



## Labour

**1. Statistics Canada reports unionized workers enjoy 14 to 20 percent higher wages than non-unionized workers in the same line of work, as well as stronger pensions, superior health and safety standards, longer paid vacation time, better health and drug benefits, and more rights in the workplace. Does your party believe that unions play a positive role in our economy? If so, what policies will your party implement to create a climate that is easier for unions to organize?**

The foundation of Today's BC Liberal plan is a strong, growing, and diverse economy that creates good-paying jobs for British Columbians. A job is the best way to look after the people we love and unions are an important part of that.

Like everyone else, the best thing for union workers is work. That's why we are focused on responsible resource development and building the infrastructure our province needs to continue to grow our economy.

Today's BC Liberals will continue to find ways to ensure that British Columbians have the opportunity to find well paying, family supporting jobs. Unions have and will continue to have a role in our province and we are committed to a maintaining a constructive working relationship.

**2. Over the past decade in British Columbia, an average of 150 workers die on the job each year, and 17 workers in the province are permanently disabled from workplace accidents every day. What will your party do to guarantee better health and safety conditions to reduce workplace injuries and fatalities?**

One death in the workplace is too many, which is why everyone, including regulators, workers and employers, need to collaborate to ensure best practices are followed to make safety paramount. The rate of work-related deaths in BC has been declining steadily over the last two decades. While the number of fatalities has not fallen as rapidly as we would like, according to WorkSafeBC data, the rate has decreased by two-thirds – from 1.02 deaths per 10,000 person-years of work in 1990 to 0.34 in 2014.

Technological advances and evolving workplace cultures that value safety have combined to produce and reinforce this positive trend. Today's BC Liberals will continue to look for innovative paths to increase worker safety.

Over half of all work-related fatalities are from occupational diseases, of which the majority are from exposure to asbestos. Our government has established a cross-ministerial working group to take a broad approach and work collaboratively to identify, review and report on a range of issues, including worker safety, building renovation and abatement matters, and public health and awareness. They will also

liaise with the federal government as it moves to implement its announced ban on asbestos in 2018. The working group will engage with stakeholders and interested groups to look at best practices and strategies for helping to ensure worker safety when dealing with asbestos.

Today's BC Liberals support the working group's goals and will ensure a focus on asbestos safety going forward.

**3. While corporate profits, productivity and GDP have all increased consistently during the past thirty years, Statistics Canada reports that both real hourly wages and median family income have been stagnant since 1980. Why do you think this has happened, and what does your party propose to change the situation?**

The foundation of Today's BC Liberal plan is a strong, growing, and diverse economy that creates good-paying jobs for British Columbians. By sticking to this plan, we have the fastest growing economy in the country and leading the country with over 222,000 new jobs created since 2011.

BC's average hourly wage is trending upwards at over \$25/hour and over \$15/hour for youths. British Columbians have the second highest disposable incomes in Canada.

And we've achieved this while controlling government spending in order to leave more money in the pockets of people. Due to strong fiscal management, British Columbia can afford to reduce taxes while also making historic investments in hospital and programs to ensure that we care for the people we love.

## **The Economy**

**4. British Columbia has become a deeply unequal province. According to Statistics Canada, the top 20% of income earners enjoy 44.8% of after-tax income, the highest in the country, while the poorest earn only 5%. How will your party reverse this trend and reduce the growing levels of economic inequality in British Columbia?**

Today's BC Liberals recognize individuals and families know how to spend their money best – not government. That's why we're focused on controlling government spending and building on our record of having one of the lowest overall tax burdens in Canada. British Columbia has the lowest provincial income taxes for those making up to \$125,000 and personal income taxes for most British Columbians have decreased by 37% since 2001. If re-elected, we will freeze all personal income taxes for the next four years.

We're also providing a billion-dollar tax cut to the middle class in B.C. by reducing MSP premiums by 50%, saving families an average of \$900 per year. This MSP cut benefits 2 million British Columbians, on top of the 2 million who currently pay no MSP at all – and we're working towards eliminating premiums entirely.

**A recent Environics Research poll showed that 90% of British Columbians think there should be income tax increases for the wealthiest income earners, and 67% believe that major corporations pay less tax than they should. Since the beginning of the new millennium, the wealthiest citizens and businesses have enjoyed tax breaks, supposedly to “create jobs,” yet the unemployment rate in BC is the same today as it was in 2000, at approximately 6%. Does your party believe that those who benefit the most should pay their fair share of taxes?**

Today’s BC Liberals have built a solid foundation in British Columbia, with the fastest growing economy in the country and leading the country in job creation.

This is a marked improvement from the 1990s, when BC had the highest unemployment rate in western Canada every year under the NDP, and our province was dead last in job growth in Canada the last four years they were in power.

We have a plan to keep this momentum building, which includes controlling government spending, keeping taxes low and supporting a skilled workforce in British Columbia.

Our BC Jobs Plan includes new, ambitious targets:

- British Columbia will be the most diversified economy in Canada by 2022;
- We will continue to ensure British Columbians are first in line for the nearly one million job openings through 2025;
- British Columbia will be a leader in Canada in driving innovation and competitiveness, while demonstrating climate leadership; and
- We will continue to be a leader in Canada in breaking down barriers to business and trade and supporting the export capacity of B.C. businesses.

Today’s BC Liberals will stick to our plan to keep our economy diverse, strong and growing to secure a bright future for BC.

**6. The resource extraction-only policies have left this province split. Urban areas are seeing growth and opportunities like no other jurisdiction in Canada, while rural British Columbia is seeing negative growth, increasing unemployment and limited job prospects. What plans does your party have to encourage secondary industries to invest in rural British Columbia?**

Rural communities in BC have punched above their weight in building our province. Whether supporting public services or infrastructure investments, the contribution of rural B.C. makes the vital investments that all British Columbians need possible. Now more than ever, it is critical to understand the challenges for rural communities, and have a government with a plan to help them face difficult, changing economic circumstances.

Today’s BC Liberals are the only party with a plan for rural British Columbia, including:

- Delivering the Rural Dividend—a three year, \$25 million annual fund to assist rural communities to reinvigorate and diversify their local economies.

- Releasing the BC Rural Economic Development Strategy containing 73 specific commitments to grow and diversify our rural economy, such as:
  - Making targeted trades and training investments in rural communities to develop talent that supports local industry needs and the development of a more diversified regional economy; and
  - Encouraging continued innovation in our natural resource industries to maintain a competitive edge.

Going forward, Today's BC Liberals will:

- Commit \$50 million to continue the BC Rural Dividend program into 2021-22;
- Invest \$40 million to support our goal of 100% high-speed internet connectivity for all British Columbians before 2021;
- Commit \$8 million to continue the Provincial Livestock Fencing Program to 2021; and
- Monitor the Spruce Beetle outbreak in the Omineca forestry region and provide an additional \$4 million to identify and eliminate stands of wood impacted by the beetle.

## Health Care

### **7. Medical Service Plan payments are a user fee unlike anywhere else in Canada. This tax unfairly targets low and middle income families. Does your party support scrapping the MSP premiums?**

For middle-class families looking for help making life more affordable, Today's BC Liberals commit to providing a billion-dollar tax cut by making dramatic reductions to Medical Service Plan premiums. With two million British Columbians already exempt from MSP, two million more will see their premiums cut by 50% in January – the first step towards eliminating MSP entirely. This means a typical family of four earning less than \$120,000 will save \$900 per year in 2018.

### **8. Our publicly administered, universal health care system is cherished throughout British Columbia. More of these services, however, are being de-funded and privatized. What policies will your party implement to ensure that health care in the province remains under public control and is accessible to everyone?**

B.C. has the best health outcomes in Canada and, since forming government, Today's BC Liberals have made record investments in making sure British Columbians live long, healthy lives. We've invested in new and expanded hospitals and more than doubled the number of doctors who graduate from B.C. medical schools. And we've created healthy-senior friendly communities. While we have made huge strides, we know there is much more to do as our population continues to grow and age. Today's BC Liberals have a plan for health care. Now and into the future.

Since we were first elected, Today's BC Liberals have made major health care infrastructure investments across the province. Approximately \$12 billion has been invested in health facilities, including 30 completed major health capital projects throughout our province.

And we aren't stopping there. If re-elected, we will:

- Invest \$2.7 billion in capital spending on infrastructure in the health sector over the next three years.

- Complete on time and on budget previously announced major capital infrastructure, including:
  - A new St. Paul's replacement hospital in Vancouver;
  - Fully redeveloping Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster;
  - Redeveloping Burnaby Hospital and Penticton Regional Hospital;
  - Building two new hospitals in Courtney-Comox and Campbell River;
  - Completing the Royal Inland Hospital Patient Tower Project in Kamloops;
  - Upgrading G.R. Baker in Quesnel;
  - Completing the emergency department at Nicola Valley Hospital and Health Centre; and
  - Constructing 16 new operating rooms at Jim Pattison Pavilion at VGH.

**9. There are thousands of people in the province on waiting lists for surgery, home care, and finding a family doctor. What will your party do to fund more doctors, nursing positions and hospital beds throughout the province, and ensure that our health care system is there for us when we need it?**

Since 2001, we have more than doubled the number of nursing spaces, adding almost 4,800 new student spaces to train nurses. And we will provide funding to train an additional 500 nurses per year by 2022.

We will continue to work with our partners to encourage doctors to establish and expand family practices by:

- Growing the number of graduating doctors from medical programs to 400 by 2025—ensuring that the majority of these new students are placed at the University of Victoria, UNBC and UBC Okanagan.
- Identifying retention programs to ensure these health care providers remain in rural and northern communities.
- Expanding our Practice-Ready Assessment-BC program that fast-tracks international physicians into clinical practice in rural communities.

There's no question that waiting for surgery is challenging and can be stressful. We have tremendous gains – there were 572,063 surgical procedures done in BC in 2015/16 – 40% more than in 2001/02. But some patients are waiting too long, and that's why we invested an extra \$25 million last year to bring down wait lists. We will build on this investment by:

- Investing \$225 million over three years to reduce surgical wait times for elective surgeries – with no impact on emergency surgeries. That means 5,500 more hip and knee replacement surgeries over the next two years.
- Investing in 16 new state-of-the-art operating rooms at Vancouver General Hospital that will see 2,200 more surgeries done each year.

The NDP plan does not promise to invest one more penny than we do in health care. Today's BC Liberals believe there's more work to do – but we can only do it if we keep growing the economy.

## Education

**10. One of the most important policies for creating a better education system is reducing class sizes. With the recent court ruling in favour of smaller class sizes, what specific policies will your party implement to hire more teachers and reduce class sizes in primary and secondary schools in British Columbia?**

The agreement reached last month between our government and teachers is great news for students and parents - it means thousands more teachers will be hired. In 2014, our BC Liberal government secured the longest contract ever with teachers - five years of labour peace - providing time to focus on supporting students. We will strive to secure another long-term contract to provide long term stability in the classroom for parents, students and teachers.

BC's total education budget for public and independent schools is \$5.9 billion in 2017-18 – a record \$314 million (5.6%) increase from the 2016-17 school year. Annual education funding is up 44% since 2000/01, or more than \$1.8 billion, at a time when there are fewer students in the school system. The record level of investments we are making in our schools today is only possible because we have been able to get to yes on economic development.

The NDP plan includes no additional dollars for education. Going forward, Today's BC Liberals will continue to deliver a well-funded system that supports students and helps them achieve their full potential.

**11. As a result of cutbacks to post-secondary education over the past two decades, average tuition fees in the province increased four-fold between 1990 and 2010, adding to the already-record levels of student debt. What will your party do to lower tuition fees and reduce student debt in the province?**

According to the latest Statistics Canada report on tuition fees, BC has the fourth-lowest tuition in Canada. Our students pay less than one-third the average cost of post-secondary education. And recognizing that students needed to have certainty around tuition changes, our government has capped at 2% annually since 2005 and Today's BC Liberals commit to maintaining this cap.

Additional steps we've taken to make post-secondary more affordable include:

- Targeting provincial grants to benefit 22,000 students, investing approximately \$55 million annually;
- Disbursing approximately \$4 billion in loans and grants since 2001 to make education more accessible;
- Providing grants of up to \$5,500 to former youth in care who want to pursue training and education beyond high school;
- Supporting the Federal/Provincial Repayment Assistance Plan, helping low-income British Columbians to manage their student debt; and
- Implementing the BC Loan Forgiveness Program, forgiving 100% of student loans over a five-year period for eligible professionals.

If re-elected, Today's BC Liberals will lower the interest rate on student loans to the prime interest rate, saving students approximately \$45 million over the next three years. And we will expand the open

textbook program by committing an additional \$10 million over the term, building on the more than 170 open textbooks already available online for free, which has saved over 34,000 students as much as \$3.9 million so far.

## **The Environment and Resources**

### **12. Each year, millions of raw logs and other natural resources are shipped to value-added industries in other countries. What specific plans does your party have to prevent this and instead create high-value secondary industries in British Columbia?**

We all want our logs to be milled in BC, as much as possible. That's why we've focused on developing new markets for BC lumber. Exports to China increased by 2000% from 2003-2014, and we recently sent our biggest lumber shipment to India. Under current laws, every log has to be offered for domestic sale before it can be exported. So logs are only exported if nobody in BC wants to buy them.

The NDP's plan presents a muddled view that would cost thousands of forest workers their jobs, severely damage the truck logging industry, and destroy our coastal forest industry. Today's BC Liberals believe in opening up new markets, while also keeping those working in the bush employed. Across BC, the volume of timber harvested from public forests and exported as logs is a fraction of the annual harvest of public timber – around 7%. Log exports from private land are regulated by the federal government.

And we've made great progress to create domestic demand for value-added forest products – like policies and programs that encourage wood innovation and the use of wood construction for bigger and taller buildings. BC now has the tallest contemporary wood building in the world – Brock Commons Tallwood House at UBC at 18 stories.

### **13. British Columbians care deeply about our environment and believe that climate change is a major issue. What will your party do to reduce our carbon footprint and help lower greenhouse gas emissions?**

Today's BC Liberals are recognized as global climate leaders, with North America's first broad based, revenue-neutral carbon tax and the first to have a carbon-neutral public sector. We can also be proud that our electricity supply is already 98% clean.

We've proven that you can reduce GHG emissions while continuing to grow the economy and create jobs for BC families. Our Climate Leadership Plan sets out 21 new strategic actions spanning the province's transportation and industrial sectors, along with the built environment and government operations, including:

- Launching a strategy to reduce upstream methane emissions by 45%;
- Making B.C.'s electricity 100% renewable or clean;
- Expanding the Clean Energy Vehicle program to support new vehicle incentives and infrastructure, and new transit options;
- Setting a target for buildings to be net-zero ready by 2032; and
- Targeting sequestration opportunities in our forests, and emission reductions in our natural gas production and processing.

Today's BC Liberals introduced North America's first transparent, revenue-neutral carbon tax in 2008. Currently at \$30 per tonne, B.C.'s carbon tax is the highest and most comprehensive carbon price on the continent.

We will maintain the carbon tax freeze until 2021, while other Canadian provinces catch up to our leadership position. The carbon tax will be revenue neutral, meaning every dollar raised will be returned to British Columbians in the form of tax relief. This way, we maintain affordability for families and competitiveness for industry.

## **First Nations**

**14. Where does your party stand in relation to indigenous rights? What plans do you have in place that ensure meaningful discussions around the integration of indigenous peoples into the forestry and mining sectors, as well as other areas of the economy that flow from their traditional lands? How are you going to help with social issues facing many indigenous people on reserves across this province?**

Today's BC Liberals are committed to province-wide reconciliation, and also reconciliation on a nation-to-nation basis. The annual First Nation's Leaders' Gathering with the Premier and Cabinet serves as a forum for broader dialogue on a range of issues, including economic development, education and social welfare.

We appointed Grand Chief Ed John as a special advisor and allocated \$120 million for family supports and reunification, culturally appropriate services, and additional staff within Indigenous communities that will begin to address the recommendations of his report on Indigenous Child Welfare.

Pursuing economic development and reconciliation in BC go hand in hand.

We were the first government in Canada to provide a share of mineral tax revenue from mines to First Nations. In the last four years, \$26 million in direct mineral-tax revenues from new mines and major mine expansions has flowed to First Nations as a result of Economic Community Development Agreements.

We were also the first to share revenue from forestry resources. In 2010, we introduced forest consultation and revenue sharing agreements based on harvest activities in traditional territories. Since 2010, we have concluded 240 agreements with more than 150 First Nations. And since 2003, First Nations with revenue sharing agreements have received more than \$420 million. First Nations hold over 10% of the provincial allowable annual cut – about 8.2 million cubic metres a year.

We are proud of the relationships we have built with First Nations, reaching close to 500 economic and reconciliation agreements - nearly 400 of those since 2013.