

# Alberta Liberal

# It's time.

## A Real Action Plan for Alberta

### Calgary needs action

This amazing city has too much going for it to be satisfied with the way things are. The people of Calgary shouldn't have to beg for hospitals and schools and roads, and then be expected to be grateful when promises are finally made just days before an election. That's no way to run a government.

Alberta hasn't seen a change of government for nearly 37 years. In fact, in our province's 103-year history, there have been only three changes of government: 1921, 1935, and 1971. Everyone knows that's not good for democracy.

Calgarians are looking for an alternative. This publication presents it: the platform of the Alberta Liberals.

Calgarians want a provincial government that supports jobs and the economy. The gas sector is still the backbone of Alberta's energy sector, and Calgarians want a government that rebalances royalties with a break for natural gas while markets stay weak.

Calgarians need schools in the communities that lack them. And they know that turning Mount Royal College into an undergraduate university is the most cost-effective way of solving Calgary's shortage of university spaces.

Calgarians are tired of traffic problems, and they know that fixing the problems means building roads, yes, but also serious support for public transit.

Calgarians need to feel safe in their communities. In the long term, better education and addressing issues of housing, homelessness and addictions can all help. But in the short term, the Alberta Liberals will make sure Calgary is able to put enough police on the streets.

Calgarians know that with all our wealth and our collective brain power, we can solve the affordable housing and homelessness crisis and we can build the best health care system in the world. All we need is the will to do it.

And Calgarians know that it's time to protect the watershed—especially in the Bow River Basin—that supplies water for more than a million people today, and space for many more in the future.

The Alberta Liberals are committed to making the right changes in all of these areas.

The current government spends more money per capita than any other province in Canada. Where on earth has it all gone?

Are you, and Alberta, better off after all those billions of dollars? Is health care better than it used to be? Are the roads better? The schools? What about the provincial parks? Seniors' programs?

Ask yourself those questions before you go out to vote. Then check out the alternative by reading this publication, speaking with your Alberta Liberal candidate, and visiting our website ([www.albertaliberal.com](http://www.albertaliberal.com)).

Because after 37 years of one government... it's time.

## A message from Kevin Taft

### PICTURE THIS...

An Alberta freed from the boom and bust cycle; within 20 years an Alberta government earning more from investments than from oil and gas royalties.

Permanently low personal and corporate taxes, no sales tax, and no health care premiums.

Transportation, schools, hospitals, and human services second to none in the world.

Enough health care professionals trained in Alberta so that we can share them with, not raid them from, the rest of the world.

An Alberta boasting five of the world's top 100 post-secondary institutions, supported by a massive endowment fund built from royalty revenues, and driving durable prosperity.

Genuine leadership in controlling greenhouse gas emissions—beginning now, not in 2020.

### IT'S TIME

Alberta needs a plan. It has needed one for a long time.

With a plan Alberta can become an astonishing success story with permanent prosperity, a healthy environment, and a vibrant society. Without a plan we will bounce between booms and busts, each time sacrificing more of our environment and paying a terrible economic and social price.

Alberta is the most abundant corner of the planet, but its potential is slipping through our fingers. Alberta's current government spends more per capita than any other provincial jurisdiction in Canada, yet our basic services such as schools and roads don't measure up. We are racing ahead with some of the largest industrial developments anywhere but, without a land-use strategy, we get conflict, waste, and confusion. The government collects billions every year in royalties, yet the Heritage Fund is worth less in real terms today than it was 20 years ago. Despite all this, the current government gives itself top marks.

I'm not a career politician. I got involved in politics because I couldn't watch Alberta's potential slip away. Shortly after becoming leader of the Alberta Liberals, I led our party through a process to set out our vision for the future of this wonderful province. With a clear goal in mind, we went to work, developing plans, speaking out, holding the government to account and, most of all, listening and learning.

This is the vision we're pursuing for Alberta:

- People flourishing in a healthy environment.
- Unequalled opportunity and permanent prosperity.
- A compassionate and secure society.
- Open and accountable government.

*It's time* presents the Alberta Liberal action plan to achieve this vision.

Albertans deserve a government that has the unmatched potential of this province clearly in sight, and an action plan for reaching that potential. The Alberta Liberals intend to form that government, and we ask for your support in making it happen now.



Kevin Taft, Leader  
Alberta Liberals



Photo of Kevin Taft by Pieter de Vos

### Election 2008: Our commitment

To Albertans who ask why they should choose the Alberta Liberals, we make five important commitments.

We will:

**Eliminate health care premiums now, not in four years.**

**Re-regulate electricity to lower Albertans' power bills.**

**Invest 30% of all royalties starting now, before it's too late.**

**Cap greenhouse gases in five years, through an active partnership with the energy industry.**

**Provide the hospitals and train the health care professionals Alberta needs, now.**

Meet Kevin Taft. Watch the video at [www.albertaliberal.com](http://www.albertaliberal.com)



“ We need to strengthen and improve public health care, not dismantle it. ”

# It's time for people flourishing in a healthy environment

Alberta Liberals believe that people are more than economic statistics—more than simply workers and consumers. People are our province's greatest strength today, and our best hope for the future.

With our resources, we should have the best health care and education systems in the world. We should have a thriving arts and cultural community, and well-planned, well-funded cities and towns. And we should not have to sacrifice the natural environment to do it.

An Alberta Liberal government will strengthen and improve sustainable public health care, not dismantle it.

We will reverse years of foot-dragging, and make Alberta a world leader in addressing environmental issues including climate change, water protection, and land stewardship.

We will properly fund public education. We will take steps to improve our post-secondary institutions while at the same time making them more accessible. And we will spark a renaissance in arts and culture in Alberta.

We will also build a working partnership between the province and its municipalities, ending years of rancour and dependence.

It's time for a healthier, more vibrant, sustainable Alberta.

## Action Plan for Health Care

### Address health workforce shortages

- Train enough nurses, doctors and other health professionals to meet Alberta's need.
- Explore new ways of funding physicians, creating multidisciplinary health care teams and encouraging better workforce tracking.

### Reduce wait times

- Create specialized surgical centres within the public system.
- Implement a province-wide Community Health Centre model, providing more flexible access to physicians, encouraging more efficient use of other health professionals, and reducing emergency room overcrowding.
- Increase acute care capacity to reduce overcrowding, by constructing new hospitals in southeast Calgary, Grande Prairie and elsewhere, and devise long-term plans to open more beds in Edmonton and rural centres.
- Provide prompt and equal access to medically necessary MRI and CT scans.

### Manage health system costs

- Implement a public pharmacare program to reduce costs and ensure equal access to medications.
- Conduct an independent and open review of regionalization including the role of the Department of Health and Wellness.
- Establish predictable funding levels, adjusted annually to reflect population growth, inflation, and aging.
- Ensure adequate funding for rural health services to reflect the special challenges and higher costs of delivering those services in sparsely populated regions.
- Create stable funding and long-term planning to accommodate an aging population.
- Bring the WCB back to using the public health care system so that the financial benefits of treating WCB clients flow back to taxpayers.

### Keep Albertans healthier

- Conduct a Health Impact Assessment on all major government policy and funding decisions, to examine their effect on a range of factors that influence the health of our society.
- Establish a Community Wellness Fund of approximately \$200 million per year, using taxes from tobacco sales, to support wellness and lifestyle initiatives and to expand Family and Community Support Services.

### Improve continuing care

- Legislate clear, measurable, resident-focused standards, province-wide, including standards for staff-to-resident ratios.
- Implement competitive wages, permanent positions, increased staffing levels and appropriate staff mixes, and establish training standards.
- Establish a Continuing Care Commissioner, accountable to the Legislature.
- Establish autonomous resident and family councils in all homes.
- Ensure that stimulating activities and therapies are readily available.
- Legislate a Resident's Bill of Rights.
- Fund the creation and operation of an independent Advocacy Centre for Dependent Adults.
- Legislate a minimum level of care per day for those in continuing care.
- Partner with colleges, universities and professional associations to recruit and train people for careers in continuing care.
- Ensure that all contracts between Regional Health Authorities and facilities are made public.
- Commit to immediate short-term, accountable funding.
- Concentrate funding in front-line resident care.

### Other policies

- Eliminate health care premiums.
- Elect Regional Health Authority boards.
- Increase support for home care programs.
- Publicly fund midwifery services.
- Provide palliative care as a core health service, without patient charges.
- Restore stable funding and long-term planning for mental health, with an emphasis on community support.

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# Action Plan for the Environment

## Climate change

- Establish an absolute cap on greenhouse gas emissions from all sources, to take effect five years after forming government, through an active partnership with the energy industry.
- Establish a Premier's Strategic Council on Climate Change to create and implement a comprehensive climate change policy.
- Ensure that Alberta's royalty system supports the protection of our air, land and water.
- Redirect the \$250 million Natural Gas Rebate Program towards energy efficiency and conservation, such as home and business energy-efficient retrofits, to allow all Albertans to join in the fight against climate change.
- Improve building code standards to reduce energy use.
- Support increased use of public transportation, recycling and composting.
- Promote cleaner renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind and geothermal power.
- Implement appropriate financial and economic incentives to develop carbon capture and storage technology.

## Water and wetlands

- Require mandatory watershed management planning for all major river basins, including wetland protection.
- Strengthen protections against interbasin water transfers by requiring full public consultation, and approval by the Alberta Water Council before introducing any special legislation.
- Require a provincial water inventory (surface and ground) and establish an effective monitoring program.
- Reduce, then phase out, freshwater injection for deep well flooding. Stop issuing new licences for deep well flooding with fresh groundwater, and set strict timelines for the cancellation of existing water licences specifically for deep well flooding in settled areas of Alberta.

## Coalbed methane

- Minimize the land area affected by coalbed methane development.
- Conduct an independent scientific analysis of the effects of coalbed methane drilling on groundwater quantity and quality, with priority on the Horseshoe Canyon region.
- Progressively reduce venting and flaring.
- Require Environmental Impact Assessments to assess the cumulative effects of large-scale coalbed methane developments.
- Ensure that any new regulations apply to existing operations.

## Public lands management

- Establish and implement a provincial land use strategy.
- Halt the sell-off of public lands.
- Halt "paid hunting" in Alberta.
- Limit clear-cutting and encourage wildlife protection in the forestry industry.
- Ensure that all industries work together to minimize the impact on our natural environment, especially in sensitive areas.
- Work with the forestry sector to explore and develop new opportunities for a broader, more sustainable base for the industry.
- Establish conservation offsets to balance lands impacted by development.
- Immediately review existing legislation to strengthen Alberta's parks and protected areas.
- Increase the amount of protected park space. As a first commitment, establish the Andy Russell-I'tai sah kòp Park.

## Waste management

- Implement a provincial waste management strategy to better manage waste and reduce Alberta's reliance on landfills.
- Set firm, province-wide targets for waste diversion, including recycling and composting.



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“Let's start addressing greenhouse gas emissions now, not in 2020.”

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## Action Plan for Municipalities

- Honour the 10-year Municipal Sustainability Initiative for the life of the agreement. The cumulative value of that agreement to Alberta's cities, towns, counties and municipal districts will not fall below \$11.3 billion.
- Amend the Alberta Act to constitutionalize municipalities and school boards, clarifying and securing their jurisdiction over areas of local responsibility.
- Enact a Big Cities Charter to give Calgary and Edmonton clearly spelled-out powers with respect to local matters and the authority to act independently within those areas of responsibility.
- Identify high-growth areas in Alberta and establish regional planning mechanisms within those areas to develop and implement growth plans, to focus and guide future development.



“In the province of the oilsands, parents should not need to pay school fees, sell chocolate bars, and work casinos simply to provide their children with the basics of learning.”

# Action Plan for Education

## Post-secondary education

- Create a Post-Secondary Endowment Fund, using a portion of oil and gas royalties. In just 15 years, the endowment could grow to \$15 billion and generate \$770 million in extra funding every year.
- Create a \$500 million Endowment for the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, using a portion of oil and gas royalties.
- Restore legislature control over tuition increases.
- Create targeted additional learning spaces for areas with a high number of applicants.
- Reduce interest rates on Alberta student loans, and increase the part-time earning limits.
- Provide three-year funding envelopes for post-secondary institutions so they may better plan for the future.
- Expand the Alberta Opportunities Bursary by doubling the funding and expanding eligibility.
- Recognize regional disparities in allocating student loans.
- Reduce or eliminate property taxes for on-campus student housing to make accommodation more affordable and to encourage the building of more spaces.
- Establish teaching chairs to support and recognize excellence at post-secondary institutions.
- Establish Mount Royal University in Calgary.

## K–12 education

- Support the Learning Commission’s recommendations for class sizes.
- Eliminate school fees and parent fundraising for essentials.
- Review the utilization formula for all schools, rural and urban, and, in the meantime, enact a three-year moratorium on school closures.
- Phase in new junior kindergarten programs (starting with at-risk children) and establish full-day kindergarten as recommended by the Alberta Commission on Learning.
- Reinforce the status of arts, second languages and physical education as essential complements to the core curriculum.
- Identify learning problems in or by the end of Grade 1.
- Move toward a more diagnostic model for Grade 3 provincial tests to ensure student success.
- Enable a “community schools” program, under which community supports such as health care, child care, after-school care and social services can be integrated under one roof.
- Fund additional supports for special-needs students, gifted students and students whose first language is not English.
- Introduce a school nutrition program to ensure at-risk children a healthy start at school every day.

- Maintain the current number of elected rural school boards, to keep the control of rural education in local hands.
- Recognize and address the transportation pressures facing rural school boards.
- Develop a career education program for junior and senior high school students with an emphasis on apprenticeship training.

## Aboriginal education

- Take aggressive measures—including mentorship programs, apprenticeship programs and specialized curriculum initiatives—to boost high school completion rates among Aboriginal students until they are on par with the rest of Alberta’s students.
- Require annual progress reports on First Nations, Métis and Inuit Policy Framework Initiatives from Alberta Education.



# Action Plan for Arts & Culture

- Double Alberta Foundation for the Arts funding immediately and triple it within three years.
- Pursue Status of the Artist legislation.
- Launch an Alberta Arts Festival, equivalent to the Alberta Games.
- Create an Alberta Film and Television Tax Credit.
- Pilot an Alberta Publishers Fund.
- Develop a capital investment strategy for heritage and cultural facilities.
- Eliminate entrance fees for youth to cultural facilities.

“A vibrant creative community is an essential part of a thriving, smart society.”

**It’s time to achieve unequalled opportunity and permanent prosperity**

Around the world, societies that flourish and prosper have two things in common: competitive taxes and great education systems. The Alberta Liberals will invest 30 per cent of royalties to keep our taxes competitive forever, and we will use part of that endowment to build up some of the finest educational institutions anywhere.

A healthy Alberta economy for the long term needs to fire on all pistons. Alberta’s most

sustainable sector is agriculture, if we tend to it carefully. We also need to support a strong, sustainable forestry industry, and to encourage small businesses. And in every sector of our economy, we must make sure that our workers are treated fairly, with the respect they deserve.

It’s time for an Alberta that invests today’s economic strength towards a secure and prosperous future.

“The richest province in Canada should be able to properly maintain its roads, schools and hospitals.”



## Action Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development

- Restore regional agriculture offices to create a “one-stop shop” for rural Albertans for information and consultative services on all provincial matters.
- Properly fund the Farmer’s Advocate office, and hire experts in oil and gas development to advise rural Albertans on their rights.
- Review the Surface Rights Act and Expropriation Act to strike a fair balance between landowner and industry interests in locating oil and gas wells and pipelines on privately owned land.
- Adequately fund the Surface Rights Board and the Land Expropriation Board.
- Work closely with farmers and industry to strengthen farm worker safety standards.
- Provide Workers’ Compensation Board programs for farm and ranch workers.
- Encourage vegetable and fruit production for local markets.
- Establish a provincial organic certification agency, and encourage and support the growing and marketing of organic products.
- Continue to support a strong and viable Canadian Wheat Board and ensure that farmers’ voices are heard in any changes being considered.

## Action Plan for Prosperity and Energy

- Invest 30 per cent of royalties to build permanent prosperity for Alberta’s future by:
  - building the Heritage Fund into a massive, permanent income fund for Alberta, allowing permanently low taxes;
  - eliminating the infrastructure debt by 2014;
  - establishing an uncapped endowment fund for post-secondary education; and
  - creating a \$500 million endowment fund for the arts, social sciences and humanities.
- Ensure ethical standards for Heritage Fund investments.
- Unleash “the Western Tiger” by encouraging the building of bitumen upgraders in Alberta and elsewhere in Western Canada, to keep economic benefits on our side of the Canadian border.
- Re-regulate electricity, with a priority on residential, agricultural, and smaller commercial users, to restore access to efficient, reliable electricity, and to save Albertans a lot of money.
- Designate areas experiencing rapid growth as ‘Growth Plan Areas.’ Growth Plans will govern future development decisions in each area.
- Establish the Aboriginal Development Fund to provide no-interest loans for the development of Aboriginal-owned businesses.
- Implement a fiscal and royalty regime designed to:
  - provide a competitive and appropriate return to Albertans, the owners of the resources;
  - ensure a thriving Alberta-based energy industry, with a competitive return for the businesses who take the risks;
  - support the long-term sustainability of resource extraction;
  - urgently address environmental issues; and
  - deliver maximum value-added wealth generation in Alberta and Canada, within environmental, economic, and social constraints.
- Total revenue collected in royalties will rise 20 per cent from what would be collected under today’s rules, with a rebalancing toward higher royalties from oilsands and more-manageable royalties from conventional gas.
- Enact the accountability recommendations of the Royalty Review Panel and the Auditor-General to ensure the Department of Energy meets standards.

## Action Plan for Infrastructure

- Retire the infrastructure debt by 2014, using a portion of royalties (as mentioned earlier).
- Fix our roads, and address the problem of inadequate highways.
- Finance the building of needed hospitals, schools, and other public facilities, and properly maintain existing infrastructure.
- Avoid public-private partnerships (P3s)—debt by another name—for core infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, and roads.

## Action Plan for Labour

- Revise the labour code to bring it up to 21st-century standards and to reflect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- Vigorously enforce employment and safety standards in the workplace.
- Devise a comprehensive human-resources strategy to better anticipate changes in Alberta’s labour needs and reduce our reliance on solutions such as temporary foreign workers.
- Allow temporary foreign workers only after all possible sources of labour have been exhausted.
- Expand the role and size of special advisory offices for temporary foreign workers province-wide. Prosecute businesses or individuals who violate foreign workers’ conditions of employment.
- Expand the Provincial Nominee Program.
- Establish direct first-contract certification.
- Prohibit the use of replacement workers during legal labour disputes.
- Establish an independent inquiry into the operations of the Workers’ Compensation Board.

**“Workers deserve to be valued & treated with respect, an element often lacking in today’s labour climate.”**

# Action Plan for Small Business

- Enact a Red Tape Review to aid small business, based on the B.C. model.
- Bring optional insurance (comprehensive and collision) and commercial vehicle insurance under the Automobile Insurance Rate Board.

- Re-regulate electricity (as mentioned earlier).
- Eliminate health care premiums (also as mentioned earlier).

“With an Alberta Liberal government, we won’t be left scratching our heads in a few years, wondering what ever happened to Alberta’s prosperity.”

# Action Plan for Forestry

- Work closely with forest industry operators to ease the blow from the collapsed U.S. housing market, the high Canadian dollar, and the impact of pine beetle.
- Examine a tax credit for new and recent machinery and equipment installed to improve efficiency and environmental performance.

- Support the development of biomass energy projects that use wood fiber, including electrical generation at forest manufacturing mills.
- Re-regulate electricity (as mentioned earlier).
- Work with industry to streamline forest regulatory system.

# It’s time for a compassionate and secure society

Albertans have a generous streak. They’re quick to extend a helping hand. Maybe it comes with the territory. First Nations people often helped early explorers and settlers get through hard winters. Homesteaders knew you needed help to build a barn.

We have learned the hard way that prosperity and success can come and go, and that most of us need help sooner or later.

In a province with our abundance, we know that no one should go homeless, no child should lack for food, and every senior, no matter what their circumstances, should be treated with respect. Yet we see those values pushed aside too often.

This section of *It’s time* presents highlights of our plan to ensure that Albertans, especially those in need, are treated properly. It directly addresses groups whose real needs are too often met with disrespect: children, seniors, Aboriginal people, the homeless, the poor, and the disabled.

It also gets serious about issues of crime and safety, and works towards greater social justice in more-secure communities.

It’s time for a government that cares about all Albertans, looks out for their security, and treats them with the compassion and respect they deserve.

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# Action Plan for Seniors

- Increase the number of dental procedures currently covered by the Dental Assistance for Seniors program.
- Inflation-proof the Alberta Seniors Benefit by indexing it to the Alberta Consumer Price Index.
- To help seniors keep their homes, establish a loan program for home repairs, with the loan to be repaid upon sale of the house.
- Establish an Independent Seniors’ Advocate.
- Give established seniors centres the funds to expand their services.
- Establish government-funded seniors centres to provide one-stop shopping for minor health needs, exercise programs, outreach to shut-ins, and other services.

# Action Plan for Human Services

- Replace the workfare model with social justice and social development approaches, to better enable people toward self-sufficiency.
- To address the current staffing crisis, ensure that human services workers in the not-for-profit sector receive the same wages and benefits as their government counterparts.
- Index AISH benefits according to Statistics Canada “average weekly earnings” for Alberta (as is done with MLA salaries).
- Work with AISH stakeholders to identify and address deficiencies in the current program.
- Streamline the AISH application system.
- Review the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program to ensure that the funding provides quality services and care to adults with developmental difficulties, and reaches the front-line.





**It's time.**  
*Alberta Liberal*

“Alberta invests less per child care space than any other province in Canada. How is this possible?”

# Action Plan for Child Care

- Trigger the creation of new child care centres and help existing centres flourish through increased start-up funding, and operational funding for accredited centres, pre-school, out-of-school care, and day homes.
- Work with employers and industry to develop a set of best practices to improve conditions for employees with children, and to increase understanding between employers and parents who work with them. Employers will also be eligible for start-up funding and operating funding once accredited.
- Boost wage enhancements at every level to help child care centres recruit and retain staff.
- Provide financial support for students in early childhood education.
- Forgive student loans for those who remain in Alberta as child care workers for three years after graduating.
- Make spaces for children aged 6 to 12 eligible for subsidies, just as they are in every other Canadian province.
- Reduce the minimum number of hours required for subsidy eligibility.
- Provide specialized financial assistance to centres and day homes that offer infant and toddler care to address their higher staffing costs and to encourage more centres to create spaces for very young children.
- Make the Children's Advocate independent of the Children's Services ministry.

# Action Plan for Homelessness and Affordable Housing

- Reinstating a government ministry devoted strictly to Aboriginal affairs.
- Advocate for quick, fair, and effective resolution of land claims for Alberta's First Nations.
- Double provincial funding for Friendship Centres.
- Take specific measures to improve Aboriginal health care and education, as outlined earlier in this document.
- Raise the profile of Aboriginal health by appointing a Director of Aboriginal Health within Health and Wellness.
- Heighten cultural awareness among health professionals, and encourage Aboriginal people to enter health professions.
- Establish urban-Aboriginal health centres.
- Implement the Alberta Liberal Affordable Housing Strategy, including a temporary 10-per-cent cap on rent increases, a limit of one rent increase per year, and a moratorium on condominium conversions, except where developers agree to replace any lost rental units with new rental properties.
- Through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, co-ordinate and assist in implementing municipal plans to end homelessness by creating the office of Director of Housing and Human Services.
- Introduce 'Permanent Supportive Housing,' which provides the chronically homeless with stable housing options combined with support and clinical services.
- Involve other ministries—Education, Health, Justice, Solicitor General, Children's Services and Municipal Affairs and Housing—in a joint effort to prevent at-risk children from becoming homeless.
- Allow for the creation of more secondary suites in homes, and offer grants of up to \$5,000 to homeowners to create new suites.
- Amend the Municipal Government Act to allow cities and towns the power to include minimum percentages of affordable housing in any new developments or redevelopments.
- Swap or donate land to local land trusts to devote in perpetuity to affordable housing; implement tax breaks to encourage private landowners to contribute their property to affordable housing projects.
- Encourage local governments to freeze, reduce or eliminate property taxes on affordable rental units by providing corresponding grants to municipalities to make up for the lost revenue.
- Encourage municipalities to eliminate development fee levies, fast-track building permits and waive permit fees.
- Match funding with the federal government's Affordable Housing Trust and the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust.
- Help up to 5,000 families achieve home ownership by extending financial assistance to moderate income earners who wish to buy their own homes, partnering with the private sector and community housing agencies to accomplish this goal.
- Connect allowances and supplements to the renter, not the unit.
- Provide low- or no-interest loans to qualifying low-income earners to cover the cost of the security deposit and one-month's rent.
- Expand the Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution Service, a program which is designed to reduce costs, wait times and the burden on the courts to resolve landlord-tenant disputes.

“In a province with our abundance no one should go homeless, no child should lack for food, and every senior should be treated with respect.”

# Action Plan for Social Justice

- Review the housing component of Alberta Works social assistance to bring it in line with the current reality of the Alberta marketplace.
- Tear down the 'welfare wall' that deters people on social assistance from moving beyond poverty by allowing some benefits to remain with the recipient until they establish themselves in the workplace.
- Review and change the low cut-off rates for benefits, which discourage people from moving beyond low-income jobs.
- Develop a 'living wage' policy that is sufficient to allow workers to support their families, and maintain a healthy quality of life.
- Provide social investment to the non-profit sector to help them build capacity, maintain staff and provide adequate services.

# Action Plan for Aboriginal Affairs

- Reinstate a government ministry devoted strictly to Aboriginal affairs.
- Advocate for quick, fair, and effective resolution of land claims for Alberta's First Nations.
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- Take specific measures to improve Aboriginal health care and education, as outlined earlier in this document.
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- Establish urban-Aboriginal health centres.



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 Calgary-Buffalo: **Kent Hehr**  
 Calgary-Cross: **Ron Reinhold**  
 Calgary-Currie: **Dave Taylor**  
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 Calgary-Egmont: **Cathie Williams**  
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 Calgary-Fish Creek: **Laura Shutiak**  
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 Calgary-West: **Beth Gignac**  
 Airdrie-Chestermere: **John Burke**  
 Foothills-Rocky View: **Herb Coburn**

For contact information visit [www.albertaliberal.com](http://www.albertaliberal.com) or call 1-800-661-9201

# Action Plan for Crime and Safety

- Increase the current police funding formula for Edmonton and Calgary to at least \$20 per capita.
- Work with major cities to improve security on transit systems.
- Revamp the police funding formula for communities with populations from 5,001 to 20,000, and from 20,001 to 100,000.
- Develop a Unified Family Court system for Alberta, which provides a single forum for families or individuals to address legal issues that arise out of a family breakdown.
- Support and expand diversionary courts.
- Develop independent review boards to deal with allegations of serious police misconduct.
- Adopt the RCMP recommendations on the use of Tasers.
- Amend the Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Act and other legislation to allow the province to seize assets gained through illegal activities and allocate the proceeds to victims of crime.
- Press the federal government to tighten parole criteria for violent and repeat offenders.
- Encourage and adequately fund community policing initiatives to provide a higher level of neighbourhood security.
- Encourage rental properties to be certified 'crime free,' based on a successful pilot program in Edmonton's social housing projects.
- Establish minimum drink prices in bars to curb public drunkenness.

Photo of Kevin Taft by Pieter de Vos



# It's time for open, accountable government

This fourth and final key to our vision for Alberta fits on two pages, yet it's every bit as important as our other three. After all, an open, accountable government will generate improvements in every other area discussed in It's time.

Many Albertans no longer believe they have a meaningful say in the important decisions that directly affect their lives. Alberta's government needs to do a better job of listening to Albertans, and of being accountable to them.

Let's move forward into a new era for democracy in Alberta.

The Alberta Liberals will define and shape genuine democratic processes that restore people's involvement in government. We will be inspired by the possibilities of activating democracy at every level of politics.

By restoring a working democracy and safeguarding human rights, we will restore the partnership between our government and Albertans.

It's time to put democracy back on track in Alberta.

**“Democracy has become derailed in Alberta. Let's put it back on track.”**

# Action Plan for Open, Accountable Government

- Conduct a comprehensive review of government programs to root out duplication and inefficiency, providing better service to Albertans while saving hundreds of millions of dollars each year.
- Bring fixed election dates to Alberta.
- Create a Citizen's Assembly on Electoral Reform to study other voting systems, such as proportional representation. A province-wide plebiscite will follow.
- Work towards equal representation of women and men in the Alberta Legislature.
- Reform election finance laws.
- Amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to increase government transparency.
- Enact whistleblower legislation.
- Ensure proper respect for human rights, and enforcement of human rights legislation.
- Strengthen consumer protection legislation and support to protect Albertans from unfair market practices.
- Open up the process of appointments to government boards to reduce patronage.
- Ensure that Alberta's auditor general has powers at least equivalent to the federal auditor general.
- Strengthen the role of the Public Accounts Committee, to better identify and reduce government waste.
- Publicly release internal audit results within 24 months (the current government seals them for 15 years).
- Eliminate the Public Affairs Bureau and replace it with a non-partisan government communications service.