

Better Way Alberta: Re-Invest in Public Health Care

Albertans can no longer depend on public health-care services to be there when we need them. Emergency rooms are overrun, ambulance wait times are putting lives at risk, and delays in treatment are causing complications that strain the system even further. Staff shortages and burnout among the health-care workers who remain are exacerbating the crisis.

There is a better way. Together, we can build a road to a stronger, more resilient, and more equitable health-care system for all Albertans.

Here's how:

1. Keep health care publicly-funded and strengthen public delivery
2. Address staffing challenges in the health-care workforce
3. Invest in rural and small community health services
4. Resolve systemic flaws in seniors' care
5. Ensure equitable access to health care for all Albertans

Health-care workers continue to face unprecedented pressure after more than two years of pandemic response. The combination of spikes in demand (a result of public health measures that failed to contain the virus), changing workforce demographics, political hostility, bad faith bargaining, lack of investment, an emphasis on "efficiency" over preparedness, and poor working conditions has fomented into a perfect storm.

Instead of turning to costly short-term measures like outsourcing, Alberta needs to pursue a provincial health workforce strategy and collaborate on a national plan to improve working conditions, recruitment, and retention of health-care workers. This must include system-wide supports for health-care workers who are experiencing and/or are at risk of burnout and trauma.

Rather than continuing along a path of political hostility, undercutting, and privatization of our health-care system, we can choose to examine the evidence and learn from examples from around the world.

Learn more: betterwayalberta.ca

Better Way Alberta: Re-Invest in World-Class Post-Secondary Education

Alberta's post-secondary education system has suffered decades of neglect. Aside from a modest reinvestment in buildings and infrastructure during the boom-fueled early 2000s, the default government approach towards post-secondary education has been austerity.

Beyond funding challenges, virtually all provincial governments in the last 30 years have failed to produce and operationalize a concrete and meaningful vision for a viable, accessible, and

Here's how:

1. Restore \$500 million in funding cuts made over the last 4 years
2. Reverse 21% across-the-board tuition increases and explore a tuition-free model
3. End precarious employment for academic and support staff
4. Eliminate performance-based funding
5. Stop government interference and respect institutional autonomy and academic freedom

sustainable post-secondary education system—one consistent with the goals of fundamentally benefiting the public good and uplifting every new generation.

There is a better way. Together, we can build a thriving and accessible post-secondary education system that includes cutting edge polytechnics, strong community-based colleges, and world class research universities.

The development, viability, and long-term sustainability of our province depends on a thriving and vibrant post-secondary education system. Strong post-secondary education is critical to envisioning and planning a new economy: one that builds on the creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship, and sense of civic responsibility in our province. A strong system of universities, colleges, and polytechnics will provide an educated, critically thinking, and well-trained workforce that we need to grow our economy and build up all of our citizens.

Rather than continuing along a path of political hostility, we can choose to reinvest in the future of our province by providing a stronger and more equitable post-secondary education system for all Albertans

Learn more: betterwayalberta.ca

Better Way Alberta: Invest in High Quality Public Education

In recent years, the Government of Alberta has cut and destabilized funding for public education, introduced wildly unpopular curriculum without input from experts, and encouraged the growth and expansion of charter schools that are not publicly accessible.

There is a better way. Together, we can build a road to a stronger, more resilient, and more equitable public education system for all Albertans.

Here's how:

1. Invest in high-quality public schools for all Alberta students
2. Rescind policies that support privatization and fragmentation of our education system
3. Listen to the advice of educational experts to create a world-class curriculum
4. Reduce class sizes and provide appropriate support for students with diverse learning needs
5. Provide more mental health supports for students and families

Every child in Alberta deserves the right to access well-funded, high-quality public education that empowers them to reach their full potential. Schools must be staffed by well-trained teachers, school leaders, and other educational workers and support staff.

Public education must encourage children to become enthusiastic learners who succeed and thrive to their full potential so that as adults they may participate in democratic society as informed citizens. Education is an investment in society, one that allows for the improvement of outcomes for children, families, and communities. Building great schools for all Albertans requires strong commitment on the part of education stakeholders including the Government of Alberta and our elected Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Rather than continuing along a path of political hostility, undercutting, and privatization of our education system, we can choose to invest in the future of our province by providing a stronger and more equitable public education system for all Albertans.

Learn more: betterwayalberta.ca

Better Way Alberta: Invest in the New Energy Economy

For many decades, Alberta's economic prosperity has relied on precarious and volatile fossil fuel energy markets. Now, the world is moving away from fossil fuels and new industries are emerging to take their place. Experts say global demand for oil will peak as soon as 2025.

Despite the global disruption to energy systems, our government has failed to respond and prepare for this change. Our energy workers have the skills to compete, but we need to start re-tooling our economy now—or we'll be left behind.

There is a better way. Together, we can build a thriving, diversified, and resilient economy that provides the stability, opportunity, and quality of life that Albertans need to build a better future here.

Rather than continuing down the path of political hostility and polarization, we can work together for an Alberta that's ready and able to compete in the brave new energy world. According to Alberta Federation of Labour modelling, the new energy economy can create thousands of new jobs and usher in an era of prosperity like we've never seen before.

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Here's how:

1. Re-tool our economy to transition our oil and gas resources from fuel production to manufacturing materials like carbon fibre and recyclable plastics.
2. Expand public ownership and the use of innovative financing tools like windfall taxes to ensure oil and gas development advances the interests of hardworking Albertans.
3. Invest in a large-scale increase in our clean power generation to feed growing demand for low-cost electricity and attract new industries.
4. Ensure all publicly-supported projects result in tangible benefits for local workers and communities through Community Benefit Agreements.
5. Adopt strong labour market policies that protect workers from wage reductions and job losses through the transition.

Better Way Alberta: Take Action to Fight Inflation

From gas to groceries, inflation is soaring to levels not experienced since the 1980s. Average Albertans cannot shoulder this on their own, and more and more working families are falling behind.

Here's how:

1. Implement regulatory oversight and price controls to reign in price gouging.
2. Implement an excess profit tax to redistribute surplus wealth and disincentivize predatory profiteering by big businesses.
3. Promote the widespread adoption of cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) that tie wages to inflation in employment contracts and collective agreements.
4. Make it easier for workers to unionize and negotiate collectively by implementing single-step union certification.

At the same time, Canadian corporations are reporting record profits. While ordinary people struggle to keep up, corporations are taking advantage of inflation to raise prices even higher, gouging consumers to generate excess profits. And many employers are refusing to provide wage adjustments to ensure workers' pay keeps pace with the cost-of-living.

There is a better way. Together, we can tackle inflation and protect working families from predatory profiteering.

Workers have shouldered the brunt of the fallout from economic, health, and social pressures and pay a far higher tax rate than corporations to keep our communities running. The last three years have shown us that we need to have built-in protections, not only to keep people safe but to also protect their financial health. We must put in place levers that stop corporations from taking advantage of working Albertans, and we must do it now.

Learn more: betterwayalberta.ca

Better Way Alberta: Revenue Reform

Alberta is one of the wealthiest jurisdictions in the world. Yet our healthcare system is in crisis, too many children are in overflowing classrooms without enough supports, universities and colleges are being cut while student tuition is going up, and way too many families are struggling to make ends meet and falling into poverty. The so-called “Alberta tax advantage” is really only an advantage for profitable corporations and wealthy people.

There is a better way. The Alberta government can create a more fair and equitable revenue system that strengthens our economy and enables us to invest in high quality public services that benefit everyone.

As Alberta’s population grows to more than 4.5 million people, government funding needs to keep pace so we can invest in schools, hospitals, municipalities, transportation, and building infrastructure. We also must commit to increasing the number of educators, healthcare professionals, and front line workers who have been stretched to the limit by funding cuts, understaffing, and lack of support.

It’s time to make our tax system more fair for working families. Alberta can raise an additional \$5 billion to \$15 billion annually to invest back into communities and public services if the wealthiest 10% paid their fair share. This would avoid putting any additional pressure on the 90% of hardworking Albertans who have been shouldering the brunt of the investments into our province.

Here’s how:

1. Make the wealthy pay their fair share by implementing a more progressive income tax system and establishing a wealth tax on luxury goods.
2. Make highly profitable corporations pay their fair share by closing loopholes and taxing excess profits.
3. Eliminate public subsidies for highly profitable corporations.
4. Raise royalty rates to ensure resource development benefits all Albertans, now and for the future.
5. Direct new tax revenue from the wealthy and highly profitable corporations to cost relief for hardworking Albertans and improving public services for the benefit of everyone.

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Better Way Alberta: Retirement Security

A growing number of workers in Alberta don't have adequate savings for a secure retirement. The CPP was designed to be inadequate—CPP benefits have been capped at \$15,043 a year. The CPP was intended as a supplement, not as a liveable income for retirement. But fewer employers are providing workplace pensions, leaving many Albertans dependent on the CPP alone.

To make matters worse, instead of strengthening retirement security, our government has threatened to pull Alberta out of the CPP and create a new and duplicate, inferior pension plan. But the CPP belongs to Alberta workers, and making our pensions vulnerable to political agendas puts the future of Albertans at risk.

There is a better way. We can support workers to ensure that everyone in Alberta can count on a fair, liveable, and secure retirement income.

Albertans have shown very little confidence in the current Alberta government to manage investments fruitfully, having been shaken by issues with AimCo and costly private ventures and political projects that have returned little to no value to tax paying citizens. Not only that, but pulling Alberta out of the CPP will result in fewer benefits and higher costs.

To build a better future in Alberta, we need stability, opportunity, and a good standard of living to be available to all Alberta citizens at every stage of their working lives.

Here's how:

1. Keep Alberta in the CPP and work with the federal government to improve it.
2. Protect our contributions by excluding politicians from CPP investment decisions and leave these decisions to independent investment experts.
3. Mandate employers in Alberta to contribute to retirement plans for their employees.
4. Promote cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) that tie retirement benefits to inflation in employment contracts and collective agreements.
5. Make it easier for workers to unionize and negotiate collectively by implementing single-step union certification.

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Better Way Alberta: Respect & Rights for Workers

Hard-won laws to protect workers have not kept pace with the changing nature of work and new understandings of health and wellness. A growing number of workers are falling through the cracks. Exceptions and loopholes have eaten away at the Employment Standards Code, Labour Relations Code, Occupational Health and Safety, and Workers Compensation. Vulnerable workers fall prey to unsafe working conditions. Legislation is often toothless without serious government oversight and enforcement, all too often leaving workers to fight for their rights on their own against powerful corporations.

There is a better way. Together we can show hard-working Albertans the respect they deserve by strengthening our laws—and holding employers accountable for following them.

Albertans are proud of their work. They can see the buildings that were built by their hands, they can speak to the lives that they have saved in hospitals, and they can drive on the roads that they have paved. Our government must ensure that workers are empowered to demand the respect and protections they deserve, and that they benefit fairly from their hard work and contributions to our economy.

Learn more: betterwayalberta.ca

Here's how:

1. Expand the Employment Standards Code to cover all workers, including farm workers, contract employees, sales workers, and gig workers, and raise the bar for workers' rights and protections from the bare minimum.
2. Expand the Workers Compensation Act to address less visible workplace illness and injuries, like mental health impacts and the spread of diseases like COVID-19.
3. Ban injury-free workplace incentives that dissuade workers from reporting incidents.
4. Implement stronger oversight and enforcement of the Employment Standards Code, Labour Relations Code, and Occupational Health and Safety legislation to ensure employers are following the law.
5. Break down the current barriers for workers to unionize and negotiate collectively for fair pay and working conditions by implementing single-step union certification, while ensuring that punishments and enforcement of union busting tactics like terminations are significant enough to deter employers from acting illegally.