
Federal Relations

Ensuring Alberta is Leading the Nation Forward



Wildrose Caucus

Get it Right!

Federal Relations



Canada is a fantastic country with wonderful people. However, our nation will not reach its full potential and our national unity will be constantly undermined if we practice and institutionalize an unbalanced, undemocratic, and irresponsible brand of centralized federalism. A decentralized federalism that respects the diverse strengths, needs, cultures, resources and values of Canada's provinces, will both strengthen our economy while achieving a more unified nation.

Promoting strong provinces means respecting their constitutional rights and jurisdictions. Whether it is environmental regulation, the export of provincial resources, property rights, or securities regulation, the Government of Alberta must be ever vigilant with protecting our province's rights of self-governance. We have learned by unfortunate experience (i.e. National Energy Program, Wheat Board, Gun Registry, Equalization, etc.), when the federal government seeks to centralize and regulate a responsibility of the provinces, it generally ends in failure.

Another critical area of concern is the massive transfer of wealth between Alberta and Canada's so-called 'have-not' provinces. In 2009 alone, Alberta taxpayers sent \$21 billion more to the federal government for direct use by other provinces than we received in return. This equates to roughly \$5,700 for every man, woman and child in our province – by far the largest contribution per capita in Canada. A much larger portion of these dollars should be returned to Alberta for our infrastructure, health care, education and deficit reduction needs.

Equalization

Federal equalization and other wealth transfer programs were ostensibly intended to balance the quality of social programs across the country. Instead, what has happened is that the provinces benefiting most from these programs are now able to offer significantly more generous services to their citizens than the two or three provinces who are the actual net contributors (primarily Alberta and Ontario). It is no small irony that the biggest single beneficiary of such transfers, Quebec, provides cheap university tuition and inexpensive provincial day care, while Albertans pay high prices for, and have severe shortages of both in their own province. These annual wealth transfers also create the perverse incentive for 'have-not' provinces to retain fiscally irresponsible taxation and spending levels thereby remaining on the transfer dole in perpetuity. Equalization and other wealth transfer programs are failed Trudeau-era reforms that clearly are not working as originally intended and do not treat Albertans fairly.

Did you know?

Alberta has been sending around \$20 Billion more to Ottawa than it gets back in services in recent years. That works out to around \$21,375 *each year* for a family of four.

Finally, an effective and streamlined immigration system has become critical to the health of Alberta's economy and workforce, not to mention the strength it lends to our increasingly diverse provincial culture. As a province we need to take more control over our immigration system from the federal government, just as Quebec has, to ensure immigration better serves our provincial needs.

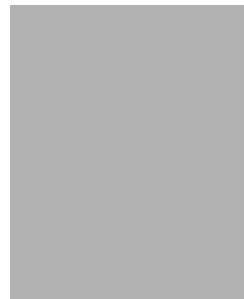
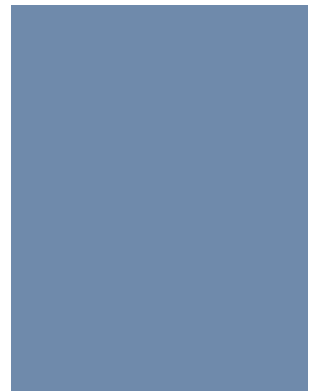
Get it Right

Albertans deserve better. A Wildrose Alliance Government would strengthen our province and nation by implementing the following policies with regards to federal relations:

- Aggressively address the issue of interprovincial wealth transfer with the federal government and Canada's premiers. Alberta must never sign another equalization agreement unless it is fair to the people of Alberta. Whether it be through the transfer of tax points, a formula-driven cap on net equalization transfers from Alberta, removing natural resource revenues from the equalization formula, or through constitutionally challenging the current equalization formula, a Wildrose government would ensure that billions more of Albertan's hard earned tax dollars remain in the province to help keep up with the growth pressures we face.
- Assert our provincial constitutional rights by demanding that the federal government cease any initiative which seeks to regulate Alberta industry or property through the auspices of environmental regulation. Alberta's resource based economy is unique in all of Canada, and therefore, so too should be our environmental strategy. Any proposal that imposes a 'cap and trade' wealth transfer scheme, an arbitrary emissions cap, restrictions on bitumen exports, or any other federal intrusion into a clearly provincial jurisdiction must be met with unflinching opposition using all political, media and legal tools at our disposal.
- Work with other provinces to greatly reduce interprovincial trade barriers by expanding the Trade, Investment, Labour and Mobility Agreement (TILMA) to include Canada's other provinces and territories.

- Ensure Alberta businesses and entrepreneurs continue to have the choice of a provincial securities regulator (in addition to any contemplated national regulator) that serves the unique needs and interests of Alberta's investors and companies. A Wildrose government would also work with other provinces to improve and further streamline the securities 'passport' system thereby making it more seamless for Alberta companies to raise capital across the country.
- Explore the option of taking more control over immigration from the federal government as Quebec has done. A provincial immigration system, if administered properly, will greatly benefit Alberta's economy by making it easier for qualified and financially sponsored working-age immigrants to enter, integrate, have their foreign educational credentials recognized, and contribute to Alberta on a permanent basis. The current provincial nominee and temporary worker programs administered by the province are under-utilized, rife with unfairness, massively backlogged and are not serving the interests of Albertans.
- Protect the rights of law abiding hunters and farmers by aggressively lobbying the federal government to eliminate the failed long gun registry.
- Work with the federal government and neighboring provinces to end the western wheat board monopoly.
- Continue to insist that only duly elected senators be appointed to represent Alberta in the Senate.





For more information, please visit: www.wildrosecaucus.ca