



Info Ottawa - Vanier

Honourable Mauril Bélanger, M.P.

Winter-Spring 2016



Dear Constituents,

In the next few pages, you will find information on the new federal government, my fight against A.L.S., the solving of a noise issue at 1200 Vanier Parkway and my bill to change the English version of Canada's national anthem. You will also find articles on a future National Holocaust Monument, the Prime Ministers' Row initiative, as well a Mr. Joffre Bélanger, a constituent who recently turned 100.

Happy reading and enjoy the end of Winter!

A NEW GOVERNMENT

First, I would like to thank the constituents of Ottawa-Vanier for re-electing me as their representative in the House of Commons.

For the eighth consecutive term, I am proud to be able to continue my work as a Member of Parliament and address issues that are important to the riding as well as Canada.

During the campaign, I had the opportunity to highlight priorities which are important to us all:

- *Ensure public servants are treated fairly and respectfully.*
- *Make sure the Rockcliffe air base redevelopment is driven by the need for balance, viability and sustainability. This is one of Ottawa's most anticipated projects and a very significant urban planning opportunity.*
- *Fight for the continuation of door-to-door mail delivery. A more grounded solution than simple elimination of this service is required, which would ensure financial sustainability of Canada Post while making things less complicated for people.*
- *Fight for more affordable housing and the right for everyone to have a place one can call "home".*

I intend to act on those priorities and look forward to continue taking an active role in the 42nd Parliament.

Canadians from coast to coast to coast have chosen a new and positive Liberal government, one with an ambitious vision for the future and a real plan for a strong middle class. An example of the positive change which I am very proud our Liberal government will be implementing is that we will prioritize significant new investments in affordable housing and seniors facilities as part of our new, ten-year investment of nearly \$20 billion in social infrastructure.

On another note, I am delighted to inform you that on March 9th, I will be serving my day in the House of Commons Speaker's Chair, presiding over Parliamentary businesses. I very much look forward to that day and shall report on it in the next edition of *Info Ottawa-Vanier*.



Our new Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, walking up the Hill

MY FIGHT AGAINST A.L.S.

On Friday November 27th, I met with highly respected Ottawa neurologist, Dr. Pierre Bourque. After undergoing a series of tests, he has diagnosed me with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. It is presently an incurable disease.

Earlier in November, I sent a letter to all Members of Parliament signaling my intention to seek election as Speaker of the House of Commons. Following this, I have had many wonderful and credible people, including colleagues from all parties, lobby on my behalf. My wife Catherine and I are enormously appreciative of all the efforts deployed for my candidacy.

Some of my colleagues were aware that since the last month of the election campaign, I have had difficulty speaking.

Under the doctor's advice and following the ALS diagnosis, I announced on Monday November 30th my decision to withdraw my candidacy for Speaker of the House of Commons. I also announced that I will be continuing to serve as the proud Member of Parliament for Ottawa-Vanier.

I wish to thank everyone who had encouraged me and supported my candidacy for Speaker. I will be eternally grateful. Thank you to my election team and the voters of Ottawa-Vanier for the privilege of serving them.

As a Member of Parliament, I intend to raise awareness by sharing this journey with my colleagues and the public so that more Canadians will learn and fight to continue research for a cure to ALS. It is in this spirit that we will continue to take each day as it comes.

NOISE ISSUE AT 1200 VANIER PARKWAY

In May 2012, residents of Overbrook and Robinson Village came to see me with regard to a noise issue emitted by two rooftop chillers at 1200 Vanier Parkway (RCMP Headquarters).

The noise was excessive and could be heard through closed doors and windows. They addressed their concerns both to Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) and to me.

By October 2012, Public Works agreed to install sound attenuating caps on the two units, but noted that this might not reduce the noise levels to provincial or municipal standards. Indeed, over the following year the two communities noticed no improvement. PWGSC, however, declared itself satisfied that noise levels had been made acceptable.

On July 15th 2014, I informed Minister Diane Finley that this assumption was wrong and I requested a meeting between departmental officials and community representatives. That meeting took place on October 3rd and made it clear to PWGSC that the problem had not yet been solved satisfactorily. Detailed noise readings were taken in November and I followed up with Public Works to ensure the matter continued to receive attention.

On February 17th, 2015, I was informed that modifications would be undertaken over the summer to reduce the noise and to respect Ontario noise standards.

The work was undertaken as promised and I was informed on October 30th, 2015, that it had indeed been completed and now more than meet Ontario standards.

MAKING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM INCLUSIVE

On January 27, 2016, I tabled a Private Member's bill to make a small modification to the English lyrics to our national anthem, changing them from "True patriot love in all thy sons command" to "True patriot love in all of us command." Just two words — "of us" would replace "thy sons."

These two words would make our national anthem more inclusive and pay tribute to all the women who have helped to shape our society. I believe it is important for our national anthem to finally recognize their contribution.

The national anthem is an important symbol for all Canadians. That is why some people say we should not tamper with it. But this is the very reason why I believe it must reflect all Canadians.

I tabled an identical bill during the previous parliament, and it was defeated in a close vote: 144 to 127. All opposition MPs and a few Conservatives supported the bill. The Conservative government even included this proposal in its 2010 Speech from the Throne. This time, I am optimistic that my fellow MPs from all parties will support my bill.

A survey of 5,000 people that I had conducted in 2015 showed even more tangible support for the new wording. According to the results, 58% of Canadians agree with the change. The proposed wording appeared in a previous version of the anthem from the early 1900s: "True patriot love thou dost in us command." These lyrics were changed during the First World War to honour our armed forces.

I tabled Bill C-210, An Act to amend the National Anthem Act, seconded by my colleague Leona Alleslev, MP for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill. MPs from all parties and all parts of the country have told me they support the bill. It has also received a very positive response nationwide in the print media (Victoria's Times Colonist, the Winnipeg Free Press, the Globe and Mail, La Presse, Le Droit, etc.), in the electronic media such as CBC/Radio-Canada and TFO, and on the radio.

Foreign media outlets like Le Monde and The Guardian also reported on the bill, and The Guardian pointed out that other countries such as Austria and Switzerland have recently considered or made changes to their national anthem to better reflect today's society.

I am confident that this time we will succeed! Parliament is expected to debate and vote on the bill in the spring.

JOFFRE BÉLANGER TURNS 100

On October 11, 2015, Joffre Bélanger, a native of the former city of Eastview and a current resident of Vanier, turned 100 — a birthday few people get to celebrate.



It's impressive to reach that age and

even more remarkable to still be in good health, as Mr. Bélanger is. I had the privilege of visiting with him. A vigorous man with a sharp eye and a lively wit, he still drives his own car and lives in his own home. All in all, he is one of those rare people who possess both good health and a keen mind.

Mr. Bélanger is a remarkable person for other reasons as well: he has worked tirelessly in the community all his life. For example, while serving as president of the St. Jean Baptiste Society in 1969, he and the mayor at that time, Gérard Grandmaître, spearheaded the initiative to change their city's name from Eastview to Vanier. Mr. Bélanger and his family invited me to Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes church to celebrate his 100th birthday. I was pleased to mark the occasion by giving him a painting by Ottawa artist Bex.

HOLOCAUST MONUMENT

On November 30th, an important fundraiser was held at the Residence of German Ambassador Werner Wnendt in support of the National Holocaust Monument. Initially approved by the previous government, the project encountered tendering delays during 2015 but is now back on track.

Re-tendering is underway and it is expected that construction, at the corner of Wellington and Booth, near the Canadian War Museum, will begin this spring and will be completed before the end of 2016.

An official unveiling is planned for April 24, 2017, the day of Yom HaShoah. The project is strongly supported by the German Ambassador, by Rabbi Daniel Friedman, Chair of the Committee for the National Holocaust Monument and by Ms. Salma Siddiqui, President of the Coalition for Progressive Canadian Muslim Organizations.

The current design features a large gathering space for ceremonies with room for 1000 people, enclosed by six triangular concrete segments to create the points of a star — reminiscent of the yellow stars that Jews were forced to wear during the Holocaust.

The Shoah casts a long, dark shadow over the twentieth century. The systematic murder of millions of innocent men, women and children is a crime that surpasses human understanding. This monument will serve as a lasting tribute to those who perished and to the resilience of the survivors. It will also offer a focal point for visitors to reflect on the importance of remaining vigilant in confronting hatred, intolerance and racism in all their forms.

As Gilles Vigneault affirmed so poignantly, "all humans are of my race."

UPDATE ON PRIME MINISTERS' ROW

A project that began with Ottawa-Vanier residents coming together to celebrate Canada's history has evolved into an initiative of national significance called Prime Ministers' Row, garnering support from across the country. I am proud to be championing this initiative as the Member of Parliament for Ottawa-Vanier.

In a nod of recognition to the multiple Prime Ministers and Fathers of Confederation who once lived here, Laurier Avenue East will be returned to its traditional role as a vibrant space for political discussion and debate. It will become an innovative, participation-oriented, outdoor cultural space designed to encourage reflection on questions of governance, identity, culture, values and history through several components.

These include: a curated series of programs and events such as conferences, debates and speaker series; an innovative public art program; and a multi-media platform, all currently under development. In this way, Prime Ministers' Row will engage Canadians from across the country and from all walks of life, bringing them together both physically and virtually.

Prime Ministers' Row will leverage existing public and private amenities such as the Government of Canada's Laurier House with its refurbished Visitors Centre, the recently-purchased All Saints Church where work has begun to create a centre for political discourse, as well as the vast green expanse of Strathcona Park. In addition, Prime Ministers' Row will benefit from collaboration with the University of Ottawa - Canada's national university.

At the heart of this initiative lie Canadians like you. People volunteering and lending their support. People who believe this place will serve as a symbolic piece of our national identity.

To become part of the Prime Ministers' Row initiative visit www.pmr-apm.ca. You will be part of creating a national legacy project that both celebrates our history and looks to our future.

CONTACT US

House of Commons
542-N, Centre Block
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Tel. : 613-992-4766
Fax : 613-992-6448
mauril.belanger@parl.gc.ca

www.mauril.ca

Constituency
504-168 Charlotte Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8K6
Tel. : 613-947-7961
Fax : 613-947-7963
mauril.belanger.c1@parl.gc.ca

