

CIVITAS CANADA 29TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE



FREEDOM AND ITS DISCONTENTS: LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AT A CROSSROADS

ALLSAINTS EVENT SPACE, OTTAWA, ON

FRI. MAY 2 – SAT. MAY 3, 2025

CIVITAS CANADA 29TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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CIVITAS CANADA 29TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

FRIDAY, MAY 2 2025

<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Presenter(s)</i>
12:00-1:00pm	Registration & coffee	
1:00-1:15pm	Welcoming remarks	Brianna Morris Daniel Dufort
1:15pm-2:30pm	<p>PANEL #1: Healthcare Reform: Empowerment and Fiscal Responsibility in Canada</p> <p>As our healthcare system faces mounting pressures, how can empowering individuals to take charge of their health create a more sustainable and effective healthcare system?</p>	Colin Craig Ivan Ross Vrána Jai Bawa Moderator: John Weston
2:30pm-3:00pm	Coffee break	
3:00pm-3:45pm	<p>TALK #1: John Diefenbaker's Battle for Canadian Liberties and Independence</p> <p>A new book: John Diefenbaker always took the side of the underdog against the powerful, be it giving Indigenous Canadians the vote; giving all Canadians the Bill of Rights; or battling American interference in Canada.</p>	Bob Plamondon Moderator: Dr. Mark Milke
3:45pm-4:00pm	Coffee break	
4:00pm-5:45pm	<p>PANEL #2: Tyrannical Threats and Democratic Foreign Policy</p> <p>Whether it's human rights violations in the Middle East, political crisis in Venezuela, China's threats against Taiwan, the war in Ukraine, or President Trump's comments about a 51st state, how should Canadians respond?</p>	Geoffrey Clarfield Ana Rizo Dr. Harry Tseng Dr. Balkan Devlen Jan Jekielek Moderator: Dr. Brian Lee Crowley
5:45pm-7:00pm	Break	
7:00pm-8:00pm	Cocktail reception	
8:00pm-9:30pm	<p>DEBATE: Be It Resolved: Partisan Politics is the Path to Reform</p> <p>If people want to see changes in public policy, should they get involved in election campaigns?</p>	Yea: Renze Nauta Nay: Matt Bufton Moderator: Rachel Curran

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SATURDAY, MAY 3 2025

<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Presenter(s)</i>
7:00am-8:00am	AGM	
8:00am-9:00am	<p>BOOKS FOR BREAKFAST</p> <p>"I Do...? Why Marriage Still Matters" (Andrea Mrozek)</p> <p>"A Day with Sir John A" (Lindsay Shepherd)</p> <p>"Corrupted by Fear: How the Charter Was Betrayed, and What Canadians Can Do About It" (John Carpay)</p> <p>"From Truth Comes Reconciliation: Assessing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report" (Rodney A. Clifton & Mark DeWolf)</p>	Moderator: Andy Crooks
9:00am-10:15am	<p>PANEL #3: Defeating Post-Nationalism for Good</p> <p>In 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated: "There is no core identity, no mainstream in Canada. There are shared values – openness, respect, compassion, willingness to work hard, to be there for each other... Those qualities are what make us the first postnational state." Is Canada a 'postnational state'? If we were to defend Canada as a nation, how might we describe her?</p>	<p>Hon. Jason Kenney Geoff Russ Étienne-Alexandre Beauregard</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Shawn Whatley</p>
10:15am-10:45am	Coffee break	
10:45am-11:30am	<p>TALK #2: The Cost of Truth</p> <p>What is it like to forfeit a career in the federal public service to expose destructive government policies? Which issues have caught the attention of ordinary Canadians and gotten them engaged?</p>	<p>Ryan Davies Tanya Davies</p> <p>Moderator: Brianna Morris</p>
11:30am-12:00pm	Break	
12:00pm-1:30pm	<p>LUNCH KEYNOTE: Educational Freedom and Low-Cost Private Education</p> <p>What can Canada learn from the rest of the world when it comes to the education sector?</p>	<p>Dr. James Tooley</p> <p>Introduction: Sylvia LeRoy Moderator: Paige MacPherson</p>
1:30pm-2:00pm	Break	

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SATURDAY, MAY 3 2025

<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Presenter(s)</i>
2:00pm-3:15pm	<p>PANEL #4: Big Ideas for Canada's Next Federal Government</p> <p>How can Canada attract talent, boost investment, and make itself stronger and more resilient? What's the economic opportunity presented by open innovation and how can the government support this? Should provinces be more powerful players in the federation?</p>	<p>Bill Robson Kevin Chan Dr. Bill Bewick</p> <p>Moderator: Daniel Dufort</p>
3:15pm-3:45pm	Coffee break	
3:45pm-5:00pm	<p>PANEL #5: A Decade of Euthanasia in Canada: Autonomy or Abandonment?</p> <p>Proponents of medical assistance in dying (MAID) are celebrating "a decade of autonomy and choice" and the "transformation of end-of-life rights." Opponents are sounding the alarm about "a pattern of noncompliance" and that "the practice is being abused." Are personal freedom and protection of the vulnerable compatible values? How does the manner in which we die affect our nation?</p>	<p>Dr. Will Johnston Amanda Achtman Bruce Pardy</p> <p>Moderator: Nicole Scheidl</p>
5:00pm-6:30pm	Break	
6:30pm-7:30pm	COCKTAIL RECEPTION	
7:30pm-9:00pm	<p>BANQUET DINNER & KEYNOTE ADDRESS</p> <p>Total Control: Managerial Bureaucracy's Threat to Democracy and Humanity</p> <p>Around the world, nations are embroiled in a struggle between a managerial elite class bent on exercising total control and common people in revolt against the centralization of distant and unaccountable power. But this struggle extends beyond the political, cultural, and technological; at stake are even more fundamental questions about what it will mean to be human in the 21st century.</p>	<p>N.S. Lyons</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Shawn Whatley</p> <p>Closing Remarks: Brianna Morris</p>
9:00pm-10:00pm	<p>Robson Family Music Hour</p> <p>Join around the piano for singing and merriment!</p>	Bill & Helen Robson

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supplementary programming

SUNDAY, MAY 4 2025

<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Presenter(s)</i>
8:00am-8:45am	5k Run	Led by: The Westons
10:00am-11:20am	<p>"Jane's Walk"</p> <p>Meeting Point: Byward Market Ending point: Parliament Hill</p> <p>Jane Jacobs is a significant figure in urban planning circles. Many planners interpret her as describing the correct plan for a city, but others read her as a proponent of laissez-faire planning (if that's not too much of an oxymoron) and spontaneous order.</p>	Led by: Matt Bufton

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SPEAKERS (in order of appearance)

Brianna Morris President, Civitas Canada

Daniel Dufort President and CEO, MEI

John Weston President, Canadian Health and Fitness Institute

Colin Craig President, SecondStreet.org

Ivan Ross Vrána Managing Partner, Diplomat Consulting

Jai Bawa Project Director, Architecture49

Bob Plamondon Author and economist

Dr. Mark Milke President, Aristotle Foundation for Public Policy

Dr. Brian Lee Crowley Managing Director, Macdonald-Laurier Institute

Ana Rizo Lawyer and President of Ladies of Liberty Alliance Canada

Geoffrey Clarfield Anthropologist

Jan Jekielek Host of "American Thought Leaders," The Epoch Times

Dr. Harry Tseng Representative of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada

Dr. Balkan Devlen Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute

Rachel Curran Head of Public Policy (Canada), Meta

Renze Nauta Program Director, Work and Economics, Cardus

Matt Bufton Co-founder and Executive Director, Institute for Liberal Studies

Andy Crooks Board member, Canadian Constitution Foundation, author, and retired lawyer

Lindsay Shepherd Author

Andrea Mrozek Senior Fellow, Cardus

Rodney Clifton Senior Fellow, Frontier Centre for Public Policy

Dr. Shawn Whatley Physician and podcast host, Concepts with Shawn Whatley

Hon. Jason Kenney Former Premier of Alberta & Senior Advisor at Bennett Jones

Étienne-Alexandre Beauregard Author and speechwriter

Geoff Russ Journalist

Ryan Davies Co-host, YouTube's Northern Perspective

Tanya Davies Co-host, YouTube's Northern Perspective

Dr. James Tooley Vice-Chancellor, University of Buckingham

Sylvia LeRoy Lotte & John Hecht Memorial Foundation

Paige MacPherson Associate Director of Education Policy, Fraser Institute

Dr. Bill Bewick Executive Director, Fairness Alberta

Kevin Chan Global Policy Campaigns Strategy Director, Meta

Bill Robson President, C. D. Howe Institute

Nicole Scheidl Executive Director, Canadian Physicians for Life

Dr. Will Johnston Physician

Amanda Achtman Founder, Dying to Meet You Project

Bruce Parly Executive Director, Rights Probe

N.S. Lyons Geopolitical analyst and essayist, The Upheaval

CIVITAS CANADA 29TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ABOUT CIVITAS CANADA

Our Purpose

To promote and deepen understanding through the exchange of a wide range of political, economic, social, religious, cultural, and philosophical ideas concerning the principles and traditions of a free and ordered society.

Chatham House Rule

Please note that Civitas adheres to Chatham House Rule. The identities of the participants are private and all discussions are not to be recorded, reported, attributed, or disseminated in any fashion. All members and guests are asked to respect this rule.

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John Weston

President, Canadian Health and Fitness Institute

Dr. Shawn Whatley (Past President)

Physician and podcast host, Concepts with Shawn Whatley

Director of Operations: Lindsay Shepherd

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