

Again, the scenes out of Ottawa continue to dominate discussion in the House of Commons. The right to assemble peacefully and demonstrate is a core constitutional right in our country but a blockade of our capital city and breaking the law is not. Whether it is blocking border communities and stopping vaccinated truckers from taking goods across the border (and truly disrupting the supply chain) or honking all night long and setting off fireworks in Ottawa and keeping people awake, this is not part of a peaceful protest. Forcing Ottawa businesses to close is not part of a peaceful protest. Harassing citizens, journalists and health care workers is not part of a peaceful protest. Desecrating monuments and stealing from food banks is not part of a peaceful protest. Waving the Confederate flag and swastikas and wearing yellow stars and having the nerve to compare your situation to the Jews murdered in the holocaust is not part of a peaceful protest. On Monday night, an emergency debate was held in the House about this blockade. I would ask everyone to watch the speech on my Facebook page by clicking here: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1027237591158306>

The highlights are:

- 1) I fully understand that people are tired of restrictions and want freedom but with freedom also comes responsibilities.
- 2) We do need a federal plan to come out very quickly explaining how and when existing restrictions will be lifted and what criteria will be used. That does not mean all of them should be lifted imminently but in my view the restrictions on vaccinated people such as travel advisories and arrival testing should be the first to end. People also should be aware that the vast majority of restrictions are provincial not federal.
- 3) Peaceful protest is an essential constitutional right. This is not a peaceful protest it is an illegal blockade.
- 4) I fully understand people do not care that the local police are the lead on this issue. They just want it resolved. Our existing law requires Ottawa and the Government of Ontario to ask the federal government for help and resources before we can provide them. Once they asked we have provided both RCMP personnel (over 300 at this point) and equipment but we need to create an overwhelming police presence and end this once and for all.
- 5) We then need a Parliamentary Committee to investigate what occurred and see how the law should be changed including considering whether more of downtown Ottawa should be part of the Parliamentary Precinct and fall under federal jurisdiction on policing. We need to see if we should make it easier for local police forces to directly request federal help. We need to review the entire issues related to foreign funding of the convoy and illegal activities in Canada.
- 6) We need the federal government to work with the provinces on a national plan to create surge capacity in our hospitals across the country as the lack of capacity is what leads to restrictions. We need a federal budget for this.