

# LEADERS' TRAVEL AMID COVID: WHY WE WERE QUICK TO REPORT

**MEDIA HAS A WATCHDOG ROLE THAT IS IMPERATIVE FOR DEMOCRACY, WRITES KAREN MICELI**



**KAREN MICELI**  
Column

*It's about trust. Our relationship with our readers is built on transparency, honesty and integrity. As such, we have launched a trust initiative to tell you who we are and how and why we do what we do. This column is part of that project.*

If you have been following the news lately, you should be well aware of the recent media coverage surrounding politicians and prominent public figures who travelled over the holidays.

One such public official was Finance Minister Rod Phillips, who the media learned travelled to the Caribbean island of St. Barts over Christmas. He subsequently resigned from his cabinet role.

Flamborough-Glanbrook MP David Sweet reportedly went to the U.S. to deal with a property-related issue, but then stayed afterward for leisure. He resigned as chair of the House of Commons Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics Committee.

Then Halton Police Chief Stephen Tanner joined the list of public fig-

ures who exercised poor judgment when it was revealed he travelled to Florida for a property-related matter.

We have received feedback from our readers expressing disappointment with the actions of their leaders, but others may wonder, why is it so important for the media to cover these incidents?

In a nutshell: These actions erode public trust — especially at a time when that trust is so fragile.

Both the federal and provincial governments have repeatedly asked Canadians not to travel abroad during the pandemic and urged citizens to avoid gathering with family outside their household over the holidays.

Halton police also shared multiple tweets encouraging residents to follow public health advice and stay home.

Surely, our public officials should lead by example, and it is the media's duty to hold them accountable when they don't.

What would become of the checks and balances vital to a democratic society if the media did not own this watchdog role?

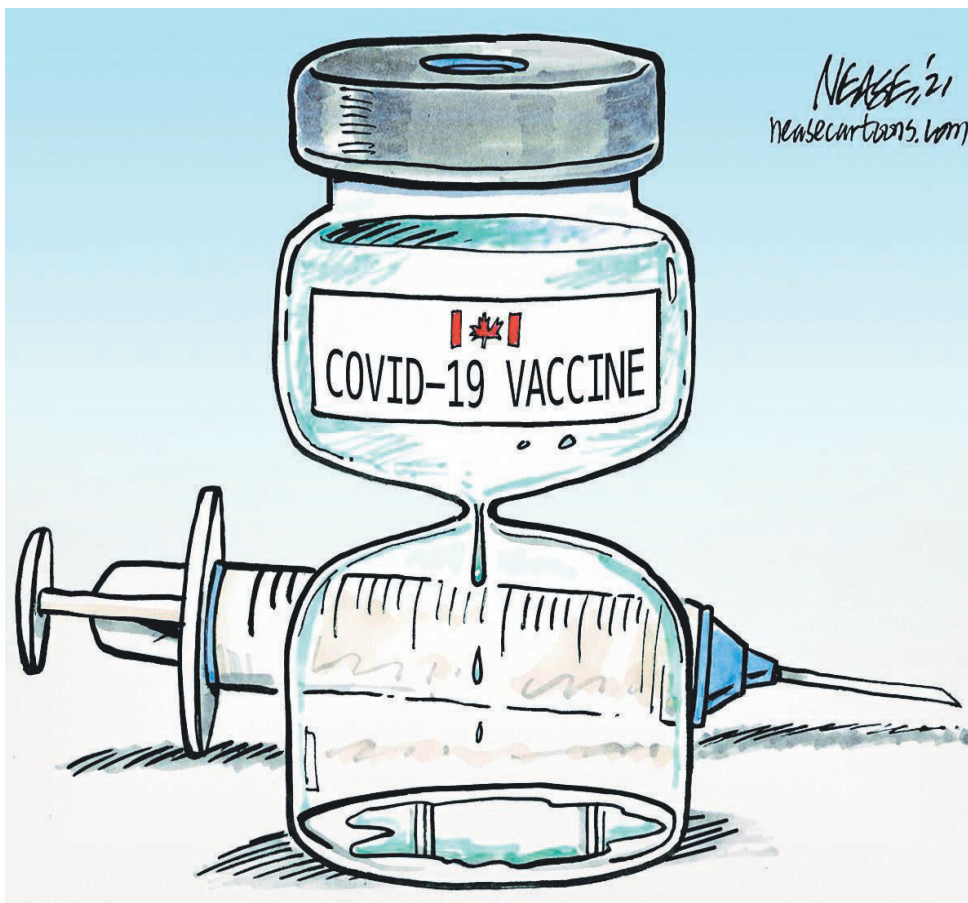
Democracy would be the next thing packing its bags and going south.

*Karen Miceli is managing editor of Metroland's four community newspapers in Halton. We welcome your questions and value your comments. Email our trust committee at [trust@metroland.com](mailto:trust@metroland.com).*

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# FEDS PUTTING OUR HEALTH AT RISK

**APPROVAL OF CN INTERMODAL HUB TRULY DISAPPOINTING, WRITES GARY CARR**

I am extremely disappointed that the federal government has ignored expert advice on significant harm to the health of Halton residents by approving CN's truck-rail hub in south-west Milton.

We've been advocating against this project due to its impact on our community.

The location for the project is within one kilometre of approximately 34,000 current and future residents, one hospital, 12 schools and two long-term care homes.

The facility will operate 24/7 — resulting in at least 1,600 new trips to and from the facility each day by



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Column

heavy-duty container trucks.

The significant health effects caused by this project are unavoidable. This includes the release of particulate matter (PM2.5) that is unsafe at any level of exposure and will cause significant adverse effects on human health in the community.

The Federal Review Panel also concluded that more than 200 mitigation conditions were required to avoid other significant adverse effects from this project, but only a handful of these conditions are enforceable by the federal

government.

It is the unenviable distinction of the federal government that it is the first federal Cabinet that has ever decided to approve a project that would cause such health risks.

There are many unanswered questions about what CN plans to do with the remaining 800 acres after it builds its new 400-acre facility. We will continue to work with the community and be their voice on this issue.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the consultation process and provided their input for the federal government's consideration.

To learn more about our position on CN's truck-rail hub, please visit [halton.ca/CN](http://halton.ca/CN).

*Gary Carr is Regional Chair of Halton Region. To contact him, email [gary.carr@halton.ca](mailto:gary.carr@halton.ca).*

## ABOUT US

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