

## Editorial

# Poilievre is truly great — at pandering

Richard Harley  
Editor-in-Chief

Pierre Poilievre made a stop in Niagara-on-the-Lake last Thursday.

Here is a leader who at first might seem informed, capable of holding rational arguments and making good points.

But what he's really the best at is pandering, lying and misleading.

He panders to a crowd that's so anti-Liberal, they're willing to eat up and digest anything he says. He's hoping that voters so dislike Justin Trudeau that they won't see beyond his simplistic, bumper-sticker rhetoric.

Here are a few examples of just how good Poilievre is at spinning webs of lies that sound, to the ill-informed, like truth.

And warning, there's a lot of purposeful misleading and contradiction to unpack here, but it's all closely related. So bear with us.

Firstly, we asked him what his party would do to ensure it supports local journalism.

His answer?  
"Free speech."

"I am going to repeal the censorship laws, make it possible for Canadian news to be visible again on Facebook, Instagram and all other social media platforms," he said.

"And get rid of the terrible censorship laws that have taken those news stories down from the internet and deprived independent local media to have a voice."

OK, let's digest this: there's no such thing as a censorship law. Full stop.

We assume he's referring to the Online News Act (Bill C-18), which is aimed "to ensure that dominant platforms compensate news businesses when their content is made available on their services."

In other words, when big players like Google or Meta share news content created by Canadian media companies, and benefits from the billions of views those stories produce, then companies like Google must pay for that privilege.

The law is simple, fair and in the best interests of Canadian journalism organizations — and something Google has agreed to, by the way.

The only "censorship"

being done is solely by Meta (which runs Facebook and Instagram).

The company has not agreed to pay its fair share and in response to the laws Canada passed to help ensure journalism organizations get paid, it has banned Canadian news on its platforms.

This shows the core values of companies like Meta are not to help you, but to exploit you.

So recap: Poilievre calls Bill C-18 a censorship law, which it absolutely is not. He's being blatantly misleading. And to the average, uninformed voter who doesn't understand it, it could seem true.

We mean this with as little offence as possible, but he's relying on his voter base to not be smart enough to know the difference.

It might sound good and pander to the right people to say he's fighting for "free speech." But in reality, in Canada we already have freedom of expression thanks to the Charter of Rights.

**"It is terrible how ... local journalism has done under nine years of Trudeau ... And now, of course, media and journalism is stronger than ever today."**

PIERRE POILIEVRE  
CONSERVATIVE LEADER

The next of his lies ties directly in with the lies we just discussed.

We asked a question about the future of the Local Journalism Initiative — a government-funded program that pays salaries of many journalists across the country.

His response?

"It is terrible how ... local journalism has done under nine years of Trudeau. He's tried to take it over and basically wants everyone to work for the government so that he can have regurgitated propaganda paid for by taxpayers."

This is completely false.

The Trudeau government has funded the Local Journalism Initiative, yes.

But let's digest this, too.

As editors of a journal-



Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre delivered a plethora of lies during his visit to NOTL, forcing The Lake Report to respond with the longest editorial it has ever published.

ism organization, we can simply say it's not "terrible" how local journalism has done under nine years of Trudeau. In fact, the LJI program is one of the reasons local journalism can thrive in small communities, often called "news deserts" because they have no local coverage.

They don't have a big newspaper and often issues go uncovered because of a lack of reporters covering the area.

Secondly, the notion that Trudeau wants everyone to work for the government and has "propaganda" placed in newspapers is simply ridiculous.

Firstly, LJI reporters don't work for the government. They work for the news organizations that receive the funding. The only person who ever tells reporters what to write about is their editor.

Notably, several conservative-leaning news outlets receive the same funding.

And secondly, the notion that any legitimate newspaper would simply print "propaganda" for any party is ludicrous.

We won't even print a news release without asking questions and vetting the information — as some local NOTL media organizations regularly do.

You will never find verbatim Liberal or Conservative news releases in our paper. Or from any party.

If we did, the majority of

the paper would be Conservative MP Tony Baldinelli's constant criticism of the Liberals, and the Liberals constantly tooting their own horns.

**"One of Poilievre's tactics is to throw out so much misinformation, that it's almost impossible to fact check it all, especially on the spot."**

RICHARD HARLEY  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
THE LAKE REPORT

(Note how we just criticized Baldinelli's approach, even though he advertises with us. That's how journalism works. Advertising with us buys you an ad, not favourable coverage.)

The reality is local news is the least partisan news you'll find anywhere because we report on municipal council and local politicians, who are not beholden to any political party.

Our ideals are our own. They are carefully thought-out, with the best interests of the whole community in mind, and have nothing to do with funding from a government program.

For Poilievre to suggest newspapers like ours are only Liberal-leaning because we receive funding

from the LJI program is insulting, out of touch with reality and just another way to pander to people who lack critical thinking skills.

Does he think that if he keeps the program running, news outlets are going to magically turn Conservative because we're so grateful?

It's almost cute, how ignorant he must be.

He would like you to believe Justin Trudeau is funneling orders to organizations like The Lake Report. It's simply not true — and the worst part is that Poilievre must be smart enough to know it. He's just hoping you buy his baloney.

Perhaps he is afraid that with a healthy media he will continue to be called out on his lies and misleading statements — exactly like what we're doing here.

Next we asked him again point blank what he plans to do with the LJI program.

His answer was that media should be funding itself "and do what media have done for, I don't know, 3,000 years?"

Simply, we have to ask, how out of touch can a person be, when from one side of their mouth they're saying they would repeal laws that give media fair compensation from giants like Google and Meta, and on the other side he says those organizations should be funding themselves entirely?

With one hand he's cutting our income flow and giving it to billionaires, and with the other he's criticizing media for not being able to make enough money and saying the government shouldn't be helping keep an essential democratic function alive.

He goes on: "And now, of course, media and journalism is stronger than ever today because we have the internet, which allows for more voices to reach Canadians and that competition is positive. We can't have the government try to shut down competition just to favour those who favour the political viewpoint of Justin Trudeau."

Again, there's a lot to unpack here.

Firstly, did he just say media and journalism is doing better than ever? We thought he just said how much we're all suffering under Trudeau?

Can't this guy make up his mind?

He's just pandering again. So don't take anything he says too seriously, people.

Secondly, the government isn't trying to shut down anyone. The government is trying to help keep local journalism organizations alive, largely because real journalists are the only ones who will give you the whole story.

"Citizen journalism" like you see on TikTok and Facebook, created by amateurs who don't really know what balanced journalism is, is often littered with untruths, accompanied by half-baked opinions and in general isn't really news.

Citizen journalism — a term that shouldn't even really exist because it isn't journalism — doesn't usually cover council meetings. If it does, it often comes with bias.

It doesn't continue to follow stories to the end. It often convicts people before a court can.

There are a litany of problems with citizen journalism and Poilievre's mindset that journalism is doing just fine because every Bob and Sue can post on Twitter is not appropriate for someone who wants to run this country.

Run it into the ground is more like it.

We realize this is probably the longest editorial we've ever published. Yet, it might be one of the most necessary editorials yet.

Because one of Poilievre's tactics is to throw out so much misinformation, that it's almost impossible to fact check it all, especially on the spot.

It's why he often appears to eat journalists and other politicians alive. Because he's on another planet and it's almost impossible to have a rational conversation with someone who just makes things up.

So it's our duty as a free press — one that isn't going to take anything at face value from any political party — to call out Poilievre's dangerous lies. Or his inability to comprehend the truth.

Either he's lying to you and knows it. Or he's just incompetent.

And because he's not a stupid man, it's not hard to figure out. If you think critically about what he says.