

April 8, 2019

Alberta Council of Women's Shelters

2019 Election Survey Responses

How do you understand the purpose and the role of women's shelters and, in general, what would you do to ensure they receive support during the lifetime of the next government?

A United Conservative government would be committed to protecting all vulnerable Albertans, including at-risk women. We understand women's shelters to provide critical support to women in crisis situations fleeing domestic violence or other forms of abuse.

Over the course of our campaign, we have made a number of announcements related to protecting vulnerable women:

1. [Protecting Vulnerable Women from Violence](#);
2. [Protecting Vulnerable Women](#) from human trafficking; and
3. [Protecting and Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault](#).

A United conservative government is committed to pursuing the following initiatives, which address both directly and indirectly, many of the issues vulnerable women face:

- Pass an Alberta version of 'Clare's Law' to ensure that in defined circumstances people at risk of domestic violence may have fuller awareness of an intimate partner's previous history of domestic violence or violent acts;
- Invest \$2 million in expanding the use of specialised electronic monitoring technology to more fully prevent those serving sentences in the community from having contact with those they were convicted of victimising;
- Commit \$5 million in new funding to combat sexual assault and provide services to survivors of sexual violence;
 - \$3.5 million will be new funding directed to sexual assault service centres that provide counseling, support, and advocacy; and

- \$1.5 million will be directed to maintaining a 24 hour crisis line monitored by a sexual assault nurse examiner and to ensuring that all police stations have sexual assault evidence kits.
- Provide an overall funding increase of 69% (\$50 million over four years) to the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT), who deal with children's exploitation, domestic violence, stalking, and gang issues, specifically to:
 - Double the funding for the Integrated Child Exploitation (ICE) Unit; and
 - Double the funding over four years to the Integrated Threat and Risk Assessment (I-TRAC) unit that helps combat domestic violence and stalking.
- Work with ALERT to create a charitable foundation (akin to the Calgary and Edmonton Police foundations) which can then attract additional funds from the public; and
- Ensure mandatory anti-harassment training for members of the Alberta public service, agencies, boards, commissions, and Legislature.

And, in the lifetime of the next government will you commit to:

The creation of 998 new second-stage shelter beds and providing related operating funds?

A United Conservative government is committed to harnessing and expanding the power of civil society to ensure vulnerable populations receive the supports they need. We will work to ensure that ACWS and other not-for-profits are able to harness the power of civil society to meet service delivery needs.

The introduction of a Portable Housing Benefit for abused women?

At this time, we have not considered introducing a Portable Housing Benefit for abused women, though we are open to input from ACWS and other stakeholders on this and other policy options.

Extending and expanding the pilot program providing free legal supports to sexual assault survivors to include domestic violence survivors?

A United Conservative government has not taken a position on this specific pilot program, though we believe it is absolutely important for domestic violence

survivors to have adequate access to legal supports. If elected, a United Conservative government will commit to working with the appropriate stakeholders on this issue.

Tying shelter funding formulas to cost of living increases?

A United Conservative government has not considered this specific policy proposal, however we are committed to ensuring not-for-profits, like the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, see a reduction in red-tape and administrative obligations so that they can focus more on the good work they are doing. We would also seek to make it easier for not-for-profits to partner with philanthropic organizations.

We would seek to expand the efforts of civil society by:

- Adopting a *Freedom to Care Act* that allows for charitable and non-profit groups to apply for a "common sense exemption" from regulations that are designed primarily for commercial application where those regulations have the unintended consequence of preventing a social good from being performed;
- Create a Premier's Charities Council to advise the government on how best to assist the efforts of civil society groups;
- Create a \$20 million Civil Society Fund supported by the Alberta Lotteries Fund to support innovative cost-shared programs delivered by community groups;
- Wherever possible, partner with civil society organisations to deliver government programming and services where they can achieve results more efficiently and effectively;
- Ensure that faith-based charities and non-profits have equal access to government grants and contributions;
- Support projects like the Alberta Social Venture Initiative, and the Trio Foundation's Social EnterPrize, a national award that celebrates the best and brightest of Canada's social entrepreneurs;
- Reduce bureaucratic burdens such as renewal obligations for proven civil society groups that deliver results for Albertans, including moving to five-year funding agreements if and where possible; and

- Maintain the most generous charitable tax credit of any province in Canada to incentivize charitable giving.