



MEETING WITH PC LEADERSHIP CANDIDATE SEPTEMBER 2, 2011

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CANDIDATE BACKGROUND AND REASONS FOR RUNNING

When I ran in my first election in 2001, I had a successful business in international trade. I had been doing international trade for about eighteen years up to that point. I was doing business in twenty-four countries at the time and spent a great deal of time building up the relationships that are required for international trade in various countries.

One of the reasons that I decided to run for office was that I did not feel that the provincial government was investing in the province to build for the future and to manage finances. We have an opportunity as private members to bring in an operating reserve account so that we could steady out the balance, the budgeting. Premier Klein positioned me into cabinet during the BSE crisis.

In addition, as the Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Minister, I spent time dealing with international affairs and the World Trade Organization. I was dealing with our agricultural communities and a lot of communication was required to bring those groups together. I was very pleased that we are the only jurisdiction in the world that has ever had

their borders opened after having been tested positive for Mad Cow disease in the livestock. We take it for granted because we have the border open, but in reality, that happened because we used science and research to open up the border because we showed them what we were doing. I am very proud of that.

I was very pleased with the implementation of the Rural Development Strategy because rural Alberta is very important, not only to Albertans in rural areas, but also to our urban areas.

In addition, I am very pleased with the bio fuels program in Alberta. During my term as Minister of Agriculture, we brought forward Canada's first bio fuels program. It is not good enough to be an energy province based on oil and gas, we should be an energy province in everything. We are leaders in areas such alternatives, solar, wind, and so on.

When Premier Stelmach came to power, he put me in charge of Post-Secondary and Innovation and Science, with the goal of bringing these two departments together. That was a bit of a challenge because these are two very different cultures. In Innovation and Science, they wanted to go out and turn things into reality, create businesses, and do research. In the post-secondary side they did not want anything to do with business and wanted to keep their autonomy.

We accomplished a few things there. First, we brought the departments together, but we also created and launched Campus Alberta. We just assumed that every other province has the same kind of arrangement. They do not. Only in Alberta, can you make one application to all twenty-six post-secondary institutions in the province.

Only in Alberta do you have laddering opportunities. You can start your academic career in Lakeland College, finish at the U of A, or even do some at the U of A and do some at the U of L. We have the best laddering, connections, and transferability of any jurisdiction probably in North America right now.

Then, we established Alberta Innovates, which is about turning research into reality. We have a Polaris winner doing research in neurosciences. We have the National Institute for Nanotechnology, which is going to help us build medical appliances that are Nano in size.

When we think about the research we're doing in diabetes or MS and some of the other chronic diseases, we should be able to find a cure and Alberta is in a very good position to actually move in that area. We needed a way to help the researchers turn it into reality.

I had a discussion with a group of students in Lethbridge, and I asked them to define Progressive Conservative. Unfortunately, I did not like the answer that I got. Because the answer was defining Progressive Conservative as having dollars as priority, no vision, no compassion, no building for the future; it's all about balancing the budget.

I despised that because that is not what Progressive Conservative means to me. The values of our party are compassion, innovation, integrity, and commitment to excellence. It is interesting that this past week my wife Rose and I were invited to attend Premier Lougheed's anniversary supper. I have been on the campaign trail since February. What I have been talking about is that when I grew up, Peter Lougheed talked about compassion, building for the future, innovation, and the government being involved in moving the province forward. And, I've been talking about changing the way we make decisions from dollars to values and principles.

I have been talking about the fact that I am not a Unite the Right Candidate; I am a Unite the Progressive Conservative Candidate. I felt good on Tuesday night when Premier Lougheed was reminding all of the MLAs that served with him when he was Premier in sixty-seven, and when they were in opposition, that they made a conscious decision that if they were elected to government they would be a center right party. In other words, they would get involved; if they needed something done, if Albertans wanted to get something done, they would get involved and help them get it done.

You saw growth in the seventies and right into the eighties. Then we hit a financial situation that we had to turn around, and we had to change direction. Premier Getty, who was there as well on Tuesday night, talked about the challenges that were created. Fast forward to the nineties when Premier Klein comes in and does what we needed to do. Stop the spending because we were borrowing for our operating, and you cannot do that. It is going to cause a terrible situation for your financials. He did

the right thing but what he also did was drive this culture of accountability and fiscal restraint into our government, which is in direct opposition to the values and the principles we have as a party.

My goal as I said is to unite us around that original concept and start budgeting for outcomes and not for percentages. This is resonating with Albertans. When I talk to the communities that are service providers to persons with disabilities, to our senior populations, to the mental health area, all of these areas, they say to start from the value and not the dollar.

I can imagine that there are many very good recommendations in the Alberta Disability Strategy. I know there are good recommendations in the Inspiring Education Report, but the first question when it hits the caucus table is how much will it cost.

You have just lost a lot of the momentum that you had in building for the future. We have to start asking what the value is. What are we going to get out of this? What is the outcome that we are trying to achieve? Then you put the dollars on after that. It is not about spending everything that we have in the bank. It is not about blowing through the cash. It is about being responsible with your dollars and building on outcomes.

When I look at things like the disabilities forums that we've had and about some of the things that we should move forward with, such as universal design, or getting supports for people in need, we need to consolidate the services so people do not have fifteen places that they have to go to.

The question is what would you design if you started from scratch for all programs that offer services to people with disabilities. You said that you want to empower the front line worker to be able to make decisions. Let us plan what sort of service delivery we are going to have for the rest of that person's life. We have created systems over the course of a number of years that today are not serving our population very well because we have not been able to break down the barriers that we have in government to say this is not working any more. A good example is senior's care. When we developed the seniors care models the demographic of a senior in Alberta was very different. In addition, today

people who are born with disabilities make it to senior's care. We did not design a system for that.

It is time for a change. Albertans want us to change the way we make decisions, and if we did that I would guess that the money is not the issue. There is probably enough money in the system. It is a matter of are we doing the right things with it. So having said that the reason I am running is to unite our party around values and principles and to change the way we make decisions.

Alberta has a future to lead on a world stage in almost everything we do. We are the world's center for energy and environmental solutions. We are a world center in food production and fiber production, and we can be a world leader in health care innovations which includes how we care for our seniors, how we care for our disabled, and how we care for those in need. And, that's the compassion piece of the values of the Progressive Conservative Party that needs to be brought up higher than where it has been. That is why I am running.

HOW WILL YOU COMMIT TO MAKING ALBERTA THE MOST INCLUSIVE PROVINCE IN CANADA?

The first step would be to go back to the Alberta Disability Strategy report and talk about it. I know there is information in the report about what people with disabilities need. I would like to have a consultative process, and I know there have been many of them, but the consultative process that I would do is to sit down and say we know where we are, where do we want to be, and then talk about how we get there. We should leave the dollars out of the conversation for now. I think this is an important process that has to happen, and we have to get rid of the silos. We have to stop talking about *this is my role*. Let us just talk about how we get to the outcome that we want. That is how I would commit to making Alberta the most inclusive province in Canada by working with you and not using the dollars as an excuse not to do anything.

HOW WILL YOU ENSURE EQUITY IN ACCESS TO DISABILITY SUPPORTS FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADULTHOOD?

We should be starting that in childhood and say this is what we are going to do all the way through an individual's life. We are not going to drop off people at age eighteen and let them struggle to find services until after the age of 65. I find it interesting how we ended up with that kind of service delivery. It is just the way government has worked within the past decade.

HOW WILL YOU ENSURE EASE OF ACCESS TO DISABILITY SUPPORTS FOR ALL DISABILITY TYPES?

If we are going to commit to making us the most inclusive province in Canada, this should happen automatically.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES YOUR PLATFORM ON DISABILITY ISSUES FROM THE OTHER LEADERSHIP CANDIDATES?

What distinguishes my platform is that I do not have all of the answers. One of the comments that I make at the forums when I close is that the government of Alberta and the Premier's role is to lead and that is very true, but it also needs to be recognized that we do not have all of the great answers.

We do not have all of the great ideas. Therefore, our secondary role, and a very important role, is to create an environment where your ideas can form and flourish. Then, together we put them into action. In addition, you cannot put them into action if you start at the dollars first. You have to start with what the outcome is. If we want to have as an outcome the most inclusive province in Canada with access to disability supports from childhood to adulthood, ensuring ease of access to disability supports for all disability types, then that is the outcome we strive for, and we build a plan around that.

I believe that the Alberta Disability Strategy is one document that is based on outcomes, and we need to go back to it and see what is still applicable today.

HOW WILL YOU ENSURE THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA WORKS WITH THE ALBERTA

DISABILITIES FORUM TO ACHIEVE COMMON GOALS?

You are one of the stakeholders that we have to have at the table. How can we make decisions without you being present is my question. When we talk about disability policies in our association, I depend on people who have actually been there, done that because if you do not have that kind of access to information, it is very difficult to come up with a policy. It is something you have to do for us. Albertans want accountability, and Albertans want outcomes. They want success so let us build for that. So I am not getting the dollar value outcome, I am getting what the outcome is that we want to achieve. If we do not achieve it even though we have put the money in, let us change what we are doing. You have five departments involved. Every one of them has standards that they are trying to impose.

In my view your next meeting should not just be with a Minister or the Premier, it should be with the Premier, the Ministers involved, the Deputy Ministers involved so that the elected officials can look at the Deputy and say that is where I want you to go next meeting. Because if you don't do that I know what happens afterwards, and you need to have that kind of engagement. That's what you would get with me.

Thank you.