



## Alberta Votes 2019

At the end of it all, an election is about hope. Ballots are cast in the hope that your selected candidate and team will deliver a better future than the others contending to seat themselves on the government side of the house.

With credible statistics pointing to 200,000 unemployed workers in our province, Alberta is sorely in need of hope these days.

Yesterday, Albertans vested their hope in Jason Kenney and the United Conservative Party. It was a vote for jobs, the economy and pipelines to underscore both.

With the choice made, it is time to move forward on building a new Alberta. We are a small province with great challenges and – potentially – great opportunity. The future lies in front of us and not in the boom-and-bust, rear view mirror of history.

Seizing the opportunity, will require new ideas, new approaches, being stalwart on what we know is right and simultaneously being flexible to accommodate a changing world.

Faced with global competitors contending for global markets, we cannot afford destructive quarrels with one another. Important ideas have been put forward by all parties in the 2019 campaign. These ideas should be gauged not by their partisan stripe, but rather on their objective merits to make life better for Albertans.

The solutions will not be simple and they will not be fast. And while it will always be important to stand firm and tall in the interests of Alberta, there is little value in repeating battles which have already been decided.

Jason Kenney and his team bring to the table considerable experience and expertise. We are confident in the capacity of the Premier designate and his future cabinet to deliver on the “requirements” noted above.

The scope of the challenge – which began well before the oil crash of 2014 – though should not be underestimated.

The real measure of the Kenney team will be leadership which advances the pragmatic regardless of ideology and is unrelenting in demanding the positive and rejecting the negative from and for all Albertans.

In Alberta today, this is the most important political test of all.



## What Happens Now

There are no firm rules governing when the Alberta legislature must resume. However, the *Election Act* says that:

- The official vote count must be completed no later than the 10th day after polling day. The Chief Electoral Officer will then post the results in the Alberta Gazette.
- If a person is declared elected after the official count, and no application is made for a recount within an 8-day period, the person becomes a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

The Office of the Clerk – who is the chief executive officer of the Alberta Legislature – is preparing for swearing-in ceremonies to be held anytime from May 7 onwards.

We anticipate cabinet ministers will be named within the next week, but with 223,000 “vote anywhere ballots” remaining to be counted after election day, there may be delays in announcing portfolios that have been designated for those involved in tight local contests.

Jason Kenney has repeatedly said that, if elected, he will immediately convene the legislature to pass promised Acts including Bill 1 the Carbon Tax Repeal Act, Bill 2 the Open for Business Act, red tape reduction and farm safety legislation. Calling back the legislature in late Spring will provide the new UCP government with the opportunity to pass a budget or alternatively to secure interim supply necessary to fund entities such as school boards and municipalities. The session will also provide an opportunity for Kenney to quickly consign many of the hallmark policies of the NDP to the Alberta history books.

As has become almost traditional elsewhere in Canada, it is likely the UCP government will ask for an independent audit of provincial finances to create a baseline for revenue and spending.

The Legislative Assembly Office (LAO) will assist newly-elected MLA's with the transition to public life. With so many new MLAs, the LAO will be busy. The LAO will deliver a several days “MLA 101” session to the new members providing an orientation to the legislature, parliamentary processes and the day-to-day details of what their jobs will entail. The sessions will address housing and other allowances, setting up living arrangements for those outside the capital region, and guidance on setting up constituency offices, including an overview of how to hire staff, run an office, and manage a budget.

The Alberta bureaucracy is non-partisan and continues daily administrative operations as normal while waiting for budgetary and policy instruction from the new government. The Kenney team will take swift action to replace Deputy Ministers, some Assistant Deputy Ministers and Directors and the leadership of some ABCs including the Alberta Energy Regulator where we can expect wholesale change.

Long before the start of the official campaign, Jason Kenney made clear that he will move quickly to deliver on core campaign promises. It is likely that administrative and legal constraints on government and the recent uneven experience of the new Ford government in Ontario will limit the speed with which the UCP can – and wish – to move. Some newly elected MLAs and UCP supporters will need to temper their expectations as the hard work of day-to-day governing begins for the Kenney team.



As the on-boarding proceeds with MLAs and Ministers learning their roles and getting up to speed on their files, it will be time for all stakeholders to re-set. With summer break not far away, now is the time to review core objectives, approaches and messages and determine how to align and work effectively with a UCP government. In this regard, we should note that any new government will experience a steep learning curve and growing pains. At the outset – and for some time afterwards – all concerned would be well advised to be accommodating and understanding of one another.

What the future would hold for remaining members of the former NDP government, most notably Rachel Notley and her senior cabinet ministers, is much less clear. With the benefit of experience since 2015, some are well positioned to represent their local riding, but life as an opposition leader and opposition backbenchers may hold little attraction. A series of resignations and by-elections could follow in the Fall.

## Unofficial Results

The Alberta legislature has 87 seats. With 90 percent of the polls reporting, the seat count is:

UCP – 63

NDP – 24

Alberta Party – 0

Alberta Liberal Party – 0

All results are unofficial, until certified by Elections Alberta.

As expected, the map of Alberta looks very blue today with only Edmonton remaining largely orange. And, with no elected MLAs, the Alberta Party and the Alberta Liberals are unrepresented on the provincial political landscape.

At the outset of the election, we highlighted several constituencies of particular interest in the 2019 campaign. Here are the updates on those key areas:

**Calgary-Elbow:** The United Conservative Party's Doug Schweitzer defeated the seemingly formidable incumbent Greg Clark of the Alberta Party. Assisted by a solid performance from the third place NDP candidate, months of campaigning and hard work by Schweitzer paid off in defeating the broad local network of the ever-present Clark.

**Calgary-Buffalo:** Former NDP Finance Minister Joe Ceci held onto the newly-redrawn riding – now the question is, does he want to sit on the opposition benches?

**Calgary-Mountain View:** With poor performances from Alberta Liberal Party leader David Kahn and Alberta Party candidate and retired broadcaster Angela Kokott, former NDP Justice Minister Kathleen Ganley was successful in defeating the UCP's Jeremy Wong. For Ganley too, the prospect of four years in opposition cannot be very appealing.



**Calgary-Varsity:** With the third place Alberta Party candidate taking away votes from the NDP's Anne McGrath, the UCP's Jason Copping was able to win the riding most expected to go to the Notley team.

**Edmonton-McClung:** Former Edmonton Mayor and leader of the Alberta Party Stephen Mandel and star UCP candidate retired Crown Prosecutor Laurie Mozeson were unable to defeat NDP incumbent Lorne Dach. Finishing in third, the campaign may be the last of Mandel's long career.

**Chestermere-Strathmore:** Controversial Freedom Conservative Party leader Derek Fildebrandt was unable to defeat the UCP's Leela Aheer who received nearly two-thirds of the votes cast in the constituency.

**Lethbridge-West:** At the time of this writing, the contest between incumbent and former NDP Environment Minister Shannon Phillips and the UCP's Karri Flatla was effectively a saw off. Ballots cast in the early voting period will be very important in determining the outcome here and a recount should be expected before the vote is final.