](#)

The Liberal Party has promoted its achievements while simultaneously warning of Conservative cuts. *Screenshot courtesy of Meta Ad Library*

With the House gridlocked and election speculation running hot, *The Hill Times* took a look at what the parties were saying beyond the House to their supporters.

The Hill Times conducted a snapshot of each political party's ads that were active on the morning of Oct. 15 on the Meta Ad Library, and whether those advertisements were positive (focused on the party's promises or achievements), negative (focused on the perceived failures or shortcomings of opposing parties), or a mix.

The Conservative Party had 59 ads running that morning, with the most recent commercial launched on Oct. 9 and the earliest starting on July 18, 2023. The Liberals had fewer ads, running 37 that launched between Sept. 17 and Oct. 1. The Green Party, meanwhile, ran 16 ads, with launch dates from July 31 to Oct. 11.

Neither the NDP nor the Bloc Québécois were running ads from their official party accounts at the time the survey was conducted. The NDP most recently had two ads running on Sept. 30, both calling for supporters to donate before the end-of-month deadline.

The Bloc, meanwhile, stopped advertising with Meta in July 2023 when the company blocked Canadian users' access to news content in an attempt to avoid becoming subject to the Online News Act.



Conservative Party of Canada - Parti conservateur
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Sponsored · Paid for by Conservative Party of Canada - Parti
conservateur du Canada

Library ID: 466657429733808

🔔 ATTENTION: URGENT POLL 🔔

Who do you want as Prime Minister?

Take the poll and let us know.

WHO DO YOU WANT AS PRIME MINISTER? CAST YOUR VOTE



- 🗨 Housing Crisis
- 🗨 Carbon Tax
- 🗨 Taxpayer-funded
Hard Drugs

- 👍 Axe the Tax
- 👍 Build the Homes
- 👍 Fix the Budget
- 👍 Stop the Crime



CONSERVATIVE.CA

Official Prime Minister Poll

Official Prime Minister Poll

Conservative ads have sought to contrast the party's policies with the Liberal Party and NDP. *Screenshot courtesy of Meta Ad Library*

For all the furore in the House, however, the Liberal and Conservative advertising is predominantly focused on the “positive”—that is, their own campaign promises and past achievements.

Almost 73 per cent of Liberal advertisements focused on the government’s achievements. Prominently featuring Trudeau, the ads promote the government’s pharmacare policy—with a particular focus on access to contraception—and the Budget 2024 slogan calling for support to “deliver fairness for every generation.”

Just over 40 per cent—a plurality—of Conservative ads were also positive. The bulk of these ads focused on a series of slogans the party had adopted in press releases, news conferences, and in the Commons, that the party will “axe the [carbon] tax,” “build the homes,” “fix the budget,” and “stop the crime.” Another ad promised that “Pierre Poilievre and our common sense Conservative team are fighting to bring home a smaller, more accountable government to make room for big citizens.”

Only five per cent of the Liberal ads were purely “negative,” stating that “Jagmeet Singh is abandoning progressive policies because Pierre Poilievre told him to. Only Liberals will choose progress over politics.” The remainder were mixed, including one targeting Singh and Poilievre: “while they put politics over progress, we’ll keep moving forward for everyone. Chip in today if we have your support.”



Liberal Party of Canada | Parti libéral du Canada

Sponsored · Paid for by Liberal Party of Canada | Parti libéral du Canada

Library ID: 2243749432675188

Jagmeet Singh is abandoning progressive policies because Pierre Poilievre told him to. Only Liberals will choose progress over politics.



NOT AFFILIATED WITH META
Let's keep moving forward
Support our progress

Donate Now

The Liberal Party has pitched itself as putting ‘progress over politics.’ *Screenshot courtesy of Meta Ad Library*

The Conservatives were roughly even on mixed and negative ads, 28.81 per cent to 30.51 per cent respectively. One negative example came from Oct. 7 when the party accused Singh of propping up the Liberals in order to qualify for a parliamentary pension. “Sellout Singh is betraying Canadians by propping up Trudeau just long enough to qualify for his pension. Trudeau stays in power,” the ad read. “Singh gets his pension. YOU pay the price.”

The mixed ads have sought to contrast Poilievre with Trudeau and occasionally Singh. In another ad launched on Oct. 7, the first anniversary of the Hamas attacks on southern Israel, the party stated: “It’s time for the prime minister to grow a backbone, stop trying to divide Canadians based on religion and ethnicity and take a principled stand in favour of humanity and against the real propagators of genocide, who are the Hamas terrorists.”

Half of the Green Party ads were mixed, focusing on issues such as the Trans Mountain Pipeline, carbon pricing, Old Age Security, and the Canada Disability Benefit. The party also criticized the gridlock in the House of Commons, accusing the Conservatives of costing taxpayers’ money while championing fiscal responsibility.

“The Conservatives love to paralyze the House of Commons and waste MPs’ time to push their narrative that “after nine years of Trudeau, everything is broken.”



Conservative Party of Canada - Parti conservateur
du Canada

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conservateur du Canada

Library ID: 1798095854330843

You've been selected to take our poll!

Do you want a Carbon Tax Election?

**DO YOU SUPPORT A
CARBON TAX
ELECTION?**

TAKE OUR POLL!

CONSERVATIVE.CA

CLICK HERE FOR POLL

Do you want a Carbon Tax Election?

Learn more

The Conservatives have sought to promote the next election as a referendum on the carbon tax. Screenshot courtesy of Meta Ad Library

“Did you know that each hour they spend dragging our MPs through non-confidence motions and unnecessary debates on privilege motions costs \$70,000?” part of the ad stated. “That’s YOUR money funding their taxpayer-sponsored soap opera, distracting from the fact that they have no real platform or coherent plan to move Canada forward.”

As *The Hill Times* reported earlier this month, the Conservatives spent more than \$352,000 on Meta ads both on the party's official accounts and those of Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carlton Place, Ont.). The Liberals, in contrast, spent \$30,227 on ads during the same period, while the NDP purchased \$15,618 during the same period.

Such funding is part of a broader digital ad spend by each of the parties, but the Meta Ad Library offers one of the most comprehensive trackers of political commercials. Google's Ad Transparency Centre includes a political advertising section in 13 countries, but not Canada. TikTok has also launched an ad library, but ads served to Canadians are currently not available.

The Conservatives have consistently out-fundraised their competitors since the start of 2022, [raising more than](#) \$20.5-million in the first half of 2024.

The Liberals, meanwhile, have announced new campaign leaders after the departure of Jeremy Broadhurst's resignation last month. In an Oct. 13 press release, the party said Andrew Bevan would take over as campaign director, while Majorie Michel would serve as deputy campaign director.

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The Hill Times

Political Party Ads on Meta, Oct. 15, 2024

	Positive %	Mixed	Negative
Liberal	72.97% (27)	21.62% (8)	5.41% (2)
Conservative	40.69% (24)	28.81% (17)	30.50% (18)
Green	18.75% (3)	50.00% (8)	31.25% (5)

Source: Meta Ad Library

Stephen Jeffery has been a deputy editor and reporter with *The Hill Times* since May 2023. He was previously editor of *The Lobby Monitor*, and a journalist and producer with *The Canberra Times* in his home country of Australia. He moved to Canada in 2019, and covers topics such as intergovernmental affairs, cabinet, legislation, lobbying, the Prime Minister's Office and the Deputy Prime Minister's Office. See all stories BY [STEPHEN JEFFERY](#)