



# Jonathan Wilkinson

NORTH VANCOUVER'S MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

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## Why not Canada Day every day?

How joyful it was to experience Canada Day in North Vancouver at the Shipyards! The sheer delight of being together again after much too long was evident in the countless smiles and peels of laughter – particularly from the little ones.

It was both uplifting and unifying.

Which got me wondering...why do we tend to consign our thoughts, reflections and emotions on Canada Day to a 24-hour period once a year...to be unpacked again a year later?

How can anything but good come from expanding our timeframes for conversation and personal reflection about our country and about being Canadian - particularly in these challenging times?

It's in that spirit that I'd like to share some sentiments that were uppermost in my mind July 1st - because echoes of them remain with me every day in the work I do on your behalf as the MP for North Vancouver.

### Values that define

Given what we are seeing happen in many parts of the world, and given the tenor of some of the recent political discourse here in Canada, this is a very important time in our country's history - for us to reflect upon, and recommit to the values that define and enrich what it means to be Canadian: openness, equality, fairness, freedom, inclusivity and diversity.

In a world where these values are increasingly under threat, affirming these in our words and deeds as individuals, as communities, and as governments is more important than ever.

Concurrently, we should reflect upon all aspects of Canada's history with clear eyes. Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada is a matter of greatest importance that we all must and shall work towards with purpose and determination - today and every day.

Throughout the pandemic, we have seen the best of Canadians. We have been there for one another, helping

our neighbours, supporting local businesses, protecting our most vulnerable, and making the right individual and collective decisions required to keep our families and communities safe and healthy.

### Hazardous course

At the same time, we have also seen deepening divisions – between neighbours, friends, and even families. These divisions have strained our communities. This has been reflected in an ever more combative national conversation, especially in and around the political arena, where some are actively working to polarize Canadians for partisan gain. This is a hazardous course that threatens the fabric of Canada.

As Canadians, let's identify and embrace what unites us, what brings us together.

At the same time, let us also embrace the fact that among our many freedoms is the right to disagree - but let us do so with healthy debate. People who hold differing views are not our adversaries – they are our friends, our neighbors, our families.

As we move forward from Canada Day into the year ahead, let's endeavour to carry with us those feelings and reflections from July 1st – contemplating the full scope of our history and how our different lived experiences have impacted the meaning that Canada holds for each of us.

And let's work every day – not just on Canada Day - to reaffirm our support for the values that unite us, the accomplishments we have achieved together, and the brighter days that we can create by working together. Finally, in a world with unprecedented challenges, let us also celebrate and be grateful that even with our issues, we remain blessed to be able to call this wondrous Canada our home.

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