



CARP

ADVOCACY

2012 ANNUAL REPORT



Front Cover Photos:

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty	CARP Chapter Event	CARP Banner	Thomas Mulcair, Leader of the Official Opposition
Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance	CARP ANNUAL REPORT TITLE		Media
CARP Federal Election Debate 2011	CBC Power & Politics with Evan Solomon		Dwight Duncan, Ontario Minister of Finance
CARP Flag raising			Wesley Sheridan, PEI Minister of Finance
Janice Sherry, PEI Minister of Justice & staff with Susan Eng & Ross Mayot	Parliament Hill		MPP Laurel Broten, Moses Znaimer, Susan Eng



OUR TEAM

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EXECUTIVE REPORT

The Status Quo Won't Change Itself



Elections are important to advocates like CARP because politicians want to be seen to be addressing the issues that resonate with older voters. Keeping governments to their promises is the real challenge after the media cameras are gone.

So if 2011 was the year of the election – five provincial ones besides the federal election - 2012 might have been a quiet year simply ensuring that election promises made it through to legislation.

That changed in January. The Prime Minister's pledge in Davos, Switzerland to "ensure the sustainability of the [Old Age Security] program for the next generation" set off a fire storm of blow back and launched CARP's "*Hands Off OAS*" campaign.

To keep the record straight, CARP did not spark the opposition to the OAS change; media and CARP members were calling us before we saw the headlines. CARP got saturation media coverage the very day of the Prime Minister's announcement; there was no need to issue a news release.

This speaks not only to the speed at which issues now develop but also to the fact that CARP has become the go-to source for rapid response on issues that affect older Canadians.

CARP Advocacy prides itself on our thorough research but it wasn't needed at first. The reaction to the attack on a fundamental part of the social safety net was visceral: our members know why being able to rely on a minimum threshold of income support in retirement is important even if they themselves would not be affected. The research came in handy later when government ministers started rolling out their justifications for raising the age of eligibility from 65 to 67.

Media interest was sustained because CARP Polls™ mapped the precipitous decline in member support for the government from a group that just before the last election was calling for a majority mandate.

Member outrage was directed as much at the process as the change itself. It was never put before the voters, it was then bundled into an Omnibus Bill that left little opportunity to debate and rushed through Parliament on the strength of the government's Parliamentary majority alone.

CARP members make it clear in our polls that to them, a Parliamentary majority is not a blank cheque and they expect opposition parties to guarantee it doesn't become one. Anything that they perceive as attacking the checks and balances in our legislative processes will shake loose their political loyalties. The heavy response



from CARP members using e-Voice to email their MPs to de-bundle the Omnibus Bill should remind our elected representatives that our votes cannot be taken for granted.

Another new front opened in 2012 – national health care reform. The federal government's refusal to negotiate a new Health Accord left the provincial premiers pushing a rope. Their response six months later was to finally adopt some best clinical practices and purchase a few generic drugs in bulk. Really!

The real importance of the Health Accords was not to keep the provinces happy but to keep Canadians healthy - by fundamentally redirecting the country's health care resources to that end - regardless of what had been done in the past, or whose ox would have to be gored. It requires leadership, innovation and cooperation and consensus, if necessary, but not necessarily consensus.

Imagine first dollar basic drug coverage for all Canadians funded by massive savings in drug costs through a single national purchasing agency with an independent drug review process that can demand fair drug pricing across the country. People living in small provinces should not have to move to access coverage available to other Canadians.

Imagine an integrated continuing care system that ensures that we can all get the care and services we need to live independently as long as possible without leaving our homes or communities. That means stable funding and mandatory standards of home care, income support for caregivers, especially those providing heavy care, geriatric care, assisted living services at home and in affordable housing, equitable access to decent nursing homes and quality end of life care.

Why not national long term care insurance?

Canada's health care system is still a patchwork eight years and billions of tax dollars after the Health Accords. Provinces have stooped to poaching doctors and nurses from each other.

This generation of seniors is more demanding but also willing to accept innovative solutions. Addressing the issues that resonate with them will improve the system for everyone else.

If the market and political clout of CARP members and older Canadians is to have any meaning, it must be used to help politicians face down the sacred cows blocking innovation now. The Status Quo is not going to change itself. 🦋

Susan Eng
VP Advocacy

IN THE CORRIDORS OF POWER

“A Political
Game-Changer”



The political landscape shifted completely in 2011/12 presenting CARP with new challenges and opportunities. Five provinces - Ontario, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the North West Territories - all went to the polls on the heels of a federal election that brought in the first majority government since 2004.

The Stephen Harper led Conservative Party had formed the government since 2006, but a majority mandate offered the opportunity to accelerate the pace and boldness of government action. The Liberals suffered a historic defeat at the polls with the Liberal leader losing both his seat and his position as Leader of the Official Opposition. In becoming the Official Opposition for the first time in party history, the NDP carved out a new space in Canadian politics and public attention - magnified with Jack Layton's passing and Thomas Mulcair taking his place as the new leader of the Official Opposition.

During the elections, seniors' issues were front and centre. Politicians and parties have come to realize that older Canadians vote all the time and scrutinize election promises. It was no surprise, then, that all the major party platforms highlighted the issues that matter most to older Canadians. Caregiving, pensions, elder abuse, and income support formed the spine of policy promises, with each party trying to out bid the others for the seniors' vote.

On the heels of these changes in government and opposition, the 2012 advocacy season kicked off with new advances and challenges for CARP advocacy. First, we had to ensure that election promises became reality. Soon enough that would be overtaken by the pitched battle to preserve OAS, a cornerstone of retirement security.

A majority government can act quickly on our issues. 2012 started with real action on the federal government's key election promises targeting seniors in response to CARP's call for action on a number of longstanding issues, including elder abuse and mandatory retirement.

Elder abuse is a scourge and a notoriously difficult crime to prevent or solve. Elder abuse can be psychological, physical, emotional, sexual or financial – often at the hands of loved ones, which makes it difficult to detect, report, investigate or prosecute.

In March 2011, prompted by media reports of a grandmother forced to live in the family's garage through a Toronto winter, CARP called on then Minister for Seniors, Julian Fantino to do more to end the scourge of elder abuse and specifically asked for the increased sentencing for elder abuse convictions that was featured in the government's election platform.

CARP lost no time in reminding the new majority government that there was no need to wait to amend the Criminal Code to allow judges to exacerbate sentencing for anyone convicted of elder abuse.

Bill-36 is on its way to becoming law. CARP appeared before the Justice Committee to reiterate our support for the bill and to call on the parliamentarians to make combating elder abuse a priority.

At the same time, our focus turned to the provincial governments who must allocate the necessary resources to better direct, investigate, and prosecute offenders as well as provide support for their victims.

Ending mandatory retirement completely is still a CARP Advocacy target. CARP was involved in the campaign over the years that had all but eliminated mandatory retirement at the provincial level by 2007. Our most recent target was the legislated age discrimination contained in Section 15(1)(c) of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, which permits mandatory retirement for federally regulated employees. It became an election promise and CARP's persistent representation at Parliamentary committees and in the media forestalled opposition to the promised change and Section 15(1)(c) was ultimately repealed in June.

This change, which comes into effect in December 2012, will affect about 800,000 employees in federally regulated industries such as finance (banking), transportation (air, rail, inter-provincial trucking) and communications (broadcasting).

But the job is not finished. The change is not retroactive. Until December 2012, such employees can still be forced to retire. And the airline pilots, whose Charter challenge helped to spur on the legislative amendment, have just suffered a setback in their uphill battle to be reinstated. At least one province still allows mandatory retirement in some circumstances. And in a deliberate step backwards, Ontario quietly reinstated mandatory retirement for firefighters at age 60, regardless of fitness or personal ability to perform on the job.

A majority government is not a blank cheque but it depends on effective representation from opposition parties and civil society to ensure that government policy addresses the interests of all Canadians.

The federal government's refusal to re-negotiate the Health Accords gave the provincial premiers the first taste of the options available to a government unconstrained by the threat of confidence motions. With the current Health Accords expiring in 2014, the anticipated re-negotiations could have set a new national direction for badly needed healthcare reforms. Instead, the federal government unilaterally set its share of healthcare costs for the immediate future and put it on the table on a "take it or leave it basis".



Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance

With no federal leadership or involvement in setting national standards or priorities, Canadians are relying on the provinces to set national standards of care, resolve structural inefficiencies and regional differences and get health care spending and drug costs under control. What the provinces came up with six months later – bulk buying of some generic medicines and adopting some best clinical practices – while welcome – is no national vision.

CARP brought its health reform priorities directly to the provincial governments – from Victoria to Charlottetown and points in between. At least two major provinces now have a health care strategy targeting seniors. The Ontario budget called for spending cuts across the board but preserved funding for their Seniors' Care Strategy – now in consultations and CARP is at the table.

The real importance of the Health Accords was to keep Canadians healthy – by fundamentally redirecting the country's health care resources to that end. CARP offers a vision in which all Canadians can choose to face their health challenges in their own homes and communities as long as they can and when they can't, the formal health care system will be accessible, affordable and treat them with dignity. Access to needed drugs and treatment would not depend on postal code and first dollar coverage would be available under a national pharmacare program.

CARP's *One Patient* proposal for a *Care Continuum* challenged health ministers to better coordinate the disparate continuing care services which are almost impossible to navigate. By keeping the focus on the patient and ensuring seamless progression through a comprehensive and accessible system of continuing care, people can stay in their homes longer, health outcomes improve and there is the potential to generate system savings.

CARP's *Hands Off OAS* campaign became the signature initiative of 2012. The Prime Minister's announcement in Davos, Switzerland that his government had "already taken steps to limit the growth of ... health care spending" – meaning the unilateral limit set while declining to negotiate new Health Accords – and that the same was to be done to the retirement income system, set off blowback that seemed to take the government by surprise.

CARP members called immediately with concerns that this meant an attack on Old Age Security and were not mollified by the



Ontario Health Minister Deb Matthews

government's assurances that current retirees would not be affected.

Media sought out CARP's reaction – and thanks to the time difference – CARP opposition to the change was carried in all the major news channels throughout the same day that the Prime Minister's announcement was reported.

To focus the advocacy effort, CARP launched the *Hands Off OAS* campaign in February with a dedicated web page. Throughout the spring, CARP channeled the effort with clear, consistent messaging, participating in public meetings and opposition roundtables on Parliament Hill and most important, capturing the reaction of CARP members and reporting it broadly.

The most newsworthy development was the impact on the voting preferences of our members. In the month following the Davos announcement, support for the government fell 20 points, eliminating the significant lead they had over the Liberals. This from a group that before the election was calling for a Conservative majority.

The actual confirmation of the government's intention to raise the eligibility age for OAS from 65 to 67 did not come until the March 2012 budget. By then, arguments offered by commentators as to why it was a good idea were already being refuted – by CARP and many others, including the Parliamentary Budget Office and think tanks.

The government said that OAS was unsustainable on its current trajectory and that the changes would ensure that younger generations would also have OAS in place when they retired.

CARP took the position that OAS is sustainable, savings can be found elsewhere, and that a national discussion is needed before making an once-in-a-generation change to a pillar of our retirement security. We backed up our arguments with research that we brought to MPs, parliamentary committees and the media.



Members of the NDP Finance Caucus

CARP's strongest message was the visceral reaction of our members and older Canadians generally. Few issues are as important to older Canadians as not outliving their savings and OAS is regarded as an essential part of that retirement security. CARP members knew that their own OAS would not be affected and did not see how cutting OAS spending would help future generations. Rather than selfishly guarding their own interests, CARP members and other older Canadians were defending an important part of the social safety net and did not want to see it torn up for their children and grandchildren.

The OAS changes also contradicted the government's election posture of courting the

seniors' vote. Less than a year earlier, the federal government had formally acknowledged its role in keeping seniors out of poverty with its much welcomed increase to the Guaranteed Income Supplement [GIS] for Canada's 680,000 most needy seniors. Yet, this same category of people would be the most affected by the changes and least able to wait two extra years for their OAS since GIS is dependent on being eligible for OAS.

The OAS changes were bundled into Bill C-38, the Omnibus Budget Implementation Bill, which made a bad situation worse. Not only were the proposed changes not ever put before the voters, but now the opportunity for full debate was seriously circumscribed.

CARP issued an open letter in May calling on MPs to separate the changes to the OAS eligibility age from the rest of the Omnibus Bill and said on behalf of members that such a fundamental change to our social safety net should not be rushed through the House of Commons on the strength of the government's Parliamentary majority alone, without adequate opportunity for full debate.

CARP Polls™ showed that the OAS issue was a political game changer.

The proposed changes and powering them through Parliament had shaken loose the traditional support for the government and delivered it to the Official Opposition for the first time in

CARP polling. This was sufficiently newsworthy on its own to warrant a national news story. That it was widely read on Parliament Hill was brought home when it was raised during CARP's appearance at a Senate committee on the Omnibus Bill the next month.

CARP polls its members in its twice monthly e-newsletter. Over 4,000 responded to the poll immediately following the speech in Davos at which the OAS changes were first suggested. In a subsequent poll, CARP members continued to demonstrate their opposition to raising the OAS eligibility age and support for the government dropped precipitously. It was becoming clear that CARP's advocacy against changes to OAS was changing the political landscape.

In a May Poll covering the Omnibus Bill, CARP members resolutely rejected both changes to OAS and the government's tactics in powering the legislation through Parliament. Government majority is not a license to ignore political and public opposition, and the MPs were about to hear from CARP members.

Overnight, more than 2,600 CARP members responded to the CARP Poll™, which received widespread media coverage:

- The vast majority (85%) of CARP members rejected the bundling of so many issues within Bill C-38, and as many as three quarters expressed their opinion in the strongest terms .
- The vast majority (70%) of CARP members said they would not vote for the government in the next election [compared to pre-election support for a Conservative majority]
- The NDP support led the Conservatives (39% to 31%) for the first time in four years of CARP Polls™ [compared with more than 50% support for the Conservatives over the past year and the NDP were usually trailing in third place with less than 20% support]

CARP's *Hands Off OAS* campaign only delayed the inevitable. Bill C-38 became law on June 29, 2012 after a time allocation motion limited debate. The 450-page bill went through the committee stage in 3 weeks (May 15-June 7) and through the Senate in 11 days of sitting (from First Senate Reading to Royal Assent).



Toronto City Councillors and Senator Art Eggleton celebrating with CARP on National Seniors Day 2012



Thomas Mulcair, Leader of the Official Opposition

The fight is not over. CARP's campaign against OAS changes received national coverage. Opposition MPs cited CARP's arguments in the House of Commons, and CARP members had their say through the CARP Poll™ and by emailing their MPs using CARP e-Voice. And while the Omnibus Bill passed, the government was forced to do it under intense media scrutiny and widespread national opposition and without the support of CARP members and many other older Canadians.

Two things have to happen now. CARP will work to minimize the impact of the OAS changes on the most vulnerable while continuing the *Hands Off OAS* campaign to have the changes reversed. The government's backing up the effective date in the face of opposition gives us time.

CARP's *Hands Off OAS* campaign encapsulated the role that CARP plays in galvanizing public opposition to resist government policy changes even in a majority government. Certainly, the OAS changes on their own provoked enough anxiety across the country because so many Canadians depend on what they see as an earned benefit to secure their retirement. And for many Canadians, OAS is the only stable form of income they receive in retirement.

CARP kept the focus on the impact of the OAS proposals while capturing and reporting on what CARP members were saying about the issue. For their own part, CARP chapters and individual members were already contacting their MPs directly, armed with the research and arguments the national office posted on the website and through CARP *ActionOline*, the e-newsletter that reaches over 80,000 member households. A constant message was that members already knew that they themselves would be exempt but they worried about others and future generations who could not make ends meet without this income support.

To blunt criticism, the Government committed in its March 2012 budget to bridge the two year gap for certain seniors already on government assistance – veterans and First Nations, to reimburse the provinces and territories if low-income seniors had to seek provincial assistance and to negotiate with the provinces to cover those on CPP disability pensions.

That did not satisfy CARP or its members and we said so, in saturation media coverage on Budget Day.

In times past, an emphatic government position spelled out in the federal budget, followed by a budget implementation bill that was certain to

pass since the government had a majority in the House of Commons would have stifled public opposition. Not this time. CARP members continued to demonstrate their opposition – in the best way to get a politician’s attention – with their voting intention. And in doing so, CARP members put paid to the idea that older voters are loyal voters and somehow set in their ways.

CARP has consistently demonstrated that CARP members vote all the time, and they do so with their eyes wide open. CARP’s role has been to bring the issues to our members, identify the avenues to hold the elected representatives accountable for addressing their concerns and stand back. CARP reports the results of the CARP Polls™ - CARP does not dictate the answers. If there was any doubt in the past, the *Hands Off OAS* campaign is evidence that the votes of older voters cannot be taken for granted.

CARP will continue to bring our advocacy priorities to all levels of government - to elected representatives of all political stripes. Media attention broadens our reach and the collaboration with other civil society agencies deepens our understanding and influence. But the voice of 300,000 plus CARP members unleashed across the country is the real guarantor of responsible government. 🦋



Alice Wong, Minister of State for Seniors, at the Elder Abuse Roundtable

CARP IN THE MEDIA

Extending
Our Reach



“[Edmond] Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than they all.”

– Thomas Carlyle, 1908

“The right to be heard does not automatically include the right to be taken seriously.”

- Hubert Humphrey

Media can either magnify the voice of a public interest advocacy group or ignore it. Ultimately, the goal is to be heard directly by the policy makers – by walking the corridors of powers – or indirectly, through the media – but in such a manner as to ensure that they not only hear you, but are seen to have heard you and therefore obliged to take you seriously. How the media treats CARP’s message plays a critical role in the success or failure of our advocacy.

CARP is competing to be heard over the well-resourced clamour of professional government relations firms on Parliament Hill. Their clients are the major economic players in the country. CARP, on the other hand, has the legitimacy that comes from representing the most numerous demographic and the most politically engaged and civic minded membership in the country. By engaging, informing and giving voice to CARP members, CARP has been able to capture media interest and have our message take equal place in the public discourse.

Sustaining media interest, however, is key to broadening the reach of CARP’s message, building public support and convincing the politicians that the issue is not going away. CARP has developed its credibility with media by thorough research, evidence-based policy positions and timely response.

CARP’s major advantage has been media’s recognition that 300,000-plus CARP members and 55 CARP chapters across the country bolster CARP’s message and provide a window to the coveted “seniors’ vote”. This recognition crystallized in Susan Eng, CARP’s VP of Advocacy, being named one of *The Hill Times* “Top 100 Lobbyists of 2012” – one of a handful of public interest advocates on the list.

If ever CARP needed effective access to the media, it was in 2012 when the federal government was poised to make a fundamental change to the Old Age Security program and was not brooking any opposition. Luckily, we had already laid the groundwork in our relations with the media.

Being prepared is good, early warning is better. Often the first hint of an emerging issue is a call from the media. CARP has cultivated its network of media contacts and its reputation as a well-informed go-to source for comment – even if it’s a trial balloon – a not uncommon tactic of governments. So it was that in early December 2011, our various sources were telling us that the

government was about make a serious attack on Old Age Security. We decided to ask our members what they thought – right away – in the CARP Poll™. So when the media frenzy hit in January with the Prime Minister’s oblique reference to making retirement security sustainable, CARP was ready with our members’ opinion.



CARP’s member communications - developed, honed and perfected in recent years gives us the edge. Between 2008- 2012, the e-newsletter *CARP ActionOnline* expanded from a modest 10,000 opt-in subscribers to a whopping 80,000. Today, *CARP ActionOnline* is by far the largest e-newsletter for older Canadians; engaging thousands of Canada’s most politically engaged and civic minded voters. And we work hard to keep our *CARP ActionOnline* readers engaged. We promise members timely access to the stories that affect them as they unfold and we hold the politicians accountable by asking all parties for their views addressed directly to our members. Politicians rarely refuse the opportunity to address this important audience.

"Ten people who speak make more noise than ten thousand who are silent."
- Napoleon Bonaparte

The CARP Poll™ captures the voice of our members and makes its heard. The “silent majority” certainly cannot make the same amount of noise as the handful of pundits and government spokespeople who have ready access

to the media. So the CARP Poll™ helps CARP to level that playing field.

Not only does *CARP ActionOnline* inform the membership about the policy issues that affect them – it also solicits their input. The highly cost effective nature of the electronic medium allows us to keep in touch with our members regularly and to poll them on issues as they develop. The CARP Poll™ facilitates the collective voice of CARP members. CARP then makes sure that it is heard – through timely news releases and in Parliamentary committees.

Media like our Polls – Quick, Reliable and Unique.

No one else has the ability to consistently poll thousands of people from a bellwether group in such a timely manner. When Prime Minister Harper made his Davos announcement on January 27th, 2012 - we already had polling numbers and feedback. That day and the next, a Canadian Press story ran in all of the major dailies and several dozen local

papers all across the country, quoting Susan Eng on the proposed changes:

"We put out a poll to our members when this idea was (rumored) in December and their answer was, 'No,' and 'Hell no'. Remember OAS and the Guaranteed Income Supplement is only paid to people who need it. We're still looking at a quarter of a million seniors living in poverty today."

We didn’t know that the Prime Minister would be making the announcement on that specific day but we were ready when he did and the media knew where to go for rapid response. We were flooded with so many interview requests that we didn’t have the chance to put out our own news release.

Within 24 hours of the story breaking CARP had already obtained the kind of saturation coverage that public interest advocates hope to get in an entire year. Within a day of the announcement, CARP’s reaction was in: The Canadian Press (this story was re-published by over 20 Canadian newspapers), The Globe and Mail, CBC News, CTV News, Power and Politics, CHCH News, Global Television’s *"The West*

Block”, CPAC, AM740, Goldhawk Fights Back, Classical 96.3, CFRA Ottawa and the Lethbridge Herald.

We’re nimble as well as quick – changing tack when necessary. The government tabled legislation to implement its decision in short order. Five months is fast work on Parliament Hill but long enough for opposition arguments to grow stale in the media. Time for a new tack.

The Government decided to bundle the OAS and several other contentious policies into their “Omnibus Budget Implementation Bill”. The sheer size and complexity of any omnibus bill would limit useful debate. Even Prime Minister Harper called it “the kitchen sink approach” but that was in 1994 when he was in Opposition. Then, he cautioned that MPs would not be able to “*represent their constituents on these various areas when they are forced to vote in a block ... How do we express our views and the views of our constituents when the matters are so diverse? Dividing the bill into several components would allow members to represent views of their constituents on each of the different components in the bill.*”

Our members agreed with the 1994 Stephen Harper. Now that the 2012 Stephen Harper-led majority also imposed time limits for his own Omnibus Bill, it was too much even for hitherto loyal supporters.

The reaction of CARP members was swift and clear – this was not how even a majority government should act. There is a legitimate role for the Opposition and the voice of the people they represent. In subsequent polls, it became perfectly clear that the Parliamentary process was as important to CARP members as the substance of the legislative measure. This became the new media message.

“CARP members would react strongly if such a fundamental part of our social safety net was rushed through Parliament on the strength of the government’s Parliamentary majority alone.”



Our Omnibus Budget Poll made quite a splash in the media because it captured the Canadian political zeitgeist on a previously obscure legislative process while challenging long-held preconceived notions about older voters. Politicians and marketers alike think that older persons are set in their ways and make the mistake of taking their loyalty for granted. While many of our members had called for the Conservative majority, the Omnibus Bill put enough of them over the edge to switch their allegiance. For the first time in history, the NDP were leading the Conservatives in the CARP Poll™.

This potential political game changer caught the media’s attention and CARP was widely quoted: “*MPs [were warned] that CARP members would react strongly if such a fundamental part of our social safety net was rushed through Parliament on the strength of the government’s Parliamentary majority alone, without adequate opportunity for full debate. This is proof that thumbing their nose at democratic checks and balances is a political game changer*”.

In the end, the Omnibus Bill became law but not before the government had to make limited yet important concessions to insulate some, though not all, of the most vulnerable seniors from the shock of this new policy. And they said they had always planned to defer the change but moved the effective date back so far that it nearly by - passes the bulk of the Boomer generation – supposedly the group whose impending eligibility for OAS was the reason for it being unsustainable.

CARP's *Hands Off OAS* Campaign provided a focal point for our members and others who were taken aback by the fundamental nature of the change and the unsustainability of the government's arguments. *CARP ActionOnline* provided a forum for MPs and commentators of all stripes to make their case directly to CARP members. We were barely keeping up with the media hits when the two polls we issued at that critical juncture ignited another volley of media coverage.

Not only was there saturation coverage of what CARP had to say, but the campaign became a star in its own right with articles like "Is CARP's *Hands Off OAS* Campaign Starting to Take Hold?" by Jonathan Chevereau for *The Financial Post* (Feb. 21, 2012). As always, we are happy to share the spotlight with other people who also do their homework. Journalists appreciate this and know that they can rely on us to refer them to external sources that can give them specialized knowledge and attest to the arguments we are making.

Saying what needs to be said.

Sometimes, people really just want a feel good story. An advocacy organization adds no value by simply going along with that. Last Christmas, prime time for "feel-good" stories, media wanted CARP's reaction to the competition that a Toronto businessman had launched for seniors in need. Seniors, or their social service agencies, had to write in and give detailed accounts of their destitution. The businessman would comb through the tales of woe and select two "winners" of his largesse.

We knew the journalists were conflicted – because they asked CARP to comment – it would have been easier for them to simply catalogue all the accolades for a nice gesture. CARP used the opportunity to draw attention to the 250,000-plus seniors living below the poverty line who would not get any help. While the initiative highlighted the plight of many older Canadians with high care needs and medical expenses who can't survive on government pensions alone and are often faced with impossible choices like having to choose between medicines or food, CARP put the story in perspective on CTV News:

"It should not be a matter of charity; it should be a basic right to live in dignity. There are opportunities to fix this: Governments can increase their income supports, they can reduce our expenses, and they can make our services easier to get to."

Context matters: CARP has been asking the Government to legislate an end to mandatory retirement for years. As of last year there stood one final bastion: a dated sub-section of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* still allowed mandatory retirement in federally regulated workplaces - CARP had worked over the years to have it repealed at the Provincial level. In December 2011, the Federal Government finally repealed the provision with some fanfare. CARP had spent the last several years issuing news



releases, commenting on court cases and pursuing the issue at Parliamentary committees and directly with MPs of all parties, so we pointed out that it *"was an overnight success after 20 years of lobbying."*

Not all advocacy activities will pay dividends right away. The greatest "wins" are not the ones that can be measured from one year to the next. With mandatory retirement, the larger success story was the change in public attitudes from sustained advocacy. But opposition from vested interests remained steadfast. The key was to change the political calculation for the decision makers.

“There has been a sea-change in public values on the issue of forcing people to retire before their time.”

Repealing the offending section of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* was quite simple and it cost the government nothing in monetary terms. But were there more voters who supported the change than those who opposed it? That’s where the media comes in – to elevate a narrow, legal issue into a broadly understandable principle that people could see would affect their lives. CARP had to meet the long held notion that mandatory retirement was needed to make way for the next generation. As we pointed out in the *National Post*, *“there has been a sea-change in public values on the issue of forcing people to retire before their time.”* Politicians must have sensed that would resonate – and not just with older Canadians.

The media need a way to cut through government spin. They want someone to give them another point of view to put things into perspective – not necessarily free of its own spin but at least grounded in the lived experience of the affected constituency.

In March, the federal government introduced a Bill changing the Criminal Code to increase sentencing for elder abuse convictions – something CARP had recommended. CARP attended the news conference and despite the media availability of two cabinet ministers, Susan Eng was scrummed by over forty reporters. On March 14th and March 15th alone, CARP logged over one hundred and forty media hits.



Reporters chose to interview and quote CARP because we were not afraid to say what else needed to be done while praising government action: *“Older Canadians will take heart from this opening salvo on ending elder abuse. Public awareness initiatives are always welcome but nothing beats a Minister of Justice standing up in Parliament to back up our collective opprobrium with legislative action. More is needed, of course, to detect, investigate, prosecute and ultimately end elder abuse”*

“In politics, you need two things: friends, but above all an enemy.” - Brian Mulroney

Perhaps you don’t need an enemy, but few have become a political powerhouse without making a few enemies along the way. As an advocacy organization, you know you’ve arrived when you have your own high-profile detractors. Even better when a widely read national columnist for one of the country’s largest newspapers treats you as a worthy target.

Margaret Wenté wrote in her *Globe and Mail* column *“The war against the young”* – (January 7th 2012):

“CARP is always carping about something. This time, it’s outraged that the government might start gutting people’s Old Age Security cheques... I am constantly astonished at the opposition parties’ stout defense of entitlements for people who demonstrably don’t need them. And I think anyone with a social conscience and a CARP membership should tear it up.”

We knew that Ms. Wenté’s attack would galvanize people who had previously been fence-sitting so CARP’s letter to *Globe* editor simply thanked her for reminding readers that CARP is a membership organization. Our phones were ringing off the hook and our member sign-up page crashed. We were tempted to send Ms. Wenté flowers!

Media like to frame CARP advocacy as one side in the “generational war”. Rather than shrink from the jousting match, CARP uses the opportunity to disabuse people of the notion that our policy proposals can only be achieved at the expense of the younger generation.

CBC's *Power and Politics* alone hosted two segments in the past few months – under the caption: “Boomers vs. Gen Y: Inter-generational war brewing?” CARP took the opportunity to explain that social improvement is not a zero-sum game between the younger and the older - some of the changes CARP members are advocating will not even benefit them – they are hoping to improve retirement security for the next generation and they also want to help them with improved daycare, education or increased job opportunities.

“CARP members want their children and grandchildren to be well looked-after as well. So I don't think that we should allow governments to play one generation off against the next. There are ways in which we can structure the ... spending now so that there is more money to spend on things like day care. But we're also looking for ways in which people can care for older loved ones at home... There are opportunities to divert demand for the healthcare system in ways that creates savings that can be used to meet those demands.” - Power & Politics, Dec. 21, 2011

“Okay, you've convinced me. Now go out there and bring pressure on me.” - President Franklin D. Roosevelt

Roosevelt may have said this decades ago but it remains a steadfast rule of politics. In order to effect any change, you need to be able to apply pressure on the politicians concerned. The media matters because it extends our reach and it is, largely, where public opinion is captured and influenced.

And it lets the decision makers see who else is also seeing and hearing CARP's message. And if the MPs need any more convincing, CARP members and other Canadians who caught us in the national headlines or the evening newscast will be calling them in the morning. 🐦

CARP IN THE PRESS

OAS CHANGES

“Increasing the age for OAS right now is the wrong thing to do at the wrong time. They can find the money elsewhere.”

- The Globe and Mail, Jan. 2012

TARGET THOSE NEEDING THE MOST

“When you are looking at fiscal constraint, you really do need to target public support to those who need it the most”

- The Toronto Star, Feb. 2012

GOVERNMENT USES MAJORITY TO RUSH THE 2012 BUDGET

“CARP members would be shattered to learn that such a fundamental part of our social safety net was rushed through Parliament on the strength of the government's parliamentary majority alone”

- The Toronto Star, May 2012

FINANCIAL ABUSE A BIG PROBLEM

“This is a targeted group for different reasons - and this is one more [factor] to worry about”

- The Globe and Mail, Aug. 2012

BETTER END OF LIFE CARE NEEDED

“They're afraid that when the end comes and it gets ugly, that they're in terrible pain or lose all their dignity, that they don't have a way out. More emphasis needs to be put on palliative care.”

- Life News, Aug. 2012



CARP CHAPTERS: THE FRONT LINES



Power in numbers takes on true meaning at CARP. The strong, active network of CARP Chapters across the country broadens our reach and deepens our influence on government decision makers by bringing CARP's advocacy message to their doorsteps.

We are growing - CARP Chapters have more than quadrupled in four years and the now 55 chapters allow CARP members across the country to participate and engage with our advocacy mission. CARP Chapters are our eyes and ears on the ground, identifying and pursuing local priorities as well as scouting out the local viewpoint on national issues. CARP Chapters provide a powerful voice, adding great insight and value to CARP's message and work – both to legitimize the national voice of CARP Advocacy, but also to allow CARP's message to resonate with all the constituencies across the country, reflecting the diversity of this demographic in Canada.

CARP Chapters are the arms of CARP reaching out to local politicians, businesses and community agencies and letting them know that CARP members are paying close attention to their actions. On CARP's behalf, the Chapters meet with politicians, collaborate with local agencies, and raise CARP's profile at local events. Through their leadership and commitment to volunteerism, the Chapters extend CARP's resources beyond the National Office's capacity, making CARP's presence known across the country.

When government ministers seek community input, they will encounter CARP Chapters from coast to coast. In her cross country series of Roundtables on Elder Abuse, the Honourable Alice Wong, Minister of State for Seniors, received CARP's position and recommendations from White Rock/Surrey Chapter Chair, Jack Mar, and North Fraser Chapter Chair, Bruce Bird in Vancouver one day and from Edgar Williams, Chair of the Avalon (St. John's NL) Chapter on another. The same message was presented in Charlottetown, Moncton, Peterborough, Brighton-Belleville-Quinte West and Halifax.

And an invitation from a CARP Chapter rarely goes unanswered. Quebec Cabinet Minister, Geoffrey Kelley headlined a meeting hosted by CARP's West Island, Montreal Chapter. His presentation on improving senior's lives in Quebec and interviews with Chapter Chair, Paul Reisman and other Chapter members were captured by CTV News.

The always active White Rock-Surrey Chapter hosted local MP Russ Hiebert, outgoing White Rock Mayor, Catherine Ferguson, and incoming Mayor, Wayne Baldwin, all of whom expressed their support of CARP at their November meeting.

CARP issues make national headlines and local media knows to turn to CARP Chapters for insight and informed opinion.

The media know that the CARP “go-to-guy” in Nova Scotia is CARP Advisory Board member Bill VanGorder. He was recently featured in a CBC story about the problem of extended wait times for long term care facilities, where he noted CARP’s advocacy for better Aging in Place strategies.

Edgar Williams, Chair of the Avalon (St. John’s NL) Chapter represented CARP on CBC’s Newfoundland and Labrador news program “*Here and Now*” to discuss the state of seniors housing in the region and outline the need for adequate planning at all levels of government.

Janet Gray, Chair of the Ottawa Chapter is a frequent media commentator as are Downtown Toronto’s Adina Lebo and Mississauga’s Murray Etherington.

Local issues remain at the heart of chapter activity. On the housing front, in addition to Edgar William’s intervention in St. John’s, the Barrie Chapter, led by Gwen Kavanagh, has been busy with the Senior Housing Co-Housing Project and has made June 25-July 3rd CARP Awareness Week for the City of Barrie. Barrie Mayor Jeff Lehman raised the Chapter’s flag and read their proclamation.

When the Alberta government proposed to change the location of a Long Term Care facility away from the downtown core along with its vital services, our Fort McMurray Chapter, chaired by Felix Berube, joined local seniors in a campaign to resist the change.

The Ajax-Pickering Chapter collaborated with the Durham Elder Abuse Network, local libraries and Homeplace to launch its 2012 campaign to end elder abuse, which included feature presentations by Tammy Rankin, Elder Abuse Advisor for the Durham Region and Constable Marta Fils of the Durham Regional Police.

Public education and awareness continue to be a mainstay of Chapter activity. Chapters have been providing various financial literacy seminars and presentations. At its AGM, the

A VISIT TO THE MARITIMES

On June 19-23, Susan Eng and Ross Mayot visited the Maritime Chapters as well as community organizations, provincial politicians, government officials, and the media, to get a better understanding of the needs and interests of our Maritime members and to see how CARP’s key



advocacy strategies line up with the policies and services for seniors in the Maritime provinces. Among several politicians, they met with the PEI Government’s Hon. Valerie Docherty, Minister Responsible for Seniors (top), and the Hon. Wesley Sheridan, Minister of Finance (second from top). In addition to visiting various Chapters, Susan and Ross had a promising meeting with Louise Gilbert, Chair of the Moncton Chapter, and the Executive Director of the New Brunswick Senior Citizens Federation, Conrad LeBlanc (third from the top). Susan was interviewed by CBC Island Morning in Charlottetown and the Todd Vienotte Show on News 88.9 in Saint John, NB (bottom).

North Fraser Chapter hosted: “*Consumers: Know Your Rights*”, a presentation by a representative of Consumer Protection BC, on rules governing telemarketers, consumer complaint procedures, and self protection from frauds and scams. The Edmonton Chapter also held a seminar series to promote *Financial Education for Seniors, Zoomers, and Caregivers*.

CARP’s influence is growing due in large measure to the collective voice of our Chapters, and we will soon be joined by new Chapters in Saskatchewan, and other regions of Canada. We anticipate another exciting year ahead. 🐾

THE CARP POLL™

Members Speak Out



We have been polling members for their opinions on current issues every two weeks since October 2008. This means we have a detailed account of members' attitudes going back four years, and we also have their voting intention data, a question we ask on every poll.

Our most popular polls, measured in terms of the number of members who complete them, deal with pension issues like OAS and CPP, or health care issues like home care and long term care. These subjects attract a lot of response from members because they are directly related to their quality of life and to CARP's advocacy mission.

CARP members weigh in on CARP's advocacy platforms – in detail, not just broad strokes – and add weight to our voice in the corridors of power.

On pension security, members have consistently made it clear that they prefer an expansion of CPP (modest if necessary, significant if possible) to any expansion of privately sponsored pension schemes. On home care, most want and expect to spend their final days at home and they want a comprehensive system of care that will allow them to do so. While none wants to spend time in long term care, all recognize the necessity, and want it to be well-funded and regulated.

On more controversial issues, CARP members have been equally forthcoming. Close to one tenth of our members have shared the fact they

have suffered elder abuse, and this was polled twice. But three times as many said they knew of someone else who had been abused, and this added urgency to CARP's call on governments for immediate action – which culminated in legislation to increase sentencing for elder abuse.

Members' Votes cannot be taken for Granted.

First of all, their political preferences, while steady are no longer static. Historically, CARP members, much like other middle aged or older, higher income, retired Canadians, tend to support the Conservative Party. In fact, for the first three years of our polling, the Conservative Party rarely scored less than 50% in voting intention, while the Liberals tended to score in the 30s and the NDP in the teens.

All that changed during the May, 2011 election. The Conservatives suffered an initial drop in support at the election call, the Liberals experienced a brief surge, but as the election drew nearer, and the Conservatives headlined seniors' issues in their election platform, CARP member support reached new highs with most calling for a Conservative majority in our pre-election polls.

CARP members continue to be a bellwether group – calling for and getting a Conservative majority – they also called the “Orange Crush”. The last pre-election CARP Poll™ showed a surge of support for the NDP when all the political pundits were still calling for a Liberal Opposition.

When the votes were counted, the Conservatives were on top in the CARP Poll™ (with a slightly reduced margin), the Liberals and the NDP were slugging it out for second place, with the NDP eventually prevailing. This has remained the pattern since (except for one brief period when the NDP led the Conservatives).

We continue to capture voting preferences in between elections to see how major policy issues play with our members. The OAS changes provided the perfect case study.

A large downward drop in support for the Conservative Party came immediately after Prime Minister Harper's statement at Davos in early January that was taken to mean [correctly, as it turned out] that the eligibility age for OAS would be raised to 67. Support for the governing Conservatives fell precipitously to erase their double digit lead over the Liberal Party.

Another major decline in the government's fortunes occurred when they used their Parliamentary majority to force the Omnibus Budget Bill C-38 through the Commons. CARP members made it clear in surveys that a majority government was not a license to run roughshod over opposition objections to a bill that was equally unpopular with the public.

The eventual outcome of members' assessments of the Parliamentary conduct of this government is that the Conservatives have lost half their support, while the NDP has doubled theirs. This change did not happen overnight, but it is clearly evidence of a tectonic shift in the attitudes of older Canadians to anything that appears to undermine the checks and balances in our Parliamentary processes.

It may be that all governments in power count on support for the status quo from retired middle-class Canadians, but if CARP Polls™ are any indication, they can no longer take this support for granted.

Democracy matters to CARP members. While polls addressing quality of life issues attract the

most response, the polls that attract the *sharpest* response, that is, the most direct correlation between current events and voting intention, are those that deal with democratic ethics and government misbehaviour. CARP members are very sensitive to what they see as misuse of the norms of democratic process, or government high-handedness.

Detailed discussion of Parliamentary processes might bore the general public, but CARP Polls™ dealing with them draw heavy and immediate response from CARP members. For them, a majority government is not a blank cheque and they expect the Official Opposition and all MPs including government backbenchers –to properly fulfill their mandate to ensure a responsible government. And when they perceive any attack on the checks and balances inherent in our parliamentary rules and traditions, they will demonstrate their disapproval by changing their voting preferences in the CARP Polls™.

In past years, the steepest declines in Conservative Party support came with Prime Minister Harper's second prorogation of Parliament, one that was taken as a tactic to avoid an election. Another steep decline occurred when the government was declared in contempt of Parliament.

This year, there was a decline in voter preference around the release of the F-35 fighter jet cost overruns likely due to the impression among members that the government wasn't being frank with Canadians. But by far the greatest impact was the fundamental change to OAS without putting it before the electorate and powering the Omnibus Bill through Parliament. It is clear that, while pensions and health care excite their interest, it is government high-handedness that will ignite members' indignation.

Consistently, CARP Poll™ results demonstrate that CARP members want to see even a majority government held in check and give that role to the opposition parties in Parliament. But they, themselves, will also be watching carefully. 🦋

CARP is a national, non-partisan, non-profit organization committed to advocating for a New Vision of Aging for Canada, social change that will bring financial security, equitable access to health care and freedom from discrimination. CARP seeks to ensure that the marketplace serves the needs and expectations of our generation and provides value-added benefits, products and services to our members. Through our network of chapters across Canada, CARP is dedicated to building a sense of community and shared values among our members in support of CARP's mission.

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