

PIGS AT THE TROUGH

THE WORST OF
GOVERNMENT WASTE



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Federation

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Introduction

We've said it before but it bears repeating.

You pay too much tax because the government wastes too much money.

Want proof?

Look no further than this Canadian Taxpayers Federation waste e-book, which compiles the best of the worst in government waste we dug up in 2023.

They waste your money on no-good pencil-pushing bureaucrats, whose unions turn around and raid the public coffers for more, more, more.

They waste your money on vacations and junkets, where they stay in lavish hotels (featuring butler service, of course) and rack-up six-figure tabs dining on the finest cuisines (beef wellington, anyone?).

They waste your money on bonuses and pay raises for themselves, despite the fact they can't even meet half of their own performance targets.

Then they turn around and hire tens-of-thousands of new bureaucrats to help with all their “work.” To add insult to injury, there are now so many bureaucrats on the federal payroll, the government can’t even tell us how many of them are “working” from home.

They waste your money on platinum perks, branded merch and senior citizen sex story shows (yes, you read that right, it *really* happened).

They waste your money on fancy art for their office walls and on million-dollar renovations at properties you’ll never be allowed to step foot in. Forget about the housing crisis, it’s the mansions for politicians and bureaucrats we need to prioritize!

They waste your money on limousine services and on clothing for themselves, then send you the bill for the dry cleaning.

They waste your money amassing real estate across the country and around the globe, then spend hundreds-of-thousands of dollars studying new ways to tax you more.

They even waste your money on red-carpet award shows for themselves.

We wish we were kidding, but, sadly, we’re not. This is what governments in Canada consider being good stewards of your hard-earned tax dollars.

With spending like this, is it any wonder the federal government finds itself more than \$1 trillion in debt?

Here at the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, we've got plenty of work cut out for us. These days, if you're in the business of wasteful government, then business is booming.

But we don't want business to be booming.

We want lower taxes for you, less waste and more accountable government.

And we won't stop until those three objectives are achieved in Ottawa, in every legislature in every province, and at every city hall in this vast, fine country of ours. Then we'll keep fighting to make sure it sticks, because no victory is ever final and no defeat is ever permanent.

We believe that shining a light on all the different ways governments waste your money is an important part of that fight. That's why we dedicate so many resources to digging up government waste stories.

It's to arm you with the information you need to take action and push for change. It's to help make you the most informed taxpayer army in the land.

That's why we've compiled the best of the worst in government waste stories from 2023 into this handy e-book, so you'll have access to them all in one place.

A warning: if you suffer from high-blood pressure, maybe pop some medication or have a chat with your doctor before reading on. These stories are liable to make your blood pressure spike.

In all seriousness: we wouldn't be able to do this work without your support.

This e-book is a testament to the support of hundreds-of-thousands of fed-up Canadian taxpayers who are committed to our mission of lower taxes, less waste and more accountable government.

We present this document as a thank you.

CHAPTER 1

Conferences, junkets & vacations

GG drops \$71K on “Icelimo” during foreign trip

Taxpayers were forced to pick up the tab for a \$71,000 bill from “Icelimo Luxury Travel” during Governor General Mary Simon’s four-day visit to Iceland, according to records dug up by the CTF.

Icelimo specializes in “genuine luxury travel life experiences... crafted with flair and finesse entirely around your dreams,” according to its website.

The cost to taxpayers was more than \$1,000 per hour during the 69.5 hours Simon and her band of bureaucrats were in the country.

“The governor general spent more on fancy rides in four days than the average Canadian makes in an entire year,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director said. “We’re not saying the governor general should be hitchhiking, but surely she could have gotten around a small island for less than the price of a brand-new BMW.”

Simon spent Oct. 12-15, 2022, in Iceland to attend the Arctic Circle Assembly, an annual gathering held at the Harpa Conference Hall in the capital city of Reykjavik.

The Harpa Conference Hall is located about 700 metres (or less than a 10-minute walk) from the Hotel Borg, where Simon and 15 of her underlings stayed during the trip. All told, the four-day trip cost taxpayers at least \$298,000.

Simon brought along her husband, her secretary, her director of communications, her manager of strategic communications, two “aides-de-camp” and her official photographer.

After the CTF broke the news of Simon’s \$71,000 spending spree on a luxury travel service, Icelandic media picked up the story.

The bill from Icelimo would have covered the cost to purchase a 2012 Dodge Challenger limo, with enough money left over to buy a 2011 Lincoln Town Car limo.

Meanwhile, Simon and company could have cut down on hotel costs by renting out an entire nine-bedroom “farmhouse” on a 700-acre estate, featuring a geothermal hot pool, located about an hour’s drive from the city.

In fact, the governor general’s team could have booked the idyllic location for more than 40 days and nights and still saved taxpayers money.

“Maybe when Canadians can barely afford groceries, our government could ease up on the fancy rides, lavish hotels and international trips,” Terrazzano said.

**This story ran in the National Post on July 13, 2023.*

Trudeau's latest Tofino vacation cost you \$287,000

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's latest vacation to Tofino, B.C., cost taxpayers at least \$287,285, according to records obtained by the CTF. That brings the total cost for Trudeau's three vacations in 2023 to more than \$678,000.

"Ordinary Canadians get to go on a big vacation once every few years, but this is the third vacation Trudeau took this year and each one cost taxpayers hundreds-of-thousands of dollars," said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director.

Trudeau spent Aug. 10-18, 2023, in Tofino with his family. The Prime Minister's Office told the media the Trudeaus would be paying for their own stay.

But RCMP security costs alone cost taxpayers at least \$287,285, with the Mounties warning "additional payments may still be processed." In other words: the costs will likely climb even higher.

That figure also doesn't include potential costs from the Privy Council Office or the Royal Canadian Air Force, as the Trudeaus flew to B.C. on a government jet.

Earlier, Trudeau found himself in hot water over another vacation, after it was revealed his Easter visit to Montana, U.S., cost taxpayers significantly more than let on.

The feds initially said that Trudeau's Easter vacation only cost taxpayers \$23,846. But that figure left out RCMP security costs, which pushed the bill up to \$228,839 – not exactly a rounding error.

Trudeau's Christmas trip to a private resort in Jamaica, from Dec. 26, 2022, to Jan. 4, 2023, cost taxpayers \$162,000.

All told, Trudeau's three vacations in 2023 cost Canadians more than \$678,000.

“If Trudeau skipped just one of these vacations and instead stayed at his taxpayer-funded cottage mansion at Harrington Lake, then he'd save taxpayers what most people make over a couple of years,” Terrazzano said.

**This story ran in the National Post on Oct. 6, 2023.*

Feds drop \$1.5M on hotel rooms for Montreal UN summit

Taxpayers were on the hook for \$1.5 million in hotel costs so 400 delegates could attend a two-week United Nations summit in Montreal, according to government records obtained by the CTF.

The summit was the UN Biodiversity Conference, also known as COP15, which was held in Montreal from Dec. 7-19, 2022.

“Did the feds really need to send 400 people to Montreal for a conference?” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “Canadians pay an obscene amount of money when our politicians and bureaucrats travel abroad, and now we learn we also pay an arm and a leg when we host conferences at home.”

Environment and Climate Change Canada confirmed total spending on hotel rooms was even higher than \$1.5 million, but said it lacks the resources to tally up the full bill.

The rooms were booked at two downtown hotels, Le Westin Montreal and the Intercontinental Montreal, costing taxpayers \$1,539,052.

This isn't the first time lavish spending by Canadian politicians and bureaucrats during a UN climate conference has raised eyebrows.

In 2021, Canada sent the largest delegation of all G7 countries to the COP26 Conference on Climate Change in Glasgow, Scotland. At least \$1 million in taxpayer funds went towards the trip, although full costs were not released by the government.

Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland and three support staff managed to book hotels in the wrong city – 86 kilometres away, in Edinburgh. Then they billed taxpayers thousands of dollars for a luxury chauffeur service to shuttle them between the two cities.

**This story ran in the National Post on Nov. 14, 2023.*

GG's high-flying ways costs taxpayers \$2.7 million in 2022

Governor General Mary Simon racked up at least \$2.7 million in travel expenses in 2022, her first calendar year on the job, according to records obtained by the CTF.

Simon made five trips abroad and more than a dozen domestic excursions, dragging along a dizzying array of underlings and support staff on most voyages.

All told, taxpayers were on the hook for at least \$2,784,010. The final figure will likely be even higher, as the government continues to process costs.

“Why do Canadians need our governor general going on all these trips?” Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director, said. “Simon should have the courtesy and common sense to realize many Canadians are struggling and can’t afford her expensive trips.”

In 2022, Simon routinely travelled with an extended entourage, including her husband, secretary, several communication strategists and “aides-de-camp,” alongside her official videographer and her official photographer, among others.

The group stayed in pricey accommodations in far-flung countries, including the Ritz-Carlton in Berlin, the Great Scotland Yard Hotel in

London, the 1919 Radisson Blu in Reykjavik, Iceland, and the Jumeriah Emirates Towers Hotel in Dubai, UAE.

Simon and her entourage racked up a near six-figure, in-flight catering tab during a weeklong trip to the Middle East in March and dropped \$71,000 at “Icelimo Luxury Travel” in Iceland in October. Other international trips included three stays in London.

The five trips abroad account for a significant portion of the overall travel bill for 2022, coming in at a little more than \$2 million. Meanwhile, Simon’s domestic travel last year cost Canadian taxpayers \$691,433.

Domestic travel included a trip to Toronto in May for the Juno Awards, as well as a stay in Peterborough, Ont., in October, where the governor general made a visit to the Canadian Canoe Museum.

In 2021-22, the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General received about \$33 million in federal funding.

**This story ran in the National Post on Aug. 24, 2023.*

Taxpayer win: After the CTF brought to light the Governor General’s extravagant and expensive in-flight catering bills, a parliamentary committee ordered Rideau Hall to curb spending on international travel by reducing the size of delegations, sourcing food and drinks from within Canada and improving oversight.



Governor General Mary Simon during her March 2022 trip to the Middle East, during which her entourage billed taxpayers for nearly \$100,000 worth of airplane food.

Trudeau bills you for \$6K-per-night luxury hotel suite

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau billed taxpayers for a \$6,000-per-night luxury hotel suite during a trip to London, England, in September 2022.

Trudeau only fessed up to his pricey digs after the Canadian Taxpayers Federation launched a legal challenge seeking to force the feds to disclose who stayed in the suite.

“As a matter of principle, the government owes taxpayers transparency,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “Taxpayers paid the bill, so we have every right to know who wasted our money.”

The trip was for Queen Elizabeth II’s state funeral in London. Canada sent a sizeable delegation for the occasion, which included Trudeau and his family, Governor General Mary Simon and First Nations leaders, among others.

In October 2022, it was revealed the delegation expensed nearly \$400,000 in hotel costs, including the \$6,000-per-night “River Suite” at the Corinthia Hotel.

The Corinthia is described as “one of the top luxury hotels in central London,” and the \$6,000-per-night suite boasts a view of the River Thames, a marble bathroom and “complimentary butler service.”

Several other top-shelf hotels in the area all offered lower prices than the Corinthia.

At first, the government refused to disclose who stayed in the suite. So, the CTF filed an access-to-information request seeking the culprit.

But the government redacted the name of the person responsible, citing security concerns and a clause in the Access to Information Act that prohibits the release of personal information.

So, the CTF filed a legal challenge.

In March 2023, while U.S. President Joe Biden was visiting Ottawa, the government leaked the information to the press in a classic bad-news dump.

It was Trudeau. He’s the one who billed you for a \$6,000-per-night luxury suite.

Taxpayer win: Trudeau finally fessed up to staying in the \$6,000-per-night luxury suite because he knew he was going to lose the CTF’s legal challenge. He knew the truth would eventually come out, so he tried to bury the story.



A promotional photo of the \$6,000-per-night luxury hotel suite Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stayed in during Queen Elizabeth II's state funeral.

King's coronation cost taxpayers \$534,000 and counting

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Canadian delegation to King Charles III's coronation racked up \$534,675 in expenses, according to records obtained by the CTF.

Final costs are expected to rise even higher as expenses are still being processed.

“The King's coronation is a big event, but that doesn't mean taxpayers should be paying half-a-million dollars so more than 100 people can travel to England,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “It seems like this government goes out of its way to bring along as many people as possible and to stay in the fanciest hotels.”

Canada's delegation was 102 people strong – including 87 travelling with Trudeau and 15 travelling with Governor General Mary Simon.

That means the cost per traveller was \$5,241 for the three-day trip.

Trudeau's troupe spent \$305,188 on accommodations at the Edwardian Pastoria Hotels Ltd., a high-end luxury hotel chain in London. They also spent \$45,760 at the Great Scotland Yard Hotel and \$15,881 at the Southampton Row Hotel.

Simon and her entourage spent \$155,283 on rooms at the London & Regional hotel.

Bureaucrats bought \$300 worth of wine and beer for the flights to London, then spent \$555 at “Majestic Wine London” upon arrival.

King Charles III acceded to the throne Sept. 8, 2022, following the death of Queen Elizabeth II. His coronation was held at Westminster Abbey May 6, 2023.

CHAPTER 2

Even we can't make this stuff up

Feds drop half-a-million on glitzy galas for bureaucrats

Cameras flashing as honoured guests strut down a red carpet. Catered menus featuring charcuterie, cured arctic char, and duck prosciutto. Speechwriters and lavish venue rentals. Trophies made of “antique gold,” “clear crystal” and “bevelled black glass.”

It's not the Oscars, not the Golden Globes, not even the Junos... It's the Public Service Award of Excellence.

The federal government spent half-a-million dollars throwing gaudy galas to bestow bureaucrats with expensive awards during the past decade. Meanwhile, federal departments consistently failed to hit even half of their performance targets.

And yet, taxpayers got stuck with the party bill for \$476,000, from 2012 to 2022.

“It's time to end Ottawa's party with taxpayers' cash,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “The appropriate trophies for these bureaucrats would be big golden pigs.”

The event launched in 2005 with 14 “award categories” to recognize government employees who “demonstrated excellence in achieving results for Canadians.”

Less than half of the feds' departmental performance targets are "consistently met" each year, according to a 2023 report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the government's independent budget watchdog.

Combined spending on the galas in the past two years came to \$118,000, with about \$80,000 of that going towards the custom-designed trophies.

In 2022, the feds dropped \$37,243 on the party, with the trophies for winners described as a "plaque in bevelled black glass," featuring "clear crystal overlay with silver standoffs" and a "personalized inscription deep-etched and silver-filled."

The feds also expensed "mileage and parking for 165 *local* employees," who presumably had to drive into downtown Ottawa for the party.

In 2021, the party was held virtually over *three days*, with the feds spending \$20,000 on the development of an online "platform" and the full event production. A speechwriter was hired for \$2,000 and the trophies cost \$15,000.

The trophies that year were described as "stone art with blown glass mounted on an optical crystal base," "COVID heroes coins" and a "black hexagon tower cast in stone."

In 2019, the feds dropped \$23,000 on the gala, which included a literal red carpet and a proposed menu featuring charcuterie, cured arctic

char, smoked and candied salmon, smoked trout, pork terrine and duck prosciutto.

A photographer was also hired in 2019 so bureaucrats could experience a flashy photoshoot. The trophies were “custom imported medallions” with “antique gold recessed finish,” presented in a “black velvet box” with “engraving on the back.”

Spending on trophies for winners totals \$242,909 since 2012. The highest spending on record for the award gala came in 2012, when the government dropped more than \$195,000 in taxpayer cash on the event.

A government spinner told the CTF that from 2005 to 2011, the cost of the parties was “in line” with 2012. But in 2013, the feds stopped hosting the parties at a rented ballroom, instead moving the festivities to Rideau Hall, to lower costs.

“Nothing screams fiscal responsibility like spending thousands every year awarding bureaucrats that can't meet their own performance targets,” Terrazzano said.

Toronto spent \$33,000 on branded stickers for crack pipes

The city of Toronto spent \$33,561 on branded stickers for crack pipes and other illicit drug gear from 2020 to July 2023, according to records obtained by the CTF.

The branded crack and meth kits were then handed out for free at a needle exchange run by Toronto Public Health and distributed throughout the city's shelter system.

“Why in the world does the city need to spend thousands of dollars on stickers for crack pipes and meth kits?” said Jay Goldberg, CTF Ontario Director. “This is a crystal-clear example of reckless city hall spending that needs to stop.”

In May, Anthony Furey, then a mayoral candidate in Toronto's 2023 by-election, released images of city of Toronto branded crack and meth kits distributed by a “harm-reduction program” called The Works

The Works was founded in 1989 as a needle exchange amid the HIV epidemic, but in recent years has branched out into distributing other drug gear. The program is run by Toronto Public Health.

After news of the city-branded crack and meth kits broke, the CTF filed access-to-information requests seeking details on how much taxpayer cash had been spent on branding drug paraphernalia.

All told, 166,392 such kits have been distributed for free.

**This story ran in the National Post on Aug. 15, 2023.*

Taxpayer win: After working on this story, the CTF filed similar access-to-information requests in Saskatchewan, after receiving a tip the provincial government was also branding crack and meth pipes. After the CTF exposed the Saskatchewan Health Authority crack pipe scheme, the provincial government announced it would no longer use taxpayer cash to distribute branded drug gear.



Branded crack and meth pipes handed out by the City of Toronto/PHOTO BY ANTHONY FUREY CAMPAIGN

Feds build \$8 million “barn” at Rideau Hall

As Canadians across the country tightened their belts during the pandemic, the feds were busy building an \$8-million Barn at Rideau Hall to serve as a storage facility.

The little-known but pricey construction project was overseen by the National Capital Commission, the feds’ supercharged parks-and-rec department responsible for maintaining Canada’s official residences.

Details of the project emerged from access-to-information records dug up by the CTF. All told, the Barn cost taxpayers \$8,049,853.

To put that in perspective, that’s enough money to buy a “palatial mansion” on the banks of the Rideau Canal, described as “Ottawa’s most opulent home.”

“I don’t know much about farming, but I’m pretty sure my buddies in Brooks can build a barn for a lot less than eight million bucks,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director.

The two-storey facility, billed as the government’s first “zero-carbon” building, is called the Barn and serves as a “working and storage space,” according to the NCC.

The NCC approved the final design for the project in June 2019. Shovels hit the dirt in July 2020, with construction wrapping up during the winter of 2021.

The Barn features a “washing bay,” a “repair garage working area,” a “tool and equipment storage area,” “vehicle storage,” and additional “storage space.”

The records obtained by the CTF indicate there were several “change orders” on the project, which means the design was changed after construction began.

The NCC has long complained of “decades of underfunding” or “chronic underfunding” when it comes to Canada’s six official residences, which are the taxpayer-funded mansions for politicians, the governor general and visiting foreign officials.

“It’s ridiculous for the NCC to be crying poor when it blew \$8 million on a Barn,” Terrazzano said. “If the NCC can’t figure out how to manage properties without costing taxpayers an arm and a leg, then the government needs to find someone else who can.”

**This story ran in the National Post on Oct. 19, 2023.*

Taxpayer win: After the CTF blew the whistle on the \$8 million “barn” at Rideau Hall, a parliamentary committee summoned the head of the NCC to demand answers for the wasteful spending. The committee later called on Canada’s Auditor General to investigate the fiasco.



The \$8-million “barn” on the grounds of Rideau Hall.

Government funds senior sex story shows

The Canadian government spent thousands of dollars funding stage productions where seniors in other countries share sex stories in front of live audiences.

The bill totals \$12,520.

Each performance features a hand-picked group of geriatrics recounting true sexual experiences, including “first time, best time, worst time, last time.”

The CTF learned of the kinky funding initiative after obtaining government records through an access-to-information request.

“When Canadian parents told their children to listen to their elders, I don’t think this is what they had in mind,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “This sounds like a really expensive game of ‘Never Have I Ever.’”

The show, called “All the Sex I’ve Ever Had,” was created by the Toronto-based arts group Mammalian Diving Reflex in 2010. It remains in production to this day.

MDR received funding from a little-known federal slush fund controlled by Global Affairs Canada, officially called the Mission Cultural Fund.

That money funded trips to Vienna, Austria, Melbourne, Australia and Taipei City, Taiwan, where MDR organized stage performances of “All The Sex I’ve Ever Had.”

In the summer of 2019, MDR flew to Taipei City five weeks before the scheduled performance to handpick seniors and prepare them for their big night on the stage.

The production, which cost taxpayers \$4,000, was pitched as a “socially engaging project that promotes Canadian values in freedom of speech and tolerance of society [sic].”

In 2017, taxpayers funded two performances of “All the Sex I’ve Ever Had,” the first in Vienna, costing \$2,981, the second in Melbourne, at a price tag of \$5,539.

“I’d like to meet the person who thought paying for seniors to relive their sex lives in front of a live audience in another country is a good use of Canadian tax dollars,” Terrazzano said. “How do sex stories from seniors in other countries promote Canada?”

The MCF was launched in 2016 with an annual budget of \$1.75 million and a mandate to “promote our artists abroad while advancing foreign policy priorities.”

Records obtained by the CTF show the MCF was consistently overbudget, overspending by an average of about \$2 million annually during its first three years.

**This story ran in the National Post on May 10, 2023.*

Taxpayer win: The CTF was the leading voice in the fight against the Mission Cultural Fund. The CTF broke this story, exposing the Canadian government funding senior citizen sex story shows in other countries, on May 10, 2023. On May 29, news broke the feds had finally axed this slush fund.

Stress balls, charcuterie boards and climate change card games: Inside the feds' branded merch shopping spree

Pizza cutters and webcam covers. Credit card sleeves and survival knives. Bookmarks and ballpoint pens. Toiletry bags and licence plate frames. Polo shirts and unisex quilted vests.

It appears there is no product the feds won't brand with the logo of a department or emblazon with the motto of a Crown corporation, and no price too high to pay for the privilege.

“It's like the government had a contest to see which department could come up with the dumbest way to spend taxpayers' money and they all won,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “This is what happens when you have too many bureaucrats with too much money and time on their hands.”

The CTF dug up government records showing the feds blew millions in tax dollars on branded merchandise between Jan. 1, 2021, and May 2, 2023.

The Business Development Bank of Canada spent \$17,600 on golf balls with its logo. Invest in Canada shelled out \$12,500 on custom-made candles. Farm Credit Canada dropped \$10,600 on branded air fresheners.

Across all agencies, nearly \$200,000 was spent on branded, reusable bags alone. Somehow, Farm Credit Canada managed to rack up a monthly tote bag bill of about \$4,500.

The Windsor-Detroit Bridge spent \$990 on “branded candy,” while the Jacques Cartier Bridge dropped \$9,700 on custom polo shirts. The document was mum on the reason bridges need to market themselves to the public.

The Canada Development Investment Corporation wrote an \$18,000 cheque for knitted wool socks, while the Business Development Bank of Canada spent \$3,700 on branded mints.

Meanwhile, Destination Canada spent \$13,300 on candles and another \$9,000 on charcuterie boards; one department spent \$1,422 on Rubik’s cubes; yet another spent \$1,797 and \$812 on fancy pocketknives and pizza cutters, respectively.

The Department of Justice dropped \$3,300 on stress balls, while Export Development Canada ordered a \$4,100 climate change trivia card game.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Services confirmed it purchased promotional material, but declined to say what they bought – because, you know, spy stuff.

**This story ran in the National Post on July 31, 2023.*

GG spends \$117,000 on dry cleaning

Canada's Governor General and Rideau Hall racked up a six-figure dry cleaning tab in recent years, according to records obtained by the CTF.

The Office of the Secretary to the Governor General dropped \$117,566 on professional dry-cleaning services since 2018, despite having in-house staff on the payroll responsible for doing the laundry.

“When I spill half the Pizza Hut lunch buffet on my white work shirt, I don't stick the company I work for with the dry-cleaning bill and neither should the governor general,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “This is another perk the governor general enjoys that struggling Canadians can't afford.”

Rideau Hall's dry cleaning tab costs taxpayers an average of more than \$1,800 a month.

It's enough money to dry clean 13,831 blouses, 6,204 dresses or 3,918 duvets, according to the prices at Majestic Cleaners in Ottawa.

The records note “traditional laundering is done in-house at the OSGG,” but that everything from personal clothing to tablecloths, napkins and assorted linens have been sent out for professional dry cleaning.

**This story ran in the National Post on Oct. 4, 2023.*



Governor General Mary Simon (seated centre-left) during a proceeding in the Canadian Senate, also known as the Red Chamber.

Taste the crunch: cricket corporate welfare cost \$420K

Bon appétit.

The federal government spent \$420,023 since 2018 subsidizing companies that turn crickets into human food.

“Canadians are struggling as inflation pushes up grocery bills, but subsidizing snacks made out of bugs doesn’t sound like the right solution for taxpayers,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “If Prime Minister Justin Trudeau wants to take a bite out of crunchy crickets, he can do it without taking a bite out of taxpayers’ wallets.”

The CTF gathered the list of cricket corporate welfare deals by reviewing the federal government’s proactive disclosure of grants and contributions.

On two separate occasions, the feds cut cheques to a Montreal-based company called NAAK Inc., for a combined cost to taxpayers of \$171,695.

The co-founders of NAAK were “introduced ... to the benefits of adding insects to (their) diet” by a friend and describe their mission as “democratizing insect consumption.”

NAAK specializes in “cricket energy bars,” but a portion of its corporate welfare money was earmarked for developing other cricket products, including cricket “steaks and falafels.”

NAAK is one of five companies producing crickets for human consumption that have received corporate welfare deals from the feds in recent years.

Corporate welfare deals, 2018-2022

Company	Number of subsidies	Total cost of subsidies
NAAK Inc.	2	\$171,695
Entologik Inc.	2	\$88,979
Prairie Cricket Farms	2	\$78,349
Gaia Protein	1	\$42,000
Casa Bonita Foods	1	\$39,000

Casa Bonita Foods wants to “manufacture high protein snacks made with cricket flour,” while Prairie Cricket Farms promotes the consumption of “roasted crickets” or “cricket powder” mixed-in with your morning bowl of cereal.

The founder of Entologik claims insects are the “protein of the future” and wants to grow the company into “the largest producers and processor of edible insects in Canada.”

“The feds are having their ‘let them eat crickets’ moment,” Terrazzano said. “If someone can sell crickets as food, we wish them the best of luck, but taxpayers shouldn’t be paying for it.”

An additional \$8.7 million in subsidies went to Aspire Food Group, which operates a cricket processing plant in London, Ont. In total, the company received four separate handouts.

While the company is primarily geared toward pet food production, its owner said about 10 per cent of its business uses crickets for human food.

**This story ran in the Toronto Sun on Sept. 11, 2023.*

Ex-MPs bill taxpayers for ivy league education

Welcome to Canada: where losing re-election is like winning a prestigious scholarship.

Up to \$15,000. All on the taxpayers' dime.

Taxpayers are paying for ex-members of Parliament to attend schools most Canadians would have to be collegiate hockey stars to go to, including Harvard and Cornell universities.

That's due to a little-known federal slush fund, officially called "transition support," that MPs who lose or do not seek re-election can tap into.

MPs must spend the transition support funding within 12 months of leaving office, although that period was extended during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The money can be used for education, professional development, office supplies, long-distance phone calls or up to four roundtrips within Canada.

Since 2019, at least 12 ex-MPs have tapped into the fund for education and professional development, expensing a total of \$90,303 to taxpayers.

And just because other departing MPs didn't use it for education or training, doesn't mean they didn't tap into \$15,000 available to them for the other purposes.

The table below shows the 12 MPs who expensed education and training under the transition support fund since 2019, including their party affiliation, the institutions they attended and the total cost to taxpayers.

MPs who have tapped into the transition support slush fund for education

Name	Party	Institution(s)	Cost
Dan Ruimy	Liberal	CDI College	\$10,488
Celina Caesar-Chavannes	Liberal (later left caucus)	Northcentral University and The Chopra Centre	\$6,077.43
Amarjeet Sohi	Liberal	SCIC e-Academic	\$4,995
Matt Decoursey	Liberal	McGill Executive Institute	\$8,690
Denis Paradis	Liberal	University of Ottawa	\$2,750
Will Amos	Liberal	Institute of Corporate Directors	\$11,500
Brad Trost	Conservative	Harvard University	\$15,000
Bruce Stanton	Conservative	eCornell	\$3,210.15

- Continued next page -

Nelly Shin	Conservative	École Québec Monde and University of Ottawa	\$3,935
Steven Blaney	Conservative	George Brown College, Événements Les Affaires, Canadian Nuclear Association, and the Collège des Administrateurs de Sociétés	\$5,699
Murray Rankin	NDP	Rotman School of Management	\$15,000
Christine Moore	NDP	Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue	\$2,959.31

Highlights from the CTF analysis include Matt Decoursey, who served as an MP for Fredericton from 2015 to 2019. When he was defeated in the 2019 federal election, he walked away with \$89,450 in severance.

A review of Decoursey's LinkedIn page shows he had little trouble landing on his feet following his time in federal politics.

In January 2020, he was appointed as a senior advisor to the federal minister of finance. In November 2020, he was named a fellow at the Pearson Centre. And in December 2020, he became a senior advisor to the President of the University of New Brunswick.

But that didn't stop Decoursey from expensing a combined \$8,690 on courses from the McGill Executive Institute in January and July 2022.

Celina Caesar-Chavannes was elected the MP for Whitby in 2015. In March 2019, she resigned from the Liberal caucus and didn't seek re-election later that year. She received \$89,000 in severance.

In May 2022, she sent taxpayers a bill for \$3,989 from the Chopra Centre, a wellness retreat and training centre founded by the author Deepak Chopra.

Brad Trost was the MP for Saskatoon-Humboldt from 2004 to 2015, and the MP for Saskatoon-University from 2015 to 2019.

He walked away with both a severance and a pension, according to a CTF analysis. He also expensed the full \$15,000 available to him in transition support funding to Harvard University.

Murray Rankin was the MP for Victoria from 2012 to 2019, and prior to entering public office, he worked as a lawyer, a law professor and as the managing partner of a law firm. He received a \$34,000 annual pension.

In July 2019, he expensed \$15,000 to the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto.

In October 2020, Rankin was elected to the B.C. legislature, and currently serves as the minister of Indigenous relations and reconciliation.

Dan Ruimy and Amarjeet Sohi, both former Liberal MPs, expensed taxpayers for a combined \$15,483 in post-secondary education costs, shortly before being elected the mayors of Maple Ridge and Edmonton, respectively.

**This story ran in the National Post on April 18, 2023.*

Senators hang up fancy art, taxpayers on the hook

Some say art is priceless, but in the Canadian Senate, it's more like a blank cheque.

Senators have racked up more than half-a-million dollars in art rentals and related expenses since 2016, while forcing Canadian taxpayers to pick up the tab.

“Senators are paid more than double the average salary in Canada,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “If they want to hang expensive art in their offices, they have more than enough money to pay for it themselves.”

The CTF reviewed all Senate expenses disclosed since July 2016, when stricter spending rules were implemented following the Canadian Senate expense scandal. The analysis reveals 52 senators filed art-related expenses for a total cost of \$514,616.

That means taxpayers are being forced to shell out \$6,600 per month so senators can hang art on the walls of their offices. The base salary for a Canadian senator is \$169,600.

Almost all the art expenses – \$512,820 – were for rentals from the Canadian Council for the Arts. Last year, the CCA received \$510 million

in federal funding, which accounts for about 90 per cent of the agency's revenue.

Senator Denise Batters has the highest art expense total since 2016, with annual bills of about \$5,000 per year. On three separate occasions, she billed taxpayers \$10,320 for two-year art rentals from the CCA.

In total, Batters filed four art expenses since 2017, costing taxpayers \$32,047.

The second largest tab comes from Mary Coyle, an independent senator from Nova Scotia, who submitted \$28,535 worth of art expenses between 2018 and 2022.

David Richards, an independent senator from New Brunswick, came in third place, with seven art expenses from 2017 to 2021, for a total of \$25,230.

Rounding out the top-five is former senator Vernon White, who spent \$25,035 on art from 2016 to 2022, and Paula Simons, an independent senator from Alberta, who billed taxpayers for \$21,650 since 2019.

Senators who spent the most on office art since 2016

Senator	Timeframe of expenses	Cost
Denise Batters	2017-2023	\$32,047
Mary Coyle	2018-2023	\$28,535
David Richards	2017-2023	\$25,230
Vernon White	2016-2022	\$25,035
Paula Simons	2019-2023	\$21,650

The cost of running the Canadian Senate exploded under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

In 2015-16, Senate expenditures were \$74.5 million. By 2023-24, the Senate's budget jumped to \$126.7 million – an increase of 70 per cent.

The number of bureaucrats working at the Senate also spiked, from 372 full-time staff in 2017, to 493 full-time staff in 2022 – an increase of 30 per cent.

Annual office budgets are also up. This year, each Senator will get about \$240,000 for office-related expenses, including art.

CHAPTER 3

Bonuses, perks & pay raises

GG pockets \$50K pay raise since 2019

Canada's governor general pocketed a \$48,800 pay raise since 2019, according to records obtained by the CTF.

In 2019, the governor general's salary was \$302,800. By 2023, her annual salary had jumped by 16 per cent, up to \$351,600.

“Can the government prove the governor general is providing taxpayers with \$50,000 in extra value?” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “The government continues to rubber stamp raises while Canadians are asking themselves if they can afford a package of ground beef.”

On average, the governor general received an annual raise of 4.15 per cent during the pandemic – increases well above the rate of inflation.

To make matters worse: former governors general can continue to expense taxpayers for more than \$200,000 per year after leaving office – a perk that extends for the rest of their lives and continues up to six months after they die.

The cherry on top: they get a \$150,000 a year pension regardless of how long they served in office. We call that the Julie Payette pension problem.

**This story ran in the National Post on Feb. 6, 2023.*

CBC doles out \$16 million in bonuses in 2022

The bonuses keep going up, and the ratings keep going down.

Everyone's favourite public broadcaster (we're kidding) handed out more than \$16 million in bonuses in 2022, according to documents dug up by the CTF.

That year, CBC management issued bonuses to 1,142 employees, for an average of \$14,056 per staffer. The total cost to taxpayers was \$16,052,148.

“Many Canadians are missing meals while CBC staffers aren't even worried about missing a bonus,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “The CBC should stop handing out bonuses and stop taking so much money from taxpayers.”

In the eight years since Prime Minister Justin Trudeau came to power, the number of CBC staffers taking home an annual bonus more than doubled – rising from 546 in 2015 to 1,142 in 2022, an increase of 109 per cent.

The cost of bonuses at the CBC has risen in all but one year under Trudeau. Taxpayers have been on the hook for almost \$100 million in bonuses at the CBC since 2015.

**This story ran in the National Post on March 9, 2023.*

CBC bonuses, 2015 to 2022

Year	Bonus
2015	\$8,254,599
2016	\$8,097,155
2017	\$8,903,882
2018	\$13,337,262
2019	\$14,257,933
2020	\$15,013,838
2021	\$15,398,101
2022	\$16,052,148
TOTAL	\$99,314,918

Taxpayer win: After the CTF broke this story, CBC President and CEO Catherine Tait appeared on the public broadcaster's premier evening newscast, The National. The CBC had just announced hundreds of layoffs weeks before Christmas. The host cited the CTF's reporting and asked Tait if bonuses were "off the table" this year. In response, Tait nearly swallowed her tongue, while refusing to rule out bonuses. A parliamentary committee is summoning Tait for a 2024 appearance to explain why bonuses aren't "off the table."

"Given the job cuts announced at CBC for 2024 it would be inappropriate for the CBC to grant bonuses to executive members," the committee wrote in a report to Parliament.

Bank of Canada executives get \$3.5 million in bonuses

The Bank of Canada lavished millions of dollars in bonuses on its executives in 2022 amid seven interest rate hikes and the worst inflation crisis in four decades, according to records obtained by the CTF.

All but two of the central bank's 82 executives (97.5 per cent) received an "at-risk pay" bonus. Twenty-five received a "performance pay" bonus. The average bonus among executives was \$43,700, for a total cost to taxpayers of more than \$3.5 million.

"Executives at the Bank of Canada shouldn't be showering themselves with big bonuses when Canadians can't afford gas, groceries or mortgages," said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. "Most organizations don't give 98 per cent of their executives bonuses when they have their worst year in four decades."

Executive bonuses at the Bank of Canada total nearly \$21 million since 2015. Since then, the size of the executive class at the Bank of Canada spiked by 18 per cent.

Executive bonuses at Bank of Canada, 2015-2022

Year	Number of executives	Bonus
2015	69	\$683,794
2016	70	\$550,064
2017	71	\$2,572,915
2018	73	\$2,923,613
2019	78	\$3,261,123
2020	79	\$3,594,681
2021	79	\$3,785,902
2022	82	\$3,588,324
TOTAL		\$20,960,416

The records obtained by the CTF indicate its executives did not receive “at-risk” bonus pay in 2015 or 2016, which is why the bonus figures for those years are so much lower.

To say that 2022 was a bumpy year for the Bank of Canada would be an understatement.

The Bank of Canada’s mandate is to keep “an inflation target of two per cent inside a control range of one to three per cent.”

But inflation was 6.8 per cent in 2022, representing a “40-year-high, the largest increase since 1982,” according to Statistics Canada. The Bank of Canada also failed to meet its inflation target in 2021.

Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem told Canadians in 2020 that interest rates would remain low for a “long time.” But then the central bank turned around and hiked interest rates seven times in 2022.

Macklem admitted “we got some things wrong” in 2022 (no duh) and the deputy governor even acknowledged “we haven’t managed to keep inflation at our target,” adding that Canada’s central bankers “should be held accountable.”

“Handing out big bonus cheques sure is an odd way to hold your organization accountable,” Terrazzano said. “Canadians have every right to be furious when they find out these executives were taking bonuses as inflation and interest rates soared.”

Speaking at an event organized by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business in July 2022, Macklem told companies not to adjust their wages for inflation.

Translation: keep your wages low while Macklem hikes interest rates on you. Easy for him to say, given the fact he takes home an annual salary around half-a-million dollars.

All told, bonuses at the Bank of Canada total about \$55 million since 2020, according to records obtained by the CTF.

**This story ran in the National Post on Oct. 27, 2023.*

Taxpayer win: Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre told the CTF that if he's elected prime minister he would "cancel bonuses for failing government authorities and that would include, for example, the Bank of Canada."



CTF Federal Director Franco Terrazzano with a novelty bonus cheque outside the Bank of Canada's headquarters in Ottawa.

CMHC bonuses balloon during housing affordability crisis

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation dished out nearly \$27 million in bonuses in 2022, according to records obtained by the CTF.

The average bonus paid out to CMHC employees in 2022 was \$11,700. More than 90 per cent of the workforce took home a bonus.

“If the CMHC’s number one goal is housing affordability for all, then it doesn’t make sense to shower employees with bonuses while Canadians can’t afford to buy a home,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “This is yet another example of this government rewarding failure with taxpayer-funded bonuses.”

The number of CMHC employees taking home an annual salary of more than \$100,000 also spiked by 27 per cent between 2018 and 2022. There are now 931 people at the CMHC taking a six-figure annual salary.

“The CMHC could do more to make homes affordable by hiring 931 carpenters instead of paying hundreds of bureaucrats bloated six-figure salaries,” Terrazzano said. “Canadians need more homes, not more overpaid bureaucrats.”

The CMHC “exists for a single reason: to make housing affordable for everyone in Canada,” according to its website. And if you ask Canadians what they think, the CMHC is a failure.

Polling from Ipsos shows 63 per cent of Canadians who don’t own a home have “given up” on ever owning one. Nearly 70 per cent of respondents said home ownership in Canada is “only for the rich.”

In September 2022, the Royal Bank of Canada reported that “buying a home has never been so unaffordable.” In November 2023, the National Bank of Canada said average mortgage payments as a percentage of income have hit their second-worst levels since 1981.

The average home price increased by 2.4 per cent in 2022, according to the Canadian Real Estate Association. This followed a 21 per cent increase in 2021 and a 13 per cent increase in 2020.

But none of that has slowed the spate of bonuses at the CMHC.

Records obtained by the CTF show the CMHC has consistently rubberstamped bonuses for more than 90 per cent of its workforce in recent years.

In 2020, 1,879 employees got a bonus, costing taxpayers \$22.8 million. In 2021, 2,025 employees got a bonus, costing taxpayers \$25.5 million. And in 2022, 2,292 employees got a bonus, costing taxpayers \$26.8 million.

All told, that's more than \$75 million in bonuses at the CMHC during the pandemic years alone.

**This story ran in CTV News on July 24, 2023.*

Taxpayer win: After the CTF exposed the CMHC for spending taxpayer money studying the possibility of implementing a home-equity tax (which would tax the proceeds of your home when you sell it), the agency confirmed it would halt all funding of such studies.



CTF Federal Director Franco Terrazzano with a novelty bonus cheque outside the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's headquarters in Ottawa.

Trudeau makes it rain: \$1.3 billion in bonuses since 2015

The Trudeau Liberals rubberstamped more than \$1.3 billion in bonuses for bureaucrats between 2015 and 2022, according to records obtained by the CTF.

During those years, government executives took home an average annual bonus ranging from \$15,550 to \$18,252.

“Bonuses are for when you do a good job, they shouldn’t be handed out like participation ribbons,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “Taxpayers can’t afford to bankroll big bonus cheques each and every year.”

The feds dished out \$202 million in bonuses during the 2022-23 fiscal year alone. And that figure may rise even higher, with government documents noting that “some payments” for that year have yet to be recorded.

Of the \$202 million in bonuses paid out for 2022-23, \$152 million was given to 8,328 executive-level employees, while the remaining \$50 million went to lower-level staff.

The annual cost to taxpayers for federal bonuses has spiked by 46 per cent since 2015, including the \$564 million in bonuses dished out since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

About 90 per cent of government executives receive an annual bonus, even though “less than 50 per cent of [performance] targets are consistently met” each year, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

“The real question is what does a government executive have to do to miss a bonus?” Terrazzano said. “It seems like all you have to do is show up to the office every now and again with your shoes tied and you get handed a big fat bonus cheque.”

**This story ran in the National Post on June 8, 2023.*

Federal bonuses, 2015 to 2023

Year	Executives who got a bonus	Average executive bonus	Total cost of bonuses
2015-16	90.5%	\$15,550	\$137,895,430
2016-17	90.6%	\$15,996	\$140,885,660
2017-18	90.5%	\$16,162	\$143,814,949
2018-19	90.8%	\$16,364	\$154,704,963
2019-20	90.0%	\$17,248	\$160,896,237
2020-21	89.1%	\$17,606	\$171,587,303
2021-22	88.7%	\$18,138	\$190,737,367
2022-23	88.9%	\$18,252	\$201,994,316
Total			\$1,302,516,225

Feds hand out more than 800,000 raises during pandemic

The federal government handed out 802,043 pay raises to bureaucrats from 2020 to 2022, according to records dug up by the CTF.

“Canadians don’t feel sorry for privileged bureaucrats who took pay raises during the pandemic while the rest of us worried about missing paycheques or losing jobs,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director.”

A total of 312,825 federal bureaucrats got at least one raise in 2020 and 2021. That represents more than 90 per cent of the federal bureaucracy.

In 2022, the feds dished out another 162,263 raises, although it remains unclear how many individual bureaucrats got a pay bump.

Federal pay raises for bureaucrats, 2020 to 2022

Year	2020	2021	2022
# of employees receiving economic pay increase	258,596	151,247	29,436
# of employees receiving step pay increase	114,538	115,399	132,827
Total # of raises	373,134	266,646	162,263

The average compensation for each full-time federal employee is \$125,300 when pay, pension, paid time off, shift premiums and other benefits are considered, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Meanwhile, data from Statistics Canada suggests the average annual salary among all full-time workers in 2022 was about \$64,000.

In April 2023, the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan think tank, released a report showing that government employees receive “an 8.5 per cent wage premium, on average, over their private-sector counterparts.”

The report also notes “the available data on non-wage benefits suggest that the government sector enjoys an advantage over the private sector,” in the form of pension coverage and paid time off, among other perks.

100K+ federal bureaucrats take home \$100K+ in 2022

More than 100,000 federal bureaucrats took home more than \$100,000 in salary last year, according to documents obtained by the CTF.

All told, 102,761 federal bureaucrats got a six-figure salary in 2022, costing taxpayers \$13.4 billion.

“Taxpayers can’t afford more bureaucrats taking six-figure salaries,” said Franco Terrazzano, Federal Director of the CTF. “It’s high time the feds take the air out of the ballooning bureaucracy.”

There are now 33,754 more federal bureaucrats making six-figures annually than there were before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

And since Prime Minister Justin Trudeau came to power in 2015, the number of federal bureaucrats taking \$100,000 and up has spiked by 136 per cent.

In August 2022, the CTF called on the feds to implement an annual “sunshine list,” which would proactively disclose salaries of employees earning \$100,000 or more.

Every provincial government, except Prince Edward Island and Quebec, provides their taxpayers with sunshine lists.

“The federal government must be transparent with taxpayers about bureaucrat pay and that means publishing a sunshine list,” Terrazzano said. “We pay the bills and we deserve to know how many six-figure bureaucrats we’re paying for.”

**This story ran in the National Post on June 8, 2023.*

PSAC's attempted raid on the public coffers

It was longer than the bill for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's groceries.

And much more costly.

Shift premiums for working past 4 p.m. A \$17,000 education fund for laid-off staff. Extra hours at double time. Mandatory unconscious bias training. And taxpayer-funded contributions to a union-controlled "social justice fund."

Those were just some of the pricey demands coming from negotiators for the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the largest union representing the federal bureaucracy.

In January 2023, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation blew the whistle on PSAC's outrageous demand for a compensation increase of up to 47 per cent over three years, which would cost taxpayers \$9.3 billion.

The CTF then conducted an analysis of PSAC's wish list, which shed light on the many non-wage benefits the union was demanding.

The message being sent by union negotiators was clear: taxpayers, empty your pockets.

“Canadians can’t afford to keep paying more and more and more,” said Franco Terrazzano, Federal Director of the CTF. “The federal government has to draw a line and say no to out-of-touch union demands.”

Among the demands was a special shift premium whenever members work past 4 p.m.

PSAC negotiators also wanted an education fund for laid-off members to be used for post-secondary tuition costs.

They were also seeking special pay raises for case managers at Veterans Affairs, mandated “diversity, equity and inclusion” training, as well as unconscious bias training, for all employees and managers.

PSAC also wanted five extra paid days off for “self-identified Indigenous” employees to engage in traditional cultural practices like “hunting, fishing (and) harvesting.”

Then there was the demand for taxpayer-funded contributions to PSAC’s Social Justice Fund, which engaged in “advocacy for progressive public policy,” according to the union’s website.

“The Employer shall contribute one cent (1¢) per hour worked to the PSAC Social Justice Fund and such a contribution will be made for all hours worked by each employee in the bargaining unit,” read the union’s demand list.

If all 97,000 employees in the bargaining group were to work 40-hours per week, for 50 weeks of the year, that would mean taxpayers would be on the hook for nearly \$2 million in annual contributions to the union-controlled fund.

Other non-wage benefits PSAC demanded:

- Increased paid leave for family related responsibilities from 37.5 hours to 75 hours annually;
- Accrual of four weeks of automatic vacation leave after four years of service, rather than after seven years of service;
- Increased and extended eligibility for a variety of allowances and premiums, including shift premium and meal allowances;
- All overtime paid at double-time, where now it is most often paid at time-and-a-half.

“Most Canadians would be laughed out of the room if we asked our boss for these types of benefits,” Terrazzano said. “These demands prove that government union negotiators are trying to milk taxpayers.”

PSAC negotiators said the federal government must offer compensation that is “comparable to employees in similar occupations” in the private sector.

But government employees already enjoy a 9.4 per cent wage premium over their private-sector counterparts, according to a 2020 report from the Fraser Institute.

The study found that government employees also enjoy a significant advantage when it comes to non-wage benefits, including time off for personal reasons, retirement ages, pension plan coverage and job security.

Compensation for each full-time federal government employee is \$125,300 on average, according to a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. By comparison, in September 2022, the average Canadian salary was roughly \$59,000.

In May 2023, the government struck a new collective agreement with PSAC, following a strike action.

Taxpayer win: PSAC's initial set of demands would have cost taxpayers \$3.1 billion annually. The new agreement the feds struck with PSAC instead cost taxpayers about \$1.3 billion. That's savings of \$1.8 billion every year. The CTF was the only group to consistently push back against PSAC's outrageous demands.

CHAPTER 4

The best (worst) of the rest

Carbon tax costs taxpayers \$200 million to administer

The cost of administering the federal carbon tax and rebate scheme has risen to nearly \$200 million since its inception in 2019, according to records obtained by the CTF.

The hit to taxpayers last year alone was \$82.6 million, with the government assigning 465 full-time employees to administer the carbon tax and rebate scheme.

“The carbon tax is a double whammy for taxpayers,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “First, it makes our gas, heating and groceries more expensive. And then we’re forced to pay higher taxes to fund Trudeau’s battalion of carbon tax bureaucrats.”

Carbon tax administration costs totaled \$82.6 million in 2022, and \$116.5 million between 2019 and 2021.

In 2022, there were 223 bureaucrats “assigned to work on the collection of the fuel charge,” while 242 administered the rebate scheme.

Annual costs spiked last year as the government changed the rebate scheme “from a refundable credit claimed annually on personal income tax returns, to [a] quarterly tax-free payment made through the benefit system,” according to the records.

“It should be obvious to everyone that the feds can’t raise taxes, skim hundreds-of-millions off the top and hire hundreds of new bureaucrats, then somehow make everyone better off with rebates,” Terrazzano said.

Cost to administer the carbon tax and rebate scheme 2019 – 2022

Year	Total annual cost	Number of employees
2019	\$33,219,471	256
2020	\$40,541,290	316
2021	\$42,766,636	333
2022	\$82,628,993	465

The carbon tax will cost the average family up to \$710 this year even after the rebates, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the federal government’s independent budget watchdog.

The carbon tax currently costs 14 cents per litre of gasoline and 12 cents per cubic metre of natural gas. By 2030, the carbon tax will cost 37 cents per litre of gasoline and 32 cents per cubic metre of natural gas.

“Canadians pay higher taxes so federal paper-pushers can increase our fuel prices and make our lives more expensive,” Terrazzano said.

Turn off the hiring machine: Trudeau adds 98K bureaucrats to government dole

The Trudeau Liberals have a habit they can't seem to break: hiring bureaucrats.

Since Prime Minister Justin Trudeau came to power in 2015, the feds have added more than 98,000 new bureaucrats to the government payroll.

That trend shows no signs of slowing down, with 21,290 extra staff added in 2022.

“Was there a bureaucrat shortage in Ottawa before Trudeau took over?” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “Canadians need a more efficient government, not a bloated government full of highly paid bureaucrats.”

The feds now employ 357,247 bureaucrats, according to the latest data from Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

To put that in perspective: there are now more than 98,000 extra government employees on the taxpayer dole than there were when Trudeau came to power.

Growth of federal bureaucracy, 2016 to 2023

Year (As of March 31 each year)	Number of federal bureaucrats
2016	258,979
2017	262,696
2018	273,571
2019	287,983
2020	300,450
2021	319,601
2022	335,957
2023	357,247

And it isn't just the size of the bureaucracy that's ballooning – the cost is too.

The cost of the federal bureaucracy grew by 31 per cent over the past two years, according to a 2023 report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Given the hiring spree, Canadians might wonder: how are things running in Ottawa?

Well, the reviews are in and the results aren't good.

Less than 50 per cent of the government's own performance targets are consistently met by federal departments within each year, according to the PBO.

The federal government currently employs so much staff, it can't even keep track of where they're working.

In May 2023, the TBS confirmed, "it is not possible to determine the number of [bureaucrats] working from home versus those working in the office."

CBC amasses half-a-billion in real estate

The CBC has amassed nearly half-a-billion dollars in real estate holdings, according to records dug up by the CTF.

The CBC's real estate portfolio, comprised of 12 properties scattered across Canada, is assessed at more than \$444 million. The CBC leases another 72 properties, including five in foreign countries, that it refuses to disclose costs for.

CBC's most expensive property is its downtown Toronto headquarters, which is assessed at nearly \$314 million.

For context, when TorStar – the parent company that publishes the *Toronto Star* – was sold in 2020, the price tag for the entire newspaper chain was \$52 million.

And when the *Calgary Herald* sold its building earlier this year, it went for \$17.25 million.

In 2012, the *Globe and Mail* sold its head offices in downtown Toronto for \$136 million.

The *National Post* sold its headquarters in Toronto for \$24 million in 2012.

CBC-owned property, assessed municipal value

Location	Value
Toronto, Ont.	\$313,866,000
Vancouver, B.C.	\$99,061,000
Winnipeg, Man.	\$11,718,000
St. Johns, N.L.	\$4,439,000
Yellowknife, NWT	\$3,181,720
Fredericton, N.B.	\$2,791,000
Charlottetown, P.E.I.	\$2,631,800
Saguenay, Que.	\$2,485,939
Whitehorse, Yuk.	\$1,847,410
Winnipeg, Man.	\$1,541,000
Thunder Bay, Ont.	\$537,000
Rankin Inlet, Nun.	\$314,600
Total	\$444,414,469

The CBC is refusing to disclose what it spends on the 72 other properties it currently leases in Canada and abroad, citing it as “commercially sensitive information.”

Outside of Canada, the CBC leases property in London, U.K., Mumbai, India, Paris, France, and New York City and Washington, U.S.A.

In Paris, France, the CBC leases offices in “a corner building on one of the prestigious avenues leading off the Arc de Triomphe,” located in the city’s 17th Arrondissement, on the right bank of the River Seine.

In London, U.K., Canada’s public broadcaster leases office space bordering the city’s Soho district, famous for its restaurants and nightlife, located a short drive from Buckingham Palace and Hyde Park.

And in New York City, the CBC leases office space in downtown Manhattan, a short walk from Rockefeller Centre and Central Park.

It also leases multiple properties in six Canadian cities, including two in Prince Rupert, B.C. (pop. 12,300) and two in Matane, Que. (pop. 14,000).

In Montreal, the CBC leases three properties, including its French-language headquarters on Papineau Avenue. While it is now refusing to say what it costs to lease its Montreal HQ, back in 2019, the CBC disclosed it was paying \$20 million per year.

“Why does the CBC need to lease these properties in far-flung countries, let alone multiple properties in smaller Canadian towns, and how much is all of this costing taxpayers?” Terrazzano said. “The CBC costs taxpayers more than \$1 billion every year, so at the very least it owes Canadians full transparency.”

In 2021, the CBC took \$1.2 billion from taxpayers, including \$21 million in “immediate operational support” to ensure its stability during the pandemic.

In late-2022, the feds gave the CBC another \$42 million to help it “recover from the pandemic,” as reported by the National Post.

**This story ran in the National Post on Sept. 25, 2023.*

\$2,500 lump sum payment covers strike cost

The federal government doled out a \$2,500 lump-sum payment which offset the lost wages for Public Service Alliance of Canada members during an eight-day strike.

The lump-sum payments cost taxpayers \$300 million for PSAC's 120,000 members.

In March 2023, PSAC members launched a national strike following a breakdown in collective-bargaining negotiations.

The strike lasted eight working days before the federal government announced it had reached a tentative agreement with the union.

PSAC got wage increases of “12.6 per cent compounded over the life of the agreement from 2021-2024... as well as a pensionable \$2,500 one-time lump sum payment.”

“Taxpayers should never be on the hook for striking workers,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “But that’s exactly what this lump sum payments looks like.”

The CTF also blew the whistle on a range of outrageous demands PSAC was pushing for during its negotiations with the feds, including shift premiums for working past 4 p.m., a \$17,000 education fund for laid-off staff and taxpayer-funded contributions to a union-controlled “social justice fund.”

\$200 million gone and no record of jobs created

The buzz words were flyin', the politicians were smilin' and all the while taxpayers were sold a false bill of goods.

The “investment” was going to put Canada on the auto industry map. It was going to grow the economy, innovate the industry, create countless “new jobs” and lead to spin-off “employment opportunities.”

At least, that’s what the government of Paul Martin was selling the public back in 2005, when federal officials gathered in Oshawa, Ont., to announce \$200 million in taxpayer cash for General Motors.

But fast forward nearly two decades and the feds can’t show a single job was created and only two per cent of the loan has been repaid, according to records obtained by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation through access-to-information requests.

“How can the government claim its corporate welfare is a success when it doesn’t even know if it created jobs?” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “The receipts show only two per cent of the money was repaid – what about the other 98 per cent?”

As of Jan. 9, 2023 – 18 years later – the feds are unable to show whether “investing” hundreds of millions of public funds into private hands created a single job.

The reason why is simple: the government didn't require GM to report back on whether any jobs ever materialized.

“The estimated jobs fields are not mandatory data fields in the corporate database,” a federal bureaucrat wrote in response to an access-to-information request. “Recipients were not required to report on the number of jobs.”

To make matters worse: the cheque cut to GM was a “repayable contribution,” which is a bureaucratic euphemism for a loan. But almost two decades later and federal records show just two per cent, or \$4.6 million, has ever been repaid.

Access-to-information records, GM “Beacon Project” corporate welfare deal

Company	Program	Offer accepted	Assistance Type	Amount	Repayment	Estimated jobs
General Motors	Program for Strategic Industrial Projects	2005-12-05	Repayable contribution	\$200M	\$4.6M	0

This year, the government gave a combined \$28 billion in corporate welfare to auto giants Volkswagen and Stellantis to build EV battery plants in Ontario.

A Parliamentary Budget Officer report published Sept. 12, 2023, shows it'll take four times longer than claimed to receive enough revenue to offset the cost of the subsidies.

“The break-even timeline for the \$28.2 billion in production subsidies announced for Stellantis-LGES and Volkswagen is estimated to be 20 years, significantly longer than the government’s estimate of a payback within five years for Volkswagen,” the PBO said.

“This debacle provides another painful lesson for taxpayers: don’t believe the hype when politicians cut corporate welfare cheques,” Terrazzano said. “Instead of giving taxpayer money to hand-picked corporations, the feds should cut taxes and red tape for all businesses.”

The “underfunding” myth that refuses to die

Those who believe Canada’s official residences are crumbling due to a lack of funding may have missed something: the numbers.

The National Capital Commission spent \$135 million renovating and maintaining the official residences from 2006 to 2022, according to a CTF analysis.

“It’s a myth that official residences are falling apart because politicians are too thrifty,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “From luxury limos to extravagant hotel suites, the feds haven’t met a single thing it isn’t willing to spend big on and the official residences are no different.

“Here’s the real problem: the agency in charge is too incompetent to take care of these properties despite blowing millions on them each and every year.”

Yet, somehow, the myth persists that there’s a lack of funding for Canada’s official residences.

The *Toronto Star* reports prime ministers are shamed if “even a red cent” is spent on upkeep and a guest column in the *Globe and Mail* claims Canada is “too complacent (and cheap) to have nice things.” Countless other reports express similar sentiments.

The NCC manages the mansions for the prime minister (an official residence and a cottage estate), the governor general, the leader of the opposition, the speaker of the house and visiting foreign officials.

The government spent \$11 million on “major capital projects” at the official residences in 2020-21, according to its latest annual report. It spent \$5.6 million in 2021-22.

And that’s not the exception, it’s the rule going back a decade-and-a-half.

According to NCC records, the government spent \$36.9 million on maintenance and \$81.5 million on renovations from 2006 to 2022. That’s \$135 million or about \$8.5 million per year.

To put that in perspective, every year the government could buy a “palatial mansion” on the banks of the Rideau Canal, described as “Ottawa’s most opulent home,” and still have about a million bucks left over.

Despite this, the NCC rarely misses an opportunity to complain of “decades of underfunding” or the “lack of timely investment” into Canada’s official residences.

“The NCC is so incompetent it could have bought a mansion every single year and still have money left over,” Terrazzano said. “There’s no way the NCC should be begging struggling taxpayers to fork over more money so it can pretend to host some kind of extravagant real-estate show on Netflix.”

The NCC's appetite for spending is growing fast.

In its April 2018 report on the state of the official residences, the agency said it needed an additional \$83 million – over and above what was already spent – for “deferred maintenance” costs.

In its June 2021 report – which updated the prior report's findings – the NCC said the cost of “deferred maintenance” had grown to \$89 million.

That's an average of nearly \$15 million per official residence.

But between 2017 and 2021 – roughly the time between the two reports – the NCC dumped another \$26 million into renovations.

Nevertheless, the NCC claimed deferred maintenance costs grew by \$6 million.

But it isn't just big-ticket items that ballooned costs in recent years, smaller purchases have, too.

The CTF obtained access-to-information records for “upkeep” and utility costs at the official residences from 2018 to 2023. The records indicate annual upkeep costs of about \$2 million across the properties.

At Rideau Hall, home to Canada's governor general, \$9,900 was spent renting a tent with a chandelier, \$4,800 went towards a set of mahogany doors and more than \$30,000 was dropped on multiple renovations of the “Rose Garden fountain.”

The NCC also spent \$140,000 studying and designing a private staircase at Rideau Hall that never got built. It spent another \$117,000 for the installation of a series of doors and a gate near the governor general's office to enhance privacy.

At Harrington Lake, the prime minister's country estate, the NCC spent \$2.5 million on a back-up cottage, while it spent another \$730,000 renovating the kitchen in the main residence. Smaller purchases included new appliances (\$30,000), wine and beverage coolers (\$3,500), a boat rack (\$8,500) and a golf cart (\$5,000).

In its latest report on the state of Canada's official residences, the NCC characterized all of this as "severe underfunding."

As a result, the NCC wants another \$175 million for major renovations and another \$26.1 million every year for ongoing maintenance. About \$36 million would be earmarked for the prime minister's official residence, 24 Sussex Dr.

The Historic Ottawa Development Inc. is a non-profit group of architects, conservationists and project managers. Its president is Marc Denhez, who used to serve on the NCC's official residences advisory committee.

Denhez recently told the CBC that when it comes to 24 Sussex, he believes "reports of the home's state of decay have been exaggerated and the [NCC's] suggested price tag to fix it is out of step with industry norms."

“It can be done for a lot less money if you know how to kick the tires,” Denhez said.

The data shows the oft-repeated story of Canada being too cheap to properly fund its official residences is a myth. But here’s the thing: you don’t even have to crunch the numbers to realize that. All you have to do is ask yourself a simple question.

When’s the last time you heard of a politician in Ottawa refusing to spend taxpayers’ money?

Spending on Canada’s official residences, 2006-07 to 2019-20

Property	Maintenance	Renovations	Total
Governor General's residence (Rideau Hall)	\$27M	\$65.3M	\$92.3M
Prime Minister's residence (24 Sussex)	\$3.3M	\$6M	\$9.3M
Prime Minister's cottage (Harrington Lake)	\$2.6M	\$6.9M	\$9.6M
Opposition Leader's residence (Stornoway)	\$1.1M	\$671K	\$1.8M
The Speaker's residence (The Farm)	\$1.8M	\$1M	\$2.8M
Official Guest House (7 Rideau Gate)	\$939K	\$1.4M	\$2.4M
Combined	\$36.9M	\$81.5M	\$118.4M

**The latest annual report shows the NCC spent an addition \$16.7 million on “major capital projects” in 2020 and 2021, bringing total investment since 2006 up to \$135 million.*



The traditional home of Canada's prime minister, 24 Sussex Dr., has sat empty since Justin Trudeau was first elected in 2015.

Epilogue

There you have it, folks. The best of the worst of government waste for 2023.

Whether it's \$6,000-per-night luxury hotel rooms, \$71,000 Icelimos, Ivy League educations, or fancy art purchases, it's clear Canadian politicians and bureaucrats are no penny-pinchers when you're the one picking up the tab.

We know it's not easy to hear about all this waste. We know reading about it can be demoralizing, not to mention rage inducing. We know sometimes it feels like there are no consequences for bad behaviour and nothing ever changes. We know it's even harder to read about it when so many Canadians are struggling just to make ends meet.

We know this because you tell us. We know this because sometimes we feel this way too. But we also hope you know that when taxpayers band together, change is possible. Taxes can be cut, spending reined in and government waste and wrongdoing exposed. No one said it would be easy, but nothing worth doing ever is.

Here at the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, we are continuing the fight in 2024. We'll fight with you, through every means at our disposal, to hold high-taxing, big-spending politicians and bureaucrats accountable. We'll fight with you to expose government waste and wrongdoing. And we'll fight with you to spread the word far and wide so that every Canadian can be as informed as this Taxpayer Army.

Here are some key issues you can expect us to hammer away at in 2024:

- Taxpayer-funded bonuses to failing government bureaucrats, like those who oversaw ArriveCAN
- Trudeau and his ministers billing you crazy amounts of money to criss-cross the country to go on “affordability” retreats
- Costly international United Nations conferences like the World Economic Forum
- Corporate welfare for multi-national corporations
- The two biggest waste offenders in Ottawa: Rideau Hall and the National Capital Commission
- Media bailouts and the CBC

Whether it’s filing access-to-information requests, landing stories on the front page of national newspapers, appearing on TV panels, testifying at parliamentary committees, launching campaigns against tax hikes, pressuring politicians, or spreading the word on social media, we want you to know the CTF will always have your back. And we want to thank you for having ours. None of what we do would be possible without your support.

Together, we can fight for change. Together, change is possible.