

# Liberal

ALBERTA LIBERAL OPPOSITION

## 2015 Policy Book

Comprehensive List of Approved Policies of the Alberta Liberal Opposition

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# Enhancing our Economy

- Support the introduction of a progressive taxation system in Alberta.
- Stop transfers from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund to General Revenue.
- Require that all government contracts over \$10,000 be fully and immediately disclosed to the public as open data.
- Return to a comprehensive consolidated budget.
- Establish the Office of the Budget Commissioner as an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.
- Enhance Alberta's economic potential through the creation of a Start-up Alberta Fund to support entrepreneurs and their small businesses.
- Require any reforms to public or private sector pension plans be negotiated through the collective bargaining process.
- Pursue a national agreement to boost Canada Pension Plan payouts and premiums, and tie any Pooled Registered Pension Plans in Alberta to the ratification of the national agreement.
- Work with our partners in Confederation to establish a national energy, transportation and utility corridor for the purposes of inter-provincial and international trade.
- Work with our partners in Confederation to establish free trade between all Canadian provinces and territories from coast-to-coast-to-coast.
- Work with our partners in Confederation to reform the Temporary Foreign Worker program to ensure Canadian jobs are protected, current workers are placed on the pathway to citizenship, and more permanent immigration in Alberta.
- Work with our partners in Confederation to remove the burden of Supply Management and eliminate mandatory check-offs for Alberta milk, egg, and poultry producers.
- Increase immigrant settlement funding.
- Improve international qualification assessments to expedite recognition of foreign credentials.
- Include paid farmworkers under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the *Workers' Compensation Act*, the Labour Relations Code, and the Employment Standards Code.
- Shorten required employment period for maternity/parental leave from 52 to 26 consecutive weeks.
- Amend the Alberta's Labour Code to allow unpaid candidate leave with a job guarantee.
- Modernize and liberalize Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission rules to allow for the creation of a "cafe culture" in municipalities.
- Incentivize the expansion of a homegrown small brewing and micro-distillery industry, which encourages domestic production and more choice for consumers.
- Cap interest rate charges and fees for payday and car title loans.
- Incentivize financial institutions to offer low-interest, short-term credit to people who need smaller-size loans.
- Develop the legal and regulatory framework to create a high speed rail network connecting Edmonton, Red Deer, and Calgary.

# Quality Education

- Eliminate school fees.
- Increase ESL funding.
- Make schools community hubs.
- Eliminate Provincial Achievement Tests.
- Start a provincial school lunch program.
- Fully fund all-day kindergarten programs.
- Provide a tax credit up to \$500 for teachers.
- Make Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) mandatory in schools where students request them.
- Include age appropriate information on consent in all programs of study dealing primarily with sexual health education.
- Incorporate accredited private schools into the public system by eliminating current funding model over the next five years.
- Ensure basics skills are taught first before discovery learning in the Alberta Education curriculum.
- Restore Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP), and create a new program of year-round, paid internships.
- Establish dedicated trade schools at the high school level by expanding the Registered Apprenticeship Program and other related trade-based programs.

# Innovative Learning

- Provide stable, predictable funding for post-secondary institutions by adopting a multi-year funding cycle.
- Deliver an equitable one-time capital funding package to universities in order to remedy accumulated liability due to chronic underfunding.
- Cap all post-secondary fee and tuition increases to under the rate of inflation and secure tuition fee regulations in legislation.
- Cut post-secondary tuition across the province by one third.
- Make grant-based financial aid to Alberta students superior to debt-financing.
- Prohibit post-secondary institutions from implementing and utilizing Market Modifiers and Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees.
- Lift restrictions on post-secondary institutions requiring them to direct resources or funding towards applied research.
- Increase opportunities for distance learning.

# Available Child Care

- Create a universal low-cost childcare program in Alberta.
- Increase the number of licensed child care spaces in the province.
- Permit high school credits to be awarded for students completing the Levels 1 to 5 “Child Care Course”, and make applicable child care volunteer work available for “Work Experience” high school credits, and ensure Child Care Worker wages are more competitive so that the quality of child care is enhanced.

# Making Housing Affordable

- Increase support the Housing First model.
- Implement a formal poverty reduction strategy for Alberta.
- Permit inclusionary zoning for municipalities to address affordable housing challenges.
- Expand the proposed dispute resolution process for condominiums to include single family dwellings.
- Require energy efficiency labeling for new homes and condos.
- Require residential builders to be licensed.

# Vibrant Families and Communities

- Increase funding to Family and Community Support Services and other community-led social initiatives that prevent social crises and improve social cohesion.
- Expand Community Facilities Enhancement Program (CFEP) to cover maintenance and accessibility upgrades.
- Index Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) payments to inflation.
- Base financial eligibility for income supports on real-life variables.
- Provide government services in more languages.
- Directly fund neighbourhood associations.
- Re-establish Community Lottery Boards.
- Create endowment for amateur sport.
- Increase funding to the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.
- Draft Big City Charters for Calgary and Edmonton.
- Redistribute revenue from Combined Low Expenditure Assessments to regional boards so that higher population centres receive a more reasonable share of the tax.
- Provide stable, predictable funding for municipalities by adopting a multi-year funding cycle.

# Healthy Living

- Return health care decision-making ability to frontline staff and administrators, not centralized under the Alberta Health (Services) bureaucracy.
- Extend dental care coverage to include lower-income Albertans who are not be able access basic and emergency dental services due to their unregulated costs.
- Work with our partners in Confederation to include dental care into the *Canada Health Act*.
- Guarantee maximum emergency and surgery wait times to six hours sand six months respectively.
- Guarantee access to mental health services within a maximum of seven days for children, youth, and adults experiencing acute episodes of mental illness, and fourteen days for those experiencing disabling symptoms of mental illness that are not of a psychotic or suicidal nature.
- Fully fund the cost of rehabilitation services provided by the CNIB to Albertans suffering from vision loss.
- Establish an Alberta Wellness Fund receiving an annual investment of approximately one percent of the total budget for Alberta Health.
- Use federal health transfer money for deferred health facility maintenance.
- Replace, modernize and expand the bed capacity of the Misericordia Community Hospital.
- Double the funding of for public home care.
- Keep the Michener Centre open.
- Ensure every Albertan has easy access to a family doctor and a primary care/wellness team by creating more incentives for general practitioners, increasing the ratio of residencies to medical school graduates, ensuring ongoing acute and community care linkages, and enhancing regional (rural) medical training programs.
- Increase funding to research into the prevention and treatment of chronic and autoimmune diseases, and encourage the creation of multidisciplinary teams who take an integrated approach to implementing these findings.
- Improve access to evidence-based treatment from multidisciplinary teams of both traditional and alternative health professionals in institutions and community treatment centres in order to treat individuals, including children, in a holistic manner encompassing mental and physical components concurrently.
- Make every reasonable effort to implement and expand on the recommendations of the Senate Committee Report (2006) and “Positive Futures – Optimizing Mental Health for Alberta’s Children & Youth” (2006).
- Require all private, for-profit health care service providers to disclose sufficient information with regard to the provision of programs and services paid for by public money in order to conduct value-for-money analyses and report these finding to the public on an annual basis.

# Dignity for Seniors

- Support the creation of a national affordable seniors' drug plan.
- Restore the Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program as a grant for eligible seniors.
- Introduce a refundable personal income tax credit for purpose of improving the safety and accessibility of a preferred residence.
- Mandate the installation of a fire-suppression systems such as automatic sprinklers in all facilities primarily used for housing seniors and other vulnerable persons in order to protect them from fire.
- Provide seniors' activity centres with stable funding to help address their rising but varied operating costs.
- Keep families together by eliminating the practice of transferring people awaiting continuing care placement to any available facility within 100 kilometres.
- Create more adequately and appropriately staffed public long term care facilities and spaces, including increased use of auxiliary hospitals.
- View palliative home care and hospice care as the first choice, not an alternative to placement or hospitalization, and improve the quality, consistency, accessibility of palliative home care/hospice care across the province.
- Expand accreditation standards, focusing on areas such as symptom management, and advance care planning, and support the integration of a palliative approach into chronic disease management.

# Respect for Indigenous Peoples

- Increase funding to Alberta Native Friendship Centres.
- Request an independent (Health Canada and the World Health Organization) study of Fort Chipewyan.
- Support a federal public inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women.
- Support a joint federal-provincial-First Nations investigation into the death of children in government care.
- Repeal the *Aboriginal Consultation Levy Act, 2013 (Bill 22)*, and commit to meaningful consultation with First Nations on resource development.
- Provide cultural competence training and care for Aboriginal Health.
- Require and fund cultural competency training and ongoing professional development by qualified Traditional Elders for Alberta teachers, administrators and staff who work with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students.
- Establish and fund an Aboriginal Wisdom Council, consisting of qualified Traditional Elders, with a mandate to evaluate the current situation in correctional facilities, make recommendations for structural and operational changes, and provide ongoing guidance on creating a more culturally inclusive environment for Aboriginal offenders in Alberta correctional facilities.

# Better Democracy

- Establish a single fixed election date
- Change Alberta's electoral system to instant-runoff (preferential) voting.
- Make municipal political contributions tax receiptable in the same manner as provincial and federal political contributions.
- Allow MLAs to have free votes in the Legislature on all non-budgetary or platform issues.
- End political interference in Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) requests by establishing an open, independent process.
- Co-locate Alberta Trade Offices in Canadian embassies and consulates.
- Require open competition for senior government representatives or trade envoys.
- Disband the Public Affairs Bureau.

# Fair and Safe Society

- Work with our partners in Confederation to decriminalize the production, sale, and use of cannabis, and issue fines and other penalties similar to those for public tobacco use and alcohol consumption.
- Increase and stabilize funding to Legal Aid Alberta to make it responsive to societal demands and available to more Albertans.
- Expand the Calgary and Edmonton Drug Court system to other jurisdictions, and provide funding to enhance further prevention, assessment, and treatment activities.
- Establish Mental Health Courts to effectively meet the needs of offenders with serious mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders.
- Instruct the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission to enforce evidence-based restrictions on alcohol advertising elements proven to be attractive to youth, and to reduce youth exposure to alcohol advertising through volume restrictions.
- Launch a broad-based public campaign to educate youth about the risks of alcohol use in order to foster a culture of responsibility in Alberta.
- Amend the Alberta Human Rights Act to include gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds of discrimination.
- Amend the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) to allow monetary penalties for companies that lose customers' personal information.
- Streamline death review process for children who die in government care.
- Remove section 11.1 of the Alberta Human Rights Act.
- Budget realistically for disaster recovery.
- Support the creation of a flood insurance program for Alberta.
- Reduce usage of antibiotics in the raising of livestock for consumption.
- Make helmets mandatory for ATV use.



# Responsible Energy Use

- Reduce volatility and high-cost of residential electricity bills.
- Ban economic withholding and bring in penalties for electricity generators and utilities that match the magnitude of the offense.
- Increase the powers of the Market Surveillance Administrator.
- Reduce dependence on coal-fired electricity generation and encourage the creation of a market for renewable energy.
- Encourage more bitumen upgrading in Alberta.
- Ensure appropriate environmental safeguards are in place to support getting Alberta's energy products to new markets.
- Grant all requesting stakeholders standing at Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) and Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) hearings.
- Legislate a new urban resource extraction policy, which requires mandatory consultation with urban municipalities before approving energy development projects within their boundaries, ensures licences are compatible with municipal development plans, and grants municipal governments veto power over the final licencing decision.
- Amend the *Responsible Energy Development Act* to include a requirement that the regulator must consider whether resource development applications are in the public interest, and reinstate the right of landowners to appeal environmental decisions affecting their land to an independent Environmental Appeals Board.

# Sustainable Environment

- Apply Alberta's carbon levy to actual emissions.
- Equally distribute carbon levy revenue between the Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation (CCEMC) and the Green Transit Incentives Program (GreenTRIP).
- Designate all surface and groundwater as a public good, to be managed in the public interest, and regulated accordingly.
- Enhance independent monitoring measures and impose tougher penalties for polluters.
- Establish the Office of the Environmental Commissioner as an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.
- Require a majority of members of the Science Advisory Panel of the Alberta Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Agency to have a background in environmental science, and amend the *Protecting Alberta's Environment Act* to require the Agency to publicly report its findings on a quarterly and annual basis.
- Amend the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan and the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan to slow forest degradation and fragmentation, and support legal protection of intact forests and prohibit further fragmentation under any new Land Use Regional Plans.
- Support and fund continuing research at the Experimental Lakes Area.
- Protect the habitats and migration patterns of endangered and at risk species.
- Ban hunting of wildlife held in captivity on game farms.