

Turning the dial: How DEI captured the CBC and lost the public

By Patrick Kenney

On July 17, 2025, the U.S. Senate approved a [\\$1.1 billion rescission](#) of federal funding for National Public Radio (NPR) and the Public Broadcasting Service, following a similar vote in the House the month before.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

The issue wasn't with public broadcasting in principle, but with NPR and PBS in practice. It was a response to a growing sense among Americans that public broadcasting had deviated from its mandate. Instead of fostering broad civic engagement, NPR had become, in the words of one of its senior editors, "[an assembly line of progressive orthodoxy.](#)"

This should serve as a warning for Canada, where the CBC finds itself lost in a similar ideological fog. Like NPR and PBS,

the CBC was once a trusted voice in the national conversation: a platform for civil discourse, balanced reporting, and stories that reflected the diverse fabric of Canadian life. However, that institution is now a shadow of its former self. It still exists, but in a kind of twilight zone: still government-funded, but no longer valued.

The CBC I knew and admired was exemplified by broadcasters like Peter Gzowski, Barbara Frum, and Don Herron; it was not perfect, but it aimed for fairness, curiosity, and cultural diversity. It gave voice to the country—its regions, contradictions, humour, and pathos.

But sometime around the rise of Justin Trudeau's Liberal government in 2015, a shift occurred. The tone became more didactic, and the moral landscape narrowed. News stories started to resemble sermons, filtered through the sanctified language of identity politics, climate alarmism, and the latest phobia.

At the core of this shift is the CBC's institutional emphasis on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). The CBC has embraced DEI as a moral stance—a framework aimed not just at broadening perspectives but at enforcing them. In a newsroom influenced by DEI, journalism ceases to be a means of investigation and becomes a tool for advocacy. The aim is not only to report the world but to reshape it.

It is a serious contradiction for a public broadcaster—responsible for informing citizens and protecting democratic discourse—to swear allegiance to a comprehensive social ideology, whether it is DEI or any other. One is reminded of the Soviet-era Pravda, the official mouthpiece of the Communist Party, whose name, meaning “truth,” concealed its true role as a propaganda tool.

Many have recognized the obvious truth: when journalism becomes subordinate to ideology, it ceases to be journalism.

As American journalist Matt Taibbi noted, “The job of the press is to speak truth to power, not to curate narratives that suit power.” When curation becomes standard practice, the newsroom abandons its vocation for something entirely different. Selective silence, moral framing, and adherence to approved scripts turn it from a platform for truth into a pulpit of orthodoxy. No media institution can serve both truth and ideology without eventually betraying both.

This tension came into sharp relief in 2022, when former CBC producer Tara Henley broke ranks and publicly exposed the Corporation’s internal culture. In a widely circulated essay, she described [a newsroom culture hostile to dissent and allergic to complexity](#).

“To work at the CBC,” she wrote, “is to embrace cognitive dissonance and abandon journalistic integrity.”

The data shows that many Canadians share her same disquiet. According to the Reuters Institute, public trust in the CBC has dropped [17 percentage points in just four years](#). Among Canadians under 35, viewership has plummeted by [65% since 2010](#). In prime time, the CBC now captures a mere [2.1% of the audience—a 72% decline over six years](#). These are not the metrics of a healthy institution.

The CBC, like NPR, has come to confuse elite consensus with universal truth. The result is a broadcaster that speaks to *Canadians*, but no longer *with them*, let alone *for them*. When journalism gives way to social engineering, the audience doesn’t protest; it simply drifts away. Quietly and steadily, it turns the dial.

Fortunately, we live in a media landscape where the monopoly on the news has been broken. The old gatekeepers no longer control how information spreads, and Canadians—resourceful, skeptical, and quietly discerning—are seeking alternatives.

They are tuning in elsewhere, not to be coddled or corrected,

but to be informed. Not to be enlisted in a moral crusade, but to understand the world as it is, not merely as some would wish it to be.

The CBC still speaks, but fewer are listening. And unless it finds the humility to return to its founding purpose—to inform without preaching, to reflect rather than direct—it will continue its slow fade into irrelevance.

The dial has turned. And it will not turn back.

First published in [Juno News](#)