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Weekly News

Alberta NDP calls on government to release internal analysis on job-killin Sovereignty Act:

- A Freedom of Information Request by the Alberta NDP was returned on December 16, and showed there were 71 pages of records in response to the request for “all briefing materials sent or held by the staff in the Office of Premier on the Sovereignty Act.”
 - The Premier’s Office refused to release any of the documents.
- The UCP shut down debate on the Sovereignty Act to rush it through the legislature, even though the Calgary Chamber, municipal leaders, Indigenous leaders and more were warning about the impact it would have on Alberta's economy.
- Danielle Smith’s office has barred Albertans from seeing the only internal government analysis of the job-killing Sovereignty Act. Albertans deserve to know what warnings Smith and her team received about this act from the public service.
- Albertans ought to have the same information that she does about this devastating act that introduces

uncertainty into our economy at a critical moment. It signals to investors that they can't rely on due process and the rule of law, and throws the consultation process with First Nations into chaos. Former Bank of Canada governor David Dodge said Danielle Smith's bill 'sends a message that Alberta can't quite get its act together.'

- The Alberta NDP will repeal the Sovereignty Act as part of our Competitiveness, Jobs, and Investment Strategy, which was unveiled last week. Benefits of this strategy have been recognized and supported by the Alberta Industrial Heartland Association.
- We will offer Albertans a stable, no-surprises government that is focused on getting real relief to families, ending the chaos in healthcare, and building a resilient jobs economy.

Onion Lake Cree First Nation file lawsuit against UCP over Sovereignty Act:

- The UCP's job-killing Sovereignty Act has been in force for only four days, and it's already creating chaos. Onion Lake Cree First Nation warned Smith in writing that her bill violated Treaty rights. Numerous Indigenous leaders have made the same

point in recent days, and the Assembly of First Nations passed a resolution calling for the bill to be withdrawn. Danielle Smith and the UCP ignored them all.

- Today's court challenge is the direct result of the UCP's utter failure to respect and uphold their duty to consult with First Nations. It's an avoidable setback for reconciliation and a blow to economic certainty.
- An Alberta NDP government will repeal the unconstitutional Sovereignty Act and uphold treaty rights as part of building a resilient jobs economy.

UCP open up applications to Alberta Broadband Fund:

- Access to high-speed internet is essential in order to support the vitality and economic development of rural and remote communities.
- The UCP has made announcement after announcement, promise after promise to start work on rural broadband, but have failed to get a single shovel in the ground in three and a half years.
- Instead of creating a made-in-Alberta broadband strategy as we have proposed, the UCP handed

control of Albertans' money to the federal government program only to realize that several communities and organizations did not qualify.

- An NDP government will immediately get to work on delivering high-speed internet access in every corner of the province so we can support rural and remote communities in building a resilient jobs economy.

Stollery Hospital declares state of emergency:

- My thoughts are with all the families who are struggling to get care for a sick or injured child, and with the staff at the Stollery, who are utterly exhausted with no end in sight.
- A state of emergency means AHS can cancel Christmas vacations, require mandatory overtime, and take other emergency staffing measures to try and shore up an overwhelmed hospital.
- These frontline workers are true Alberta heroes. But it never should have gotten to this point.
- The UCP has chased healthcare workers out of Alberta. They refused to even debate the deepening crisis in children's healthcare and sent the legislature home early instead.

- Danielle Smith and the UCP are more interested in pandering to the extremist fringe than keeping kids safe. It's in this context — a state of emergency at a children's hospital — that Danielle Smith decides to create a new cabinet position specifically to undermine the province's vaccination efforts. You can't make this stuff up.
- Albertans know they can't trust the UCP with their health. An Alberta NDP government will bring real resources to the frontline, work collaboratively with healthcare professionals, and end the chaos in our hospitals.

UCP announce hospital transport alternative:

- Today's announcement is an incredible disappointment to Alberta's paramedics, other frontline health-care workers, and to all Albertans worried about the UCP chaos in our hospitals.
- The UCP's response to the EMS crisis is grossly inadequate and does not address the significant staffing shortage throughout Alberta's health system, including paramedics and emergency room staff.

- Paramedics have three specific calls which the UCP completely ignored again today. All paramedics must get off shift on time. All part time and casual paramedics need to be offered full time positions. And the UCP has to do far more to offer harm reduction services and reduce the number of overdose calls for ambulances.
- I am also concerned that this move towards non-medical vehicles for interfacility transfers is simply a step towards privatizations of ambulance service.
- Alberta's health system is in crisis and it needs real leadership. An Alberta NDP government will bring real resources to the frontline, we will work collaboratively with healthcare professionals and we will end the chaos in our hospitals.

UCP increase legal aid tariff:

- While an increase to the legal aid tariff is a positive step, it never should have gotten to this point.
- The UCP refused to honour the 2018 agreement signed by our government. They claimed it wasn't possible to increase the tariff, which led to delays and chaos in our justice system, and risked cases being thrown out.

- The tariff increase still fails to address the other issues facing legal aid, including paying arrears owed to legal aid under the 2018 agreement and revising eligibility guidelines to ensure better access to justice. I urge Minister Tyler Shandro to work with lawyers' organizations to resolve these issues and end the chaos in our justice system.

Alberta NDP pledge to restore holiday pay:

- This weekend will be the last Christmas where Alberta workers are shortchanged on their holiday pay should Rachel Notley and the Alberta NDP be elected to government in 2023.
- Alberta workers will earn less pay than other Canadians for working on Christmas this year because of legislative changes made to holiday pay rules. In 2019, the UCP passed legislation that substantially changed who qualifies for holiday pay in Alberta, excluding many workers.
- The UCP is deliberately making sure that Albertans earn less than any other Canadian this holiday, despite working the same hours. If Rachel Notley is elected Premier in 2023, our government will restore fair holiday pay for Albertans to make sure

everyone who works the Christmas shift or puts in more time on New Year's Day gets paid what they deserve.

- Previously, all workers were eligible for general holiday pay regardless of whether or not the holiday was on a normally scheduled workday.
- This year, because both Christmas and New Year's Day both fall on a Sunday, many Albertans will not receive general holiday pay, unlike those working in the same occupation in other provinces. **Alberta is now the only province in Canada that does not guarantee holiday pay for these workers.**
- Furthermore, the UCP added a requirement that workers must have worked at least 30 days prior to the holiday. **This means Albertans recently hired or hired specifically to work Christmas shifts won't receive holiday pay at all.**
- This Christmas, those hard-working Albertans sacrificing time with their families or taking a second job to put a little extra in the bank will be sorely disappointed. We are committed to making sure this is the last Christmas that Alberta workers are shortchanged by the UCP.
 - Additional changes made by the UCP in 2020 allow employers to further reduce holiday pay, by calculating benefits based on either the most recent pay period or the preceding four weeks.

- The changes place Alberta out of step with other mainstream Canadian jurisdictions, including Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan.

- **Case Study and Cross-Jurisdictional Comparison:**

	Alberta	Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec	British Columbia
Greg works an 8-hour retail shift on Dec. 25th. He works 4 shifts per week totalling 20 hours each week at \$15 per hour. He was hired on Nov. 30th.	\$180 + \$0 (No holiday pay as he hasn't worked the 30 working days required.)	\$180 + \$60 General Holiday Pay	\$180 + \$75 General Holiday Pay

<p>Janet works in an office, and is regularly scheduled for 9-5 shifts, Monday through Friday. She works 8 hours per day at \$25 per hour. She doesn't work Christmas.</p>	<p>\$0 (Not entitled to holiday pay, because it falls on a regular day off.)</p>	<p>\$200 General Holiday Pay</p>	<p>\$200 General Holiday Pay</p>
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Electricity prices reach new record high under UCP:

- Electricity rates will surge to another record high in January under the UCP, shattering the previous record set in December.
 - [New figures released Thursday](#) estimate the Regulated Rate Option (RRO) will be between 26-29 cents per-kilowatt-hour in January. Those rates are 350 per cent higher than they were under the previous NDP Government.
- Power prices are out of control under the UCP. They continue to climb — this isn't sustainable.

Albertans are already struggling during the affordability crisis, and the UCP is not doing enough.

- The RRO was 6.5 cents per kWh when the UCP took office — still below the NDP's 6.8 cent rate cap. The UCP removed the cap, and power prices have increased steadily.
- To address the record-high prices under the UCP, the government has introduced a monthly deferral program once prices go above 13.5 cents per kWh.
- Essentially, the UCP has tried to push some of the amount Albertans owe for electricity past the next election. This is about politics, it's not about helping families. These are half-baked, band-aid solutions and a prayer that prices come down, nothing more.
- An NDP government would take steps to get power prices back under control and keep more money in Albertans' pockets.

In the news:



December 19 - 25, 2022

Malissa Dunphy

403-816-2213

[Alberta NDP criticizes UCP for cutting debate | CityNews Calgary](#)

[Onion Lake Cree Nation suing Smith government over Alberta sovereignty act | Calgary Herald](#)

[First Nation sues Alberta over sovereignty act | CTV News](#)

[NDP's FOIP request shows 452 unfilled EMS shifts in Airdrie from January to November - AirdrieToday.com](#)

[Stollery emergency provisions activated, staff redeployed as ICU sits at 100% capacity | Globalnews.ca](#)

[Alberta Industrial Heartland Association endorses NDP economic plan | Sherwood Park News](#)

[Alberta NDP promises to 'restore' holiday pay | CityNews Calgary](#)