

OPINION
& EDITORIALS



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Lisa Robinson

PICKERING CITY COUNCILLOR

Canada Has Bigger Problems Than What Donald Trump Calls Lake Ontario

Canada is having a meltdown over a lake. President Donald Trump put "Lake America" on a map, and judging by the reaction in this country, you would think he had driven a truck across the border and hauled the water away. Politicians were outraged. Commentators were outraged. Social media was outraged. But here is the part nobody seems willing to say: The water did not move. It is still Lake Ontario. Canadians still call it Lake Ontario. We can teach our children it is Lake Ontario. We can print it on our maps tomorrow. Problem solved. What should concern Canadians is not what an American president calls our lake. What should concern us is how quickly this country can manufacture outrage over two words on a map while remaining remarkably quiet about problems that actually threaten our sovereignty, our safety and our future. And there is another hypocrisy here that is impossible to ignore. For years, Canadians have been told that names can change. We renamed universities. We renamed streets. We renamed public squares. We took down statues. We were told language evolves, identity evolves and that anyone who questioned it simply needed to catch up. And we are now living in a country where we are told that a man can become a woman, that biological reality can be rewritten through language, and that anyone who objects is the problem. But suddenly Donald Trump changes two words on a map and Ottawa acts as though Canadian sovereignty has collapsed. Why? Because it was never really about the name. It was about who said it. That is not leadership. That is political theatre. While Canadians were being encouraged to rage about a lake, what were we not talking about? Foreign interference in our elections. Our own public inquiry confirmed that the People's Republic of China carried out interference operations aimed at Canadian democratic institutions. That deserves outrage. A government that cannot accurately tell Canadians how many people remain in this country after visas and permits expire should concern every citizen. That deserves outrage. Human trafficking should outrage us. Women and children are moved across this country for sexual exploitation and forced labour while governments issue reports, create committees and then return to business as usual. Fentanyl should outrage us. Parents are burying sons and daughters while politicians offer carefully polished statements and move on to the next headline. Families unable to afford their mortgage, rent, gas or groceries should outrage us. Canadians living in tents in the middle of one of the wealthiest countries on Earth should outrage us. Violent repeat offenders being returned to our streets should outrage us. Yet somehow we can summon more national fury over a foreign president's map than over the failures happening inside our own borders. That tells us something. We have confused politics with priorities. Politics is what people scream about on Tuesday because it is trending. Priorities are what still matter when the cameras go home. Foreign interference is a priority. Border security is a priority. Human trafficking is a priority. Fentanyl deaths are a priority. Housing is a priority. Affordability is a priority. Crime is a priority. A word on somebody else's map is not. The same confusion exists in our approach to crime. Our governments too often go after the easiest people to regulate rather than the hardest criminals to catch. Law-abiding hunters, farmers and sport shooters are treated like the problem while criminal gun smugglers and gang members continue operating. Criminals do not register their firearms. They never have. So when government makes it harder for a lawful Canadian to own a firearm while failing to stop illegal guns crossing the border, Canadians are entitled to ask who the policy is actually disarming. And then there is Medical Assistance in Dying. I know the preferred language. I know we are supposed to call it "medical assistance in dying." I call it what it is when government helps a person end their own life: assisted suicide. When we are expanding who qualifies, when people who are poor, disabled, mentally ill or simply exhausted are being presented with death as an option, we should stop hiding behind euphemisms and start asking what kind of country we are becoming. When a society finds it easier to help someone die than to help them live, that is not compassion. That is a moral question, and Canadians deserve an honest debate about it. And while all of this happens, Ottawa has plenty of time for outrage aimed south of the border. That is convenient. Getting angry at Donald Trump costs Ottawa nothing. It lets politicians point somewhere else. It lets them say, "Look over there." Look at Washington. Look at Trump. Look at the map. Anything except the failures happening here. But our government is the one Canadians elect. Our government is the one responsible for our border. Our government is the one responsible for enforcing our laws. Our government is the one responsible for protecting the integrity of our democratic institutions. Our government is the one that must answer for whether Canadians can afford to live in their own country. And our government is the one that should answer for the decisions it makes. Not Washington. Not Beijing. Ottawa. Real leadership does not need a foreign president to give it something to be angry about. Real leadership identifies its own problems and fixes them whether the cameras are there or not. Real leadership looks at foreign interference and acts. Real leadership looks at a broken immigration system and says we are going to know who is here, why they are here and whether they have the legal right to remain. Real leadership looks at human trafficking and refuses to treat it as a side issue. Real leadership looks at fentanyl deaths and goes after the supply, the traffickers and the money. Real leadership looks at homelessness and asks why citizens of a G7 country are sleeping in tents and doorways. And real leadership looks at the most vulnerable Canadians — the sick, the elderly, the disabled, the poor and those struggling mentally — and asks whether we have built a system that helps them live, or one that has quietly made it easier to help them die. Those are the debates worthy of a serious country. So yes, call it Lake Ontario. I will. I always will. But Canada's identity does not disappear because Donald Trump prints something different on a map. The greater danger is what happens when a country becomes so distracted by symbolic outrage that it stops demanding accountability from the people actually governing it. Have a meltdown over foreign interference. Have a meltdown over human trafficking. Have a meltdown over fentanyl taking our children. Have a meltdown over families who cannot pay their mortgage, rent or grocery bill. Have a meltdown over homelessness. Have a meltdown over violent crime. Have a meltdown over a government offering death where Canadians should be demanding life, treatment, support and hope. Those are arguments worth having. But stop letting the President of the United States decide what dominates the Canadian conversation. Every hour we spend raging about a map is an hour Ottawa does not have to answer for the border, the cost of living, crime, drugs, trafficking, foreign interference and the erosion of our own national confidence. The problem is not what Donald Trump calls our lake. The problem is what our own government has stopped answering for. And Canadians should be far more angry about that.

Letters To The Editor:

WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND? Send letters to newspaper@ocentral.com

Dear Editor:

As a parent raising a family in Pickering, I am becoming increasingly concerned about the amount of crime we are hearing about in our community. Pickering has always been a place where families could feel comfortable raising their children, walking through their neighbourhoods and enjoying local parks, shopping areas and community facilities. Lately, however, it seems that stories involving robberies, assaults, vehicle thefts, break-ins and other serious incidents are becoming far too common. Parents should not have to wonder whether their children are safe walking home from school, taking public transit, visiting a shopping centre or spending time with friends. Residents also deserve to feel secure in their own homes and neighbourhoods. I understand that no community can completely eliminate crime, and I appreciate the difficult work performed every day by Durham Regional Police officers and other first responders. But residents need to know that our municipal and regional leaders are treating public safety as a serious priority. We need stronger crime-prevention initiatives, visible policing in areas experiencing problems, better support for youth programs and stronger cooperation between police, schools, businesses and community organizations. We also need our elected officials to speak openly about the problem. Residents deserve clear information about what is happening in our community, what is being done about it and what additional resources may be required. Public safety should never become just another political talking point. As parents, we work hard to provide our children with a safe place to grow up. We expect the same commitment from the people responsible for governing and protecting our community. Pickering is still a wonderful city, and that is exactly why residents should speak up before problems become worse. Our children deserve to grow up in a community where they feel safe. Our seniors deserve to feel safe. Our families deserve to feel safe. It is time for everyone responsible for public safety to make sure that happens.

A Concerned Parent
Pickering, Ontario

Dear Editor:

It is becoming harder and harder for ordinary people to make ends meet in this economy. The cost of groceries keeps rising. Rent, mortgage payments, property taxes, utilities, insurance and transportation all seem to take a bigger piece of the family budget every month. For many people, wages simply have not kept pace with the cost of living. Families are being forced to make difficult choices. Seniors on fixed incomes are watching every dollar. Young people are wondering whether they will ever be able to afford a home. Small businesses are facing higher costs while trying not to pass everything on to their customers. People are working hard, sometimes taking on extra hours or second jobs, yet many still feel like they are falling behind. With elections approaching, I hope voters take the time to look beyond slogans and promises and ask candidates what they are actually going to do to make life more affordable. Whoever we elect should understand that affordability is not an abstract political issue. It affects whether families can pay their bills, put food on the table, keep a roof over their heads and save anything for the future. We need elected officials who will take taxation, housing costs, government spending, economic growth and the pressures facing working families seriously. People are tired of being told that everything is fine when their bank accounts tell them otherwise. My hope is that whoever is elected will listen to the people who are struggling and make affordability a real priority. At the end of the day, families should be able to work hard, pay their bills and still have something left over to enjoy life. That should not be too much to ask.

Steward LeBlanc, Whitby.

Dear Editor:

The 2026 Ajax mayoral election is shaping up to be one of the more interesting municipal races we have seen in years. With five candidates seeking the mayor's chair and no incumbent mayor on the ballot, Ajax voters have a real decision to make. Marilyn Crawford, Carion Fenn, Richard Hinds, Ashmeed Khan and Vian Persad are all asking residents to give them the opportunity to lead the town for the next four years. So who wins? If I had to make a prediction today, I would say Marilyn Crawford enters the final stretch as the candidate to beat. Crawford has something that is extremely valuable in a municipal election: name recognition and years of elected experience. She has served at the school board, municipal and regional levels and already has an established political organization and record for voters to examine. But I don't believe this election is over by any means. Ashmeed Khan also has previous council experience and is campaigning heavily on affordability, property taxes, traffic, jobs and town services. Richard Hinds is emphasizing affordability, safer neighbourhoods and economic growth. Carion Fenn and Vian Persad add even more choices for voters looking for a different direction. That makes this election difficult to predict. With five candidates dividing the vote, nobody needs 50 per cent to become mayor. A candidate simply needs more votes than everyone else. That means organization, voter turnout and getting supporters to actually cast their ballots could matter just as much as campaign promises. There is also another factor that candidates should not underestimate: people are frustrated. Residents are dealing with increasing property taxes, high grocery bills, expensive housing, traffic congestion, crime concerns and the feeling that government at every level keeps costing more. I believe the candidate who successfully connects those everyday frustrations with realistic municipal solutions will have the best chance of winning. My prediction is that Crawford's experience gives her the early advantage, but I expect the race to become much closer as election day approaches. If another candidate can convince voters that Ajax needs a significant change in direction, an upset is certainly possible. The biggest mistake anyone can make is assuming that experience automatically guarantees victory. Elections are decided by the people who vote. Between now and October 26, residents should listen carefully to every candidate. Ask them how they will control spending. Ask what they will do about property taxes. Ask about crime, development, traffic, housing and town services. And most importantly, ask whether their promises can actually be delivered. Ajax is choosing more than another politician. It is choosing the person who will lead the community for the next four years. My prediction may be that Crawford currently has the inside track.

But the voters of Ajax will have the final word. **Bill Jones, Ajax.**



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