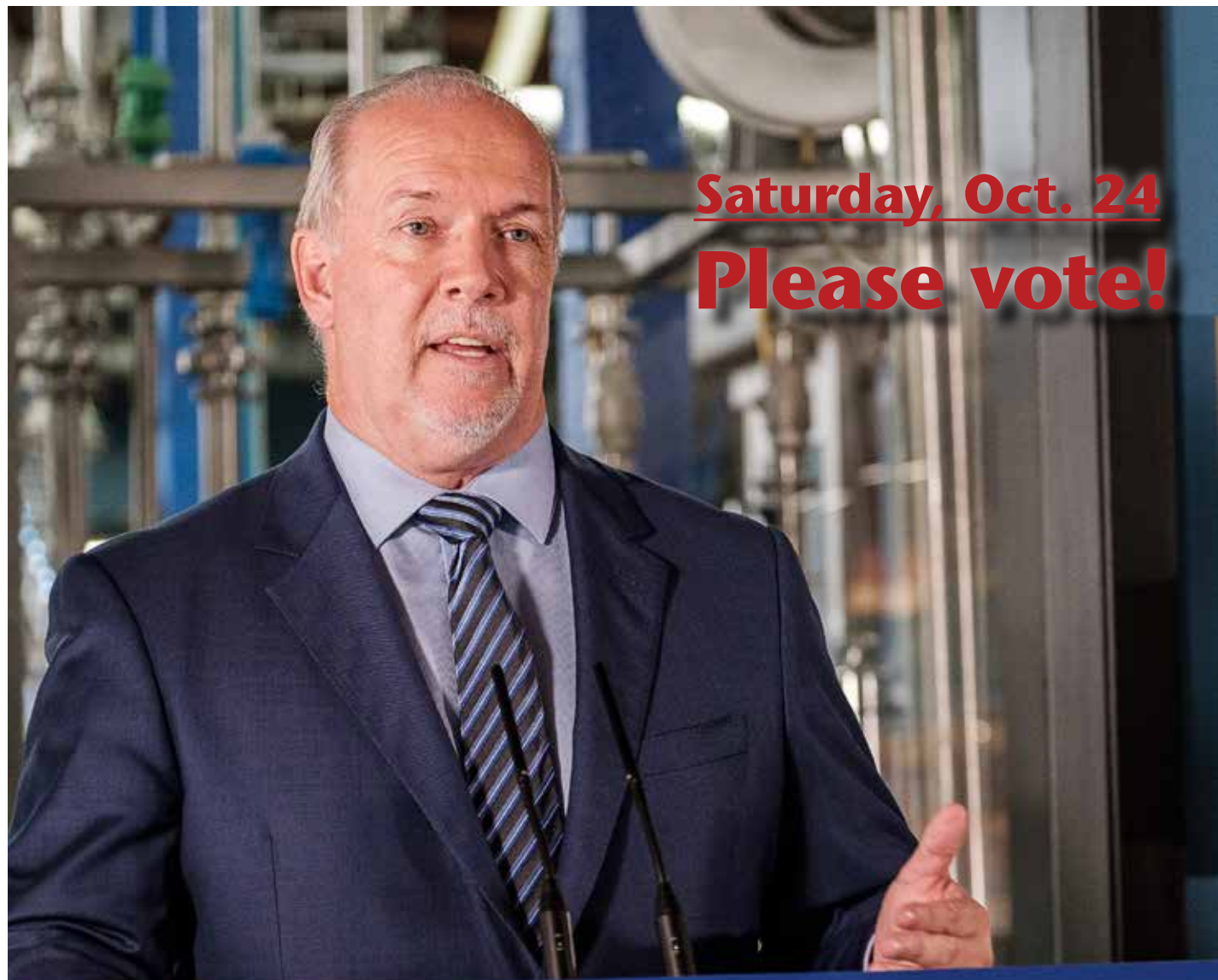


Special edition

Advocate

25
years

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THE ADVOCATE

In this edition

As British Columbians prepare to choose how we will be governed in the next four years, we take a close look at what the minority NDP government has accomplished as well as what the B.C. Liberals did during their 16 years at the helm.

We start on page 3, where President Diane Wood makes the case for electing a government that works for ordinary people, not just the fat cats.

Also in this edition:

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UFCW

WE FIGHT FOR FAIRNESS

Whose side are they on?

We need a government that works for us

By Diane Wood
President, BC FORUM

I HATED PAYING Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums. I hated paying bridge tolls. Every month, the bill would arrive. And every year it went up.

Until John Horgan and the NDP eliminated MSP premiums, those bills were a constant reminder of how far the B.C. Liberals would go to make sure the fat cats received an ever larger share of the pie.

They infuriated me.

B.C. was the only province to impose such a fee. Seniors and ordinary families were paying up to \$1,800 a year.

It was a massive hit for low income workers and people on fixed incomes, and pocket change for the wealthy.

It was so unfair. A person earning \$42,000 a year paid the same as a person who earned \$400,000 or even \$4 million.

On top of that, people who happened to live on one side of the Fraser River and work on the other were hit with daily tolls that could add up to \$1,500 a year.

That too was hugely regressive.

And why were we paying these fees?

We were paying them to make up for the massive tax giveaways the B.C. Liberals were handing to profitable corporations and the super rich.

In 16 years of pandering to the wealthy, they made our province more and more unequal. The gap between the wealthy and the rest of us grew to become the largest in

Canada. Before the BC NDP took action to address it, the wealthiest 1% paid a lower rate of taxes in relation to income than everyone else.

Equality? Fairness? Forget it.

In election campaigns, B.C. Liberals promise to look out for people. When they're in office, they do the opposite.

By the 2017 election, they had turned our province into what the Globe & Mail called "a pay to play empire." The New York Times called us "the wild west of political fund raising."

Corporate lobbyists knew what they wanted from the government. They knew the way to get it was to give tons of cash to the B.C. Liberal Party. And the B.C. Liberal government gave it to them, at times going beyond their wildest wishes with more unexpected tax cuts.

That's just not how democracies should work. Small wonder the rest of us weren't heard.

Governments should work to provide the services that make all of us stronger as individuals and as a society. They should promote equality, not inequality. They should work for people, not against them.

On page 6, Advocate editor Soren Bech outlines some of the areas where the B.C. Liberals imposed deep cuts to public services – even closing hospitals and long term care homes – in order to cover the cost of their tax giveaways to people and corporations that already had the most. It's a condensed summary. Soren tells me a complete list would have gone on for pages and pages.

When I think about all the pain the previous government imposed on so many, including the most



Diane Wood

vulnerable, and compare it to how much John Horgan and the NDP have accomplished to undo the mess, I am in no doubt as to how I will be voting.

Voting by mail

WE'RE ALL getting used to physical distancing and other precautions when we go grocery shopping. That's how in person voting will be done safely.

I have registered to vote by mail. It was very easy, and only took five minutes. If you'd prefer to do likewise, visit the Elections BC website at elections.bc.ca/ovr, or telephone 1-800-661-8683 to request a voting package.

There's more info about how to vote on page 16. Please vote!



Premier John Horgan met with creators and producers Sept. 14 to mark the launch of a new Domestic Motion Picture Fund.

“The past few months have shown us how quickly the motion picture industry can change,” said Horgan.

“This new fund will help B.C.’s domestic film industry create new content so it can recover faster, and get thousands of skilled workers involved in film and TV production back on set.”

The fund is part of the NDP’s COVID-19 Action Plan.

It’s time for us to decide

THE PROVINCIAL election, says Premier John Horgan, is our opportunity to answer two important questions: Where do British Columbians want to go? And who do they want to lead them?

As leader of a minority government, Horgan said there is growing instability at a time when stability is required to deal with the challenges.

“We have 12 months remaining in the mandate of this government, but we have a four year project or longer ahead of us. We have had, as you know, through the summer, some challenges with passing legislation,” he said.

“The stability that I believe we

had over the course of our minority government is not as strong as it was when we began.

“The challenges of partisanship within the Legislature will always be there, but particularly this summer it was clear to me that there is a great divide between the two sides,” he said.

“The best way forward is to allow those who no longer want to represent their communities because of long service. I know there are seven within my caucus, at least seven within the Liberal group and, of course, Mr. Weaver who are moving on.

“I believe, in my heart, that now is

the time to have an election.”

Horgan noted that British Columbians have worked hard to “get on the right side” of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“But we are far from out of the woods. We are not at the end of COVID-19. We’re at the beginning, and it will be with us for a year or more,” he said.

“Like a lot of things these days, this election is going to be different from the one we had three and a half years ago, but I know we can do it safely. And together, we can keep B.C. moving forward – not for the people at the top but for everyone,” said Horgan.

“I hope John Horgan is Premier again”

ANDREW WEAVER, who led the Green Party to its greatest ever success in a B.C. election, is today rooting for his former opponent.

“I hope (John Horgan) is Premier again. British Columbia has been served very well by the Premier,” Weaver said in the Aug. 31, 2020 episode of the “This is VANCOLOUR” podcast.

“The Premier is a regular person. He’s a real human being. What you see is what you get. There’s no fake John Horgan.

“There’s the real John Horgan and that’s the only John Horgan,” said Weaver.

Overall, the former leader gives top marks – an “A” rating – to the BC NDP government’s performance both



Former Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver appeared on the Aug. 31, 2020 edition of the “This is VANCOLOUR” podcast.

before the pandemic and during the pandemic, and singled out several cabinet ministers for extra praise.

“We have a remarkable Finance Minister, Carole James. What an

amazing politician! She did a superb job as Finance Minister, probably one of the best B.C. has ever had.

“David Eby as Attorney General, what an outstanding Attorney General!

“George Heyman as Environment Minister, an outstanding Environment Minister,” he said.

Weaver, a climate scientist, was elected as B.C.’s first Green Party MLA in 2013. This year, he sat as an independent and is not seeking re-election.

“British Columbia would benefit from having Mr. Horgan as Premier.

“He’s clearly indicated to me that he cares deeply, profoundly about people. To me, it’s sincere,” said Weaver.

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Judge them by what they did, not by what they say

We're still paying the price for what the B.C. Liberals did during 16 years in office

By Soren Bech
Editor, The Advocate

BC LIBERAL Leader Andrew Wilkinson may seem like a new face. He's not. He cut his teeth in politics serving as a deputy minister in the office of former Premier Gordon Campbell as the B.C. Liberals slashed vital public services.

Their first step was to implement a fantasy just as bizarre as Christy Clark's claim that LNG would make us all rich.

They cut taxes – mostly for the very wealthy and profitable corporations – claiming these unneeded tax giveaways would pay for themselves.

The annual reduction in revenue was more than \$2.1 billion.

At the same time, they fired more than two dozen deputy ministers, and replaced them with hand-picked ideologues – including then B.C. Liberal Party President Andrew Wilkinson. He was hired at \$180,000 a year to oversee intergovernmental relations in the Premier's office. All the new folks were given raises of nearly 32 percent, plus performance bonuses.

More for them. Less for us. We all paid for it.

Huge cuts in public services

BEFORE THE election, the B.C. Liberals promised no cuts. Indeed, their platform promised in 13 separate places to improve, protect or enhance public services.

The reality that British Columbians faced in the following years was a



Andrew Wilkinson photo by University of the Fraser Valley - Flickr, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=73964856>

different story.

Ministries were instructed to provide three scenarios: "Reductions of 20, 35 and 50 percent over the next three years." Cabinet ministers were told to compete with each other to see who could cut the most.

They did just that. It resulted in what *The Economist* last called "a wild gallop to the right."

In short order, while Mr. Wilkinson sat at the right hand of the Premier, the B.C. Liberals:

- Cancelled the before and after school day care program.
- Ended MSP coverage for eye exams, physiotherapy, massage and chiropractic services and diabetic supplies.
- Delisted 17 drugs from Pharmacare.
- Froze health and education funding, an effective 9 percent cut.
- Cut 20 percent from fish and

wildlife habitat protection and enforcement of environmental regulations.

- Scrapped the climate change program, the Green Economy Secretariat, and Fisheries Renewal B.C.
- Abandoned the ban on raw log exports, and the link between logging and local jobs.
- Fired the human rights commissioner, the environmental auditor and the mental health advocate.
- Cut \$7.5 million from job re-training programs for welfare recipients.

Still the attacks continued

THROUGH THE years, the tax giveaways to the most fortunate went on while the rest of us were forced to shoulder the burden.

Their plans included closing 24 court houses, cutting legal aid by 40 percent, cutting alcohol and drug treatment, cutting childcare subsidies for low-income parents.

They ripped up legal contracts negotiated by teachers and health care workers. They cut social service spending. They radically increased MSP premiums, one of the most unfair taxes imaginable. They put tolls on bridges. Froze the minimum wage.

Their plan to "protect health care" turned out to include:

- Closure of hospitals in 11 communities.
- Closure of 3,000 badly needed long-term care beds.
- Freeing health authorities to apply user fees.
- Targeting health care workers for layoff.

And Mr. Wilkinson worked to make it all happen.

An historic renewal of health care

FROM ITS first day in office, the Horgan government has made massive investments to improve public health care for British Columbians and reverse the damage caused by the B.C. Liberals.

Action is being taken throughout the province to provide greater access to primary care, which is critical to life-long health, especially for those who don't have a family doctor.

"About 17 percent of people in British Columbia report not having a primary care provider," says Health Minister Adrian Dix.

In addition only 44 percent of British Columbians are able to get same-day or next-day appointments with their primary care providers.

"This means they often have to wait long hours in walk-in clinics or at their local emergency departments to get the care they need. Our primary care strategy and the networks are providing a real solution to people so they can get the care they need, closer to home," he says.

"We're putting networks of health professionals at the centre of our primary care transformation, making life better for everyone in B.C."

Dix recently announced the addition of 22 more primary care networks, in addition to 17 announced previously.

"More people will benefit from a seamless patient-centred experience that meets their unique health needs," he says.

For people and families, the new networks mean faster, better access to their primary care team or provider – including evenings and weekends – as well as being connected to appropriate supports in the community.

The primary care networks will feature teams of health care

providers working together in the same community location. The teams will include family doctors, nurse practitioners, as well as other health care professionals ranging from registered nurses, traditional wellness co-ordinators and cultural safety facilitators to allied health-care professionals, social workers and clinical pharmacists.

Over the next three years, the initiative will help connect about 300,000 people to a local primary care team or provider.

In total, British Columbia has 39 primary care networks underway, including 12 in Vancouver Coastal, 14 in Fraser Health, five in Interior Health, five in Island Health and one in Northern Health, with more coming.

The team based primary care will be delivered using a number of different models, including full service family practices, urgent and primary care centres, community health centres, First Nations primary care clinics, and nurse practitioner primary care clinics.

Dix says the primary care networks mean that patients:

- who don't have a regular care provider – a family doctor or nurse practitioner – will be able to get one.
- will have an ongoing relationship with their care provider, which is important for their life-long health.
- Will get faster, more convenient care.
- will be provided and connected with appropriate and accessible services and supports.
- will know where to go to get the care they need, even on evenings and weekends.



Health Minister Adrian Dix

This election, let's choose a better, fairer future for all

by Laird Cronk
Chairperson, BC FORUM

This election, British Columbians have a choice:

- **Go back to the senseless cuts that left so many people out in the cold, and left us vulnerable?**
- **Or build a future for everyone that puts people and families at the forefront?**

YOU AND I remember the BC Liberals all too well: how they governed only for the wealthy and powerful.

But after three and a half years of government by Premier John Horgan and the BCNDP, we've had a chance to see what it's like to have a government that actually listens to workers. They've made major progress in building a better, fairer province.

Well before this pandemic began, John Horgan's government took steps like investing in affordable childcare and housing, raising the minimum wage, eliminating MSP premiums, investing in primary health care, improving our labour and employment standards laws, developing Canada's most ambitious climate action plan and recognizing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in law.

And during the pandemic, the BCNDP took care of people. They brought in job-protected sick leave, income supports, help for renters and BC's most vulnerable people, improvements to worker safety and workers' compensation — and a lot more.

Think about seniors' care. The Liberals underfunded it and treated private-sector long-term care as a business like any other, allowing

contract-flipping and terrible understaffing to run rampant.

John Horgan and the BCNDP saw the way contract-flipping got rid of experienced caregivers, and banned the practice. They invested in increasing the number of caregivers in care homes.

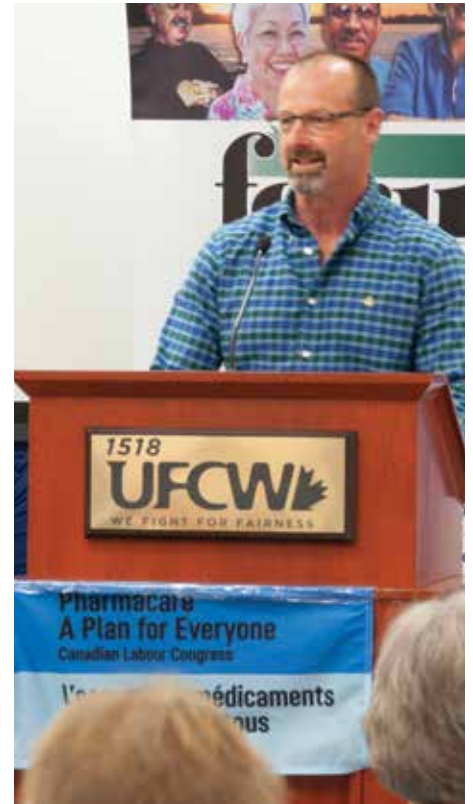
Over 8,000 long-term care workers in BC had to work in multiple care homes, in many cases just to make ends meet - a legacy of the BC Liberals changes. The BCNDP government saw the COVID transmission risk this represented. So they limited workers in seniors' care homes to a single facility, to limit the risk of exposure while minimizing income loss for workers. And they levelled up wages, so all seniors' care workers earned the higher provincial standard rate.

There's still a lot to accomplish: universal Pharmacare and dental care, expanding and improving public services, a truly worker-centered Workers' Compensation Board, investing in building sustainable green infrastructure and tackling climate change for future generations, and more.

But to do that, we need a government that can act without constantly looking over its shoulder — a stable, four-year NDP government. Because this province needs to make decisions not just about getting through the next few months, but what BC will look like for many years to come.

The good news is that we know British Columbians share our vision.

A recent poll the BC Federation of Labour commissioned showed that 72 percent of British Columbians want to see BC make changes to support a fairer, more equal province, rather than going back to the



B.C. FORUM Chairperson Laird Cronk addresses the 2019 annual general meeting.

way things were.

That only happens, though, if enough of us vote for the future we want to see — and re-elect a government that listens to us. And with Elections BC expanding mail-in voting, you can do it safely and easily. Just visit elections.bc.ca/ovr, or telephone 1-800-661-8683 for your package, and then be sure to vote.

We have an opportunity to make lasting changes for British Columbians like investments in crucial public services, securing good jobs and opportunities for the next generation, and building a better, fairer and more sustainable economy.

We have the chance to build a future that works for everyone.

Let's take it.

Tackling climate pollution

THE GOVERNMENT'S CleanBC plan is aimed at reducing climate pollution, while creating more jobs and economic opportunities for people, businesses and communities.

"The low-carbon economy we build together will bring opportunities and jobs throughout the province, so people can live and work with greater security in the communities they call home," says Premier John Horgan.

"By moving to clean, renewable energy – like our abundant supply of B.C. electricity – we can power our growing economy and make life better and more affordable for British Columbians."

The government's priorities are to:

- Reduce climate pollution by shifting homes, vehicles, industry and business off burning fossil fuels and toward greater use of clean B.C. electricity and other renewable energies.
- Boost energy-efficient solutions, like zero-emission vehicles and home heat pumps, by making them more affordable and available for British Columbians.
- Make B.C. a destination for new investment and industry looking to meet the growing global demand for low-carbon products, services and pollution-reducing technologies.

The CleanBC plan was developed to achieve the province's legislated climate targets of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent by the year 2030, based on 2007 levels.

The plan describes and quantifies measures that will eliminate 18.9 megatonnes, about 75 percent of the 2030 target. Remaining reduction initiatives will be quantified over the next 18 to 24 months.

"With CleanBC, British Columbia



Environment Minister George Heyman

is rising to the challenge of climate change," Horgan said. "Every year, we're seeing the unprecedented wildfires and floods that hurt so many

Boosting support for seniors

IN ADDITION to other measures taken to improve affordability and services for everyone, the NDP has taken steps that are of particular interest to retired workers and our families.

- Provided funding of more than half a billion dollars over three years to improve services to seniors, including home support and residential care.
- Restored free passenger travel, Monday to Friday, for seniors on BC Ferries.
- Eliminated PharmaCare deductibles for senior and other families with net incomes of \$30,000 or less, and reduced deductibles for families with net incomes up to \$45,000.
- Invested \$75 million over three years to support caregivers by expanding respite care and adult

people, communities and businesses.

"We need to begin changing how we live, work and commute to put B.C. on a cleaner, more sustainable path."

"CleanBC is a British Columbia specific approach to making our communities strong and vibrant for decades to come as we rise to the challenge of global climate change," said George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy.

"We can build a low-carbon economy that includes all sectors and all workers. Together, we can protect our children's future, while making life more affordable today."

As part of this strategy, the government's CleanBC labour readiness plan will help ensure we can take full advantage of labour and workplace opportunities that emerge through the implementation of CleanBC.

day programs, reversing the cuts imposed by the previous government, and helping seniors to remain in their own homes.

- Increased benefits to seniors living independently by an average of \$930 per year under the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program.
- Taken action to ensure that direct care to seniors will – for the first time – reach the target of 3.36 hours per resident per day by 2021. Hundreds of thousands of care hours have already been added.
- Rescinded the B.C. Liberals' infamous Bills 29 and 94 which led to the firing of thousands of workers, caused mass privatization of health care services, and disrupted the continuity of care to seniors and patients.

Here's what it looks like when government works for people

Reducing inequality, creating opportunities

WHEN THE BC NDP took action to prevent a 4.5 percent rent increase and protect tenants from renovictions and demolitions, B.C. Liberal Leader Andrew Wilkinson accused them of “pandering” to tenants.

“They’ve put all kinds of restrictive caps on the behaviour of landlords around charging rents, long-term leases and renovation of apartments,” Wilkinson said in the Legislature last year.

It’s a remarkable illustration of the mind-set of a man who was part of a government that froze the minimum wage, welfare rates and disability allowances for the most vulnerable. For a decade.

In from the cold

THE HORGAN government moved quickly to end the freeze. The minimum wage has been steadily increased. By next year it will be \$15.20 an hour. The discriminatory server wage will be eliminated. Welfare and disability rates have also been increased.

Fairer taxes

BIG STEPS have been taken towards tax fairness with increased taxes on the highest income earners, and the elimination of MSP premiums and bridge tolls.

Fixing ICBC for drivers

THE B.C. Liberals siphoned \$1.2 billion from ICBC, throwing the company into chaos. Legislation passed this spring will provide better coverage and lower rates effective May 1, 2021.

In addition, B.C. will no longer be the only province with a litigation



BC FORUM President Diane Wood shared a light moment with Premier John Horgan as she introduced him to members at the 2018 annual general meeting.

based model that costs us more than \$1.5 billion a year.

Fixing long term care

HUNDREDS OF millions are being spent to improve long term care by hiring thousands of care aides, expanding training opportunities and removing barriers to recruitment from other parts of Canada.

The government has also ensured that staff only work on one site, boosted wages during the pandemic, eliminated contract flipping to ensure continuity of care and moved to build new beds.

By comparison, the B.C. Liberals closed 3,000 long term care beds, encouraged privatization, and drove down wages, reducing the quality of care for the most vulnerable seniors in our province.

And much more

- Made B.C. the first province to fully recognize the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.
- Strengthened child labour protection.
- Shifted home support in three health authorities from for-profit corporations, making it an integral part of public health care.
- Restored transit passes to people with disabilities.
- Created thousands of new licensed, affordable child care spaces.
- Froze runaway ferry rates and restored free travel for seniors.
- Moved ahead with new hospitals, renovation and expansion throughout the province.
- Adopted a plan to reduce poverty.

Looking for a fall activity?

By David Porteous

FALL IS upon us. Embrace the change in weather and activities that can boost your well-being. For many the upcoming election could help them stay active and engaged.

COVID-19 has changed our lives in many ways and I am sure it will change the way the election is run.

Many of us started reading more to escape isolation during COVID. We have been bombarded with sometimes stressful information. We must find solutions to escape (if only for a moment) from this reality. The election could be part of the solution.

For many seniors who have run and worked many elections we may hear the mumbling "another election." Just remember life goes on, we

are still young at least mentally if not physically.

Now is the time!

OUR GOVERNMENT needs a new four year mandate not only to continue the fight against COVID but to ensure that our social programs expand and continue to help the families with the best health resources possible. Now more than ever we need to keep a government that believes in putting people first.

How you can help!

FIRST YOU may want to call your local candidate. They will need your help whether it's just a donation or help in other areas. I am sure they will give you information that is important to the outcome of the election. Another option is to contact

your family and friends and engage in positive conversation about what is important to you and family in these difficult times. If possible, stay connected using any technology you have. This is the time to speak up and let your knowledge and feelings be heard.

Remember to stay connected while practicing physical distancing.

When the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic fades away, we will need a government where the priorities are families first. Helping in this election will help you walk away from this historic milestone stronger and mentally well.

David is a Licensed Insurance (Nominee), an Elder Planning Counselor and a charter member of the Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies.

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An economy that works for everyone, not just the rich

BC has led Canada in its response to COVID-19 economic challenges – with more to come

THE BC NDP government has outlined additional steps it will take to help people, businesses and communities come out of COVID-19 stronger and better prepared. B.C.'s total provincial response exceeds \$8.25 billion.

“As British Columbians, we’ve been through a lot recently. We know our recovery won’t happen overnight, but by focusing on people and taking care of each other, we will ensure there are better days ahead for all of us,” says Premier John Horgan.

B.C. entered the pandemic as an economic leader in Canada, making it among the best-positioned to support a strong recovery. Since moving forward with a safe restart plan in mid-May, we have had stronger-than-expected consumer spending, housing activity and employment gains. By August, almost 250,000 jobs had been restored, equal to 62% of the jobs lost due to the pandemic.

“When COVID-19 first hit, we acted quickly to keep people safe and support those in need. While we are now starting to see hopeful signs of recovery, we know many people are still struggling. There is a lot of work left to do,” says Finance Minister Carole James.

“British Columbians are pulling together, and we’ll be there to support them every step of the way.”

STRONGER BC for Everyone: BC’s Economic Recovery Plan will help build a stronger, more resilient economy for everyone:

- **Improve health care** by hiring

7,000 new front-line health-care workers. This includes thousands of health-care aides to manage outbreaks in long-term care homes and 600 contact tracers to help stop further spread in the community. The plan will also increase support for mental health care in the workplace and introduce a new Hospital at Home initiative that will allow patients to receive medical services in their own home from a team of health professionals.

- **Create jobs** and opportunities by investing in targeted and short-term training in the skills people need to get work in high-demand fields, including for those who want to move into new, front-line health, child care and human-service positions. The plan will also expand Indigenous skills training and accelerate the creation of affordable child-care spaces so that more parents, particularly women, can get back to work. It includes investments of over \$100 million to support tourism-related businesses and communities.
- **Help businesses** grow and rehire with a 15% refundable tax credit based on eligible new payroll. It will also introduce a small and medium sized business recovery grant to support approximately 15,000 hard-hit businesses, while protecting as many as 200,000 jobs. Tourism operators will be eligible for a special top-up. The plan will also provide a temporary 100% PST rebate on select machinery and equipment to make it easier for eligible businesses to make the kinds of investments that will allow them to grow and become more productive.

- **Support strong communities** by investing over \$400 million to revitalize community infrastructure and support local governments to provide the valuable services people depend on. This includes \$100 million in infrastructure grants for shovel-ready projects that will create jobs right away. The plan also earmarks over \$1 billion in provincial and federal investments to help keep people moving, whether by transit, TransLink or BC Ferries. An additional \$540 million in combined federal/provincial funding will help B.C. communities address other local challenges impacted by COVID-19.

The plan includes \$1.5 billion in economic recovery spending measures that respond to immediate needs. It is in addition to \$660 million in tax measures and more than \$1.86 billion in federal and provincial restart funding for municipalities, transit and education. It also builds on B.C.’s record \$22-billion investment in public infrastructure over the next three years. Those capital projects are estimated to create 100,000 direct and indirect jobs over the life of the projects.

The next steps build on the progress the NDP has made with new investments to expand CleanBC, reduce air pollution and tackle climate change, prepare for its impacts and create good, new jobs.

In developing the plan, B.C. engaged nearly 50,000 British Columbians in every region of the province. Premier Horgan and James also met with business, labour and Indigenous groups, economists, youth, green technology experts, faith leaders and many more.

ELECTION 2020



Finance Minister Carole James, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease early this year and is not seeking re-election, will continue to oversee economic recovery spending, ensuring continuity of support to people, businesses and communities during the campaign period.

What they're saying

The right time for an election

"I believe that calling this election is not only timely, but it is also prudent given the intensifying COVID-19 pandemic...."

"Now is not the time for a shaky coalition government that could fall at any moment. We need a majority government, a strong majority government with a strong mandate."

"I have 15 grandchildren and I'm gravely concerned about what the future holds for them, their health and well-being. I want a strong government in place to deal with the unprecedented challenges forthcoming."

– Grand Chief Stewart Phillip,
President of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs

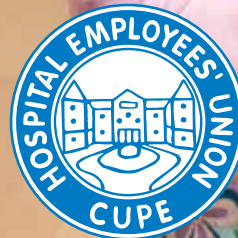
The best government in Canada

"I'm hard pressed to think of a better governing party in this country than the BC NDP; indeed, my sense is that British Columbia is the best-governed province in Canada."

– David Moscrop, postdoctoral fellow at the University of Ottawa, studies democratic deliberation, political decision making and digital media. He writes for Washington Post, Maclean's Magazine and several other media.

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Tackling the opioid crisis

BRITISH COLUMBIA is pioneering new ways to save lives by providing safer alternatives to increasingly toxic street drugs.

In a North American first, the province will offer more legal alternatives and allow nurses to prescribe them.

“We are breaking new ground here, no question about that,” says Judy Darcy, minister of mental health and addictions.

The initiative will support patients who could not find a doctor willing to prescribe take-home opioids.

Supporting forestry jobs

NEW REGULATIONS requiring domestic processing of lumber prior to export go into effect Sept. 30, 2020.

The changes are designed to increase domestic processing, creating jobs in B.C. rather than in foreign lands.

More child care

CHILD CARE spaces are being created at the fastest pace in B.C. history – an average of 780 new spaces each month.

More than 20,000 spaces have been funded in the last two years.

Through a range of initiatives under the Childcare BC plan, more than 32,000 children have received child care for no more than \$10 a day.

“The momentum of our Childcare BC plan continues to build despite the challenges British Columbia has been facing over the past months,” says Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child care.

“We remain committed to giving families better access to inclusive, quality affordable child care as we rebuild our economy,” she says.



Protecting old growth forests

IN A new approach to forest management, B.C. will protect more than 350,000 hectares of old growth forest from logging.

The commitment follows the release of *A New Future for Old Forests*, a report that will guide an overhaul of forestry rules.

It is based on the work of two foresters who travelled the province for months, hearing about how B.C.’s massive old growth trees should be protected.

“For many years, there has been a patchwork approach to how old growth forests are managed in our province, and this has caused a loss of biodiversity,” says Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests.

“We need to do better and find a path forward that preserves old growth forests while supporting forestry workers,” he says.

“A decade of dirty money” – report

THE B.C. Liberals ignored the warnings and allowed millions upon millions from illegal activity to be laundered through B.C. casinos.

A report by Peter German QC, who conducted an independent review for the provincial government, called it “a decade of dirty money.”

The “dirty money” powered the opioid crisis, made it easier for drug dealers to operate, and even contributed to the housing affordability crisis.

It happened because the B.C. Liberals refused to act and looked the other way when the alarm bells rang. Not once. Not twice. But time and time again.

The BC NDP has appointed Supreme Court Justice Austin Cullin to conduct a public inquiry.

Information for retired workers

- The Office of the BC Seniors’ Advocate provides links to a wide range of services including health care, housing, income support, personal support and transportation. Visit www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca.
- Protect yourself from scam artists with info from the Canadian Centre for Elder Law. Google “Be a Savvy Senior Fraud Protection.”
- The People’s Law School has summarized benefits available to B.C. seniors. Search the web for “When I’m 64: Benefits for Seniors” to get a free copy.
- The Council of Senior Citizens’ Organizations of B.C. (COSCO) offers free workshops to seniors groups. Visit www.seniorshelpingseniors.ca for a complete list of topics.
- The Deprescribing Network – deprescribing.org – has info on how to safely reduce medications that may no longer be needed.

Strengthening BC FORUM has never been more important

Please encourage your friends to join our team

THROUGH OUR UNIONS, before we retired, we've all seen the benefits of collective action. Our voices are strongest when we stand together in solidarity.

That's where BC FORUM comes in. We are the only provincial organization that represents union members who have retired or are nearing retirement. We are an integral part of the labour movement, with formal representation in leadership bodies, and maintain strong links with provincial and national seniors' groups.

Together, we can make a difference for ourselves and our families. Please encourage friends, colleagues and family members to join us using the form below, or on-line at www.bcforum.ca.

Renew your membership

PLEASE HAVE A LOOK at the mailing label on this edition of *The Advocate* to check whether your membership is now due for renewal. If your membership is about to expire, you can renew by mailing the coupon below to BC FORUM, #200 - 5118 Joyce St., Vancouver, B.C. V5R 4H1. You can also join us or renew your membership on-line at www.bcforum.ca.

Many unions cover first year dues

BC FORUM actively welcomes members who are 50 and better, working or retired, and the list of unions that cover the first year dues for their qualified members keeps growing! We welcome CUPE 402 and the B.C. Ferry and Marine Workers Union to the ranks of unions that support our campaigns and our work.

If you're not yet a member, contact your union for details. Some even pay dues for three years. And don't be shy about encouraging your friends and family members to join us. Solidarity makes us strong.



BC FORUM has always provided free \$2,500 Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance coverage to members.

We are proud to now extend this coverage to members' spouses at the low cost of \$5 per year. All you have to do is check the appropriate box when you apply or renew your membership. BC FORUM's AD&D coverage is valid until you reach age 86, the maximum age we were able to negotiate.



Your expiry date is on the mailing label. BCGEU, BCFMW, HSA, MoveUp, CEU, CUPE Locals 386, 402 and 7000; UFCW 1518, Heat and Frost, and LIUNA 1611 pay first year dues for qualified members.



B.C. Federation of Retired Union Members • #200 - 5118 Joyce St., Vancouver, V5R 4H1
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Name: _____
LAST FIRST INITIAL

Address: _____
STREET ADDRESS CITY POSTAL CODE

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Union: _____ Date of birth:* _____
DAY MONTH YEAR

Spouse's name: _____ Spouse's birth date:* _____
DAY MONTH YEAR

Single membership: \$20 - 1 year \$49 - 3 years
 With AD&D for spouse: \$25 - 1 year \$64 - 3 years
 Cheque Visa MC Expiry |__| / |__| CVV* |__|
 Card number: |__| |__| |__| |__| |__| |__| |__| |__| |__| |__| |__| |__| |__| |__|

.....
SIGNATURE
 Date of application: _____
DAY MONTH YEAR

* Required for Accidental Death & Dismemberment group insurance coverage to age 86.
 * Credit card companies now require the CVV for payment to be processed.

Explore the options for voting

ELECTIONS BC, the impartial body that oversees provincial elections, has for months been studying ways to safely conduct elections during a pandemic.

“Recognizing that the pandemic would likely be a factor whenever the next election was held, planning for a pandemic election began in early April,” says a statement from Elections BC.

“At that time, Elections BC reached out to the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and other Canadian election agencies to consult on the development of safe voting plans.

“New Brunswick held a provincial election during the pandemic on September 14, 2020. Saskatchewan has a provincial election scheduled for October 26, 2020,” it said.

“Our main focus is ensuring a safe and accessible voting process,” says Chief Electoral Officer Anton Boegman.

“We have been working with Dr. Bonnie Henry’s office to develop our safe voting plans and make sure that voters don’t have to choose between

safeguarding their health and exercising their right to vote. All voters have the option of voting in person with protective measures in place, or voting by mail,” he says.

Voters should stay home if they are feeling sick or self-isolating, and instead request a vote-by-mail package.

Voting by mail

ELECTIONS BC is anticipating a significant increase in voting by mail, which is an option available to all voters.

In past elections, about 1 percent of votes were cast by mail.

Surveys conducted by Elections BC in May and August suggest this may grow to as much as 35 percent this year.

The voting packages required to vote by mail can be requested now.

To do so, visit the Elections BC website at elections.bc.ca/ovr, or telephone 1-800-661-8683.

The agency notes that there are proven processes in place to administer voting by mail, tested in several recent provincial elections and referenda.

Strict procedures are in place to ensure the integrity of the process.

Voting in person

TO PREVENT close contact, some familiar voting procedures will be different. For example, voters will make a verbal declaration of their eligibility to vote instead of signing a book. You can also bring your own pen or pencil to mark your ballot.

Advance voting opportunities have been expanded to seven days to provide more options and help reduce numbers in voting places.

Advance voting places will be open from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm Pacific time starting Thursday, Oct. 15 and ending on Wednesday, Oct. 21.

Voting places will be open during the same times on election day, Saturday, Oct. 24, from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm Pacific time.

Safe voting practices are detailed at elections.bc.ca/safevoting. The measures include physical distancing, capacity limits, election officials wearing personal protective equipment, protective barriers, hand sanitizing stations, and frequent cleaning of voting stations and frequently touched surfaces – most of which we’re all familiar with from grocery shopping.

In addition, voters are encouraged to wear masks to protect others.

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Please check the expiry date on your label. Is your membership due for renewal?