



2019 ALBERTA

ELECTION GUIDE

ALBERTA'S ELECTION IS RAPIDLY APPROACHING! Be sure to get informed, be engaged, and vote! As always, ARPA Canada wants to help you get informed about the issues and equipped for action. We hope this Alberta Election Guide helps. The guide contains six sections on important policy issues. Each section includes a summary explanation of the issue, an update on any developments, a brief summary of ARPA's calls to action, and questions you may choose to ask candidates. The guide includes an appendix of links to resources to learn more about any of these issues.

ANOTHER ELECTION. SO WHAT?

As with any election, the amount of media coverage can become numbing; it is easy to become desensitized to the people, the issues, and the hype. Nonetheless, now is the time to pay

attention — the people who are elected to the Legislative Assembly and appointed to positions of power after the election will make decisions on issues we care about as Reformed Christians.

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The above list is not intended to be comprehensive. Certainly, there are other policy issues that are and should be important to Christians. This report covers issues that are very much alive today and which ARPA Canada has been studying and working on for some time. So, let's get started.

GENDER IDEOLOGY IN OUR HOMES

BILL 22 – AN ACT FOR STRONG FAMILIES BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Alberta's Bill 22, passed into law in 2018, inserted gender identity ideology into the law for child and family services, which governs child protection agencies, foster care, and adoption. Adding gender identity ideology into child services legislation has the potential to directly impact parents who don't respond "properly" to gender identity disorder in their child.

This new family law also matters for foster parents and would-be foster or adoptive parents. It is a product of a worldview that believes every child has a "gender identity and gender expression" that may differ from the child's sex. Child services must now consider how would-be foster or adoptive parents respond to these situations.

Bill 22 also changed a foundational principle of the current law. The *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* used to state, "the family is the basic unit of society and its well-being should be supported and preserved." This has been changed to, "the child's family has the primary responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child and the family's well-being should be supported and preserved."

There is a difference between saying the family is the basic unit of society and saying merely that a family has primary responsibility for the well-being of the child. The first says something about what the family is: it is the fundamental, natural institution that precedes the state, on which society is built. The latter says nothing about what the family is, merely what the state expects the family to do.

UPDATE & PAST ARPA CALLS TO ACTION

Bill 22 received Royal Assent on December 11, 2018 and came into force on February 28, 2019. Prior to the vote on Bill 22, ARPA Canada submitted a letter to the United Conservative Party (UCP) outlining both positive aspects and serious concerns about Bill 22. ARPA supporters also sent EasyMail

letters to voice their concerns and suggest amendments.

Stakeholders within the UCP ranks informed ARPA Canada that this engagement was respectful, invaluable, and timely. Our submissions made a difference. The result: the UCP unanimously opposed Bill 22!

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

Ask your candidate to commit to changing the troubling parts of this law (as described above).

- 1.) *What is your perspective on the place and role of the family unit in society?*
- 2.) *What is the role of the State when it comes to the interests of families?*
- 3.) *In 2018, the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act was amended to remove a reference to the family as "the basic unit of society". Will you advocate in favour of amending that legislation to its original language?*
- 4.) *Recent amendments to Alberta family law have also weakened safeguards that prevent state intervention in the family unless absolutely necessary. Will you commit to reinstating the safeguards in family law that limit removing a child from the home "only when less disruptive measures are not sufficient to protect the survival, security or development of the child"?*
- 5.) *Recent changes to family law incorporated gender ideology, giving the state inappropriate power in dictating how parents should raise their children. Will you trust parents to love and raise their children, even if some parents differ on the new gender orthodoxy?*

GENDER IDEOLOGY IN OUR SCHOOLS

BILL 24 – AN ACT TO SUPPORT GAY STRAIGHT ALLIANCES

Bill 24 is entitled *An Act to Support Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs)*. It passed into law on November 15, 2017, amending sections 16.1 and 45.1 of the School Act. Its stated purpose is to provide a safe, caring, and inclusive environment for students who identify as LGBTQ+. In reality, Bill 24 was a bill with an ideological bent, requiring all schools, including independent Christian schools, to adopt a view of sexuality and gender that is contrary to Scripture. Here is a short timeline showing how these radical changes were implemented:

- \\ NOVEMBER 2017: Bill 24 is introduced, mandating every school to institute gay-straight alliance clubs on request from any student, and to hide information about students from their parents. Bill 24 passes by a vote of 42-23. Twenty-two of the twenty-six UCP members vote against it.

ALBERTA VOTER TURNOUT

2015 – 57.01 PERCENT

2012 – 54.4 PERCENT

2008 – 40.6 PERCENT

1993 – 60.2 PERCENT

**AVERAGE TURNOUT LAST
SIX ELECTIONS – 50.9 PERCENT**

\\ APRIL 8, 2018: Thirty schools, including all of the Reformed schools, joined a court challenge to strike down Bill 24. This is led by the Justice Center for Constitutional Freedoms (JCCF).

\\ JUNE 2018: An application for an injunction (to prevent the government from enforcing Bill 24 until the court challenge is complete) is denied. This decision is appealed.

\\ SEPTEMBER 6, 2018: A letter to schools from the Minister of Education insists on removal of references to truth and the infallibility of scripture from Christian school policies.

\\ NOVEMBER 14, 2018: A ministerial order is sent to non-compliant schools stating that failure to comply will include funding being withheld for the 2019-2020 school year.

\\ DECEMBER 3, 2018: The injunction appeal is heard at the Alberta Court of Appeal. The decision is forthcoming.

\\ JANUARY 8, 2019: ARPA Canada appears in court, seeking and obtaining intervenor status in the case against Bill 24. More details can be found in this report.

UPDATE AND ARPA CALLS TO ACTION

In November 2017, 400 radio ads voicing opposition to Bill 24 were aired across the province. Over 4,000 emails were sent to MLAs through EasyMail asking to stop Bill 24. That was a new record for ARPA Canada. In the fall of 2018, ARPA Canada launched a campaign called the Gideon Project. Our grassroots wrote emails, made phone calls, and sent postcards to Alberta MLAs. You can read more about this campaign here.

We have reached our leaders and we need to keep doing that. We must continue to keep pressure on candidates running for election. Therefore, please ask these questions and respectfully insist on answers. ***If a candidate attempts to defer to the courts, mention that it's the responsibility of elected Members of the Legislature to fix this legislation!***

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- 1.) *Bill 24 has placed in law the ability for governments to intentionally create secrecy between parents and their children. If elected, what steps would you take to correct this?*
- 2.) *What is your opinion on parental rights and religious rights in education? Parents have been fighting for their rights in the courts; will you defend their freedom of association?*
- 3.) *A parent has the right to be informed about all their child's*

activities in school. Do you agree? How will you ensure transparency for parents?

- 4.) *Will you, as my MLA, publicly affirm the right of parents to educate their children according to their religious convictions?*

CURRICULUM AND SCHOOL CHOICE

SOGI 123 – A TOTAL CURRICULUM RE-WRITE

SOGI 123, which deals with how SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity) is taught in British Columbia classrooms, is couched as an anti-bullying initiative, but it is far more. It teaches a secular-humanist understanding of sexuality as a subjective identity to be celebrated unconditionally. This in direct contradiction to a Christian understanding of sexuality and its God-given design. SOGI 123 has spread to Alberta. The ideology behind SOGI 123 is harmful to our impressionable and vulnerable youth. There are currently six districts participating in the Alberta SOGI Educator Network. Alberta resources are now available for educators on this site. A number of education and community organizations are sponsoring the SOGI 123 initiative in Alberta.

SCHOOL CHOICE

Alberta provides more choice in schools than any other province. Some of these choices include: public schools, Catholic schools, charter schools, private schools, and homeschooling. Christian schools, including Reformed Christian schools, have long enjoyed the benefits of school choice, allowing parents to have their children taught at an institution founded on a Reformed Biblical perspective. Students in Reformed Christian schools perform well and these schools regularly surpass the provincial average in government accountability measures.

The push for one public education system will continue to increase, pressuring government to eliminate school choice, which could even include home schooling. Organizations such as Progress Alberta, Public School Boards Association of Alberta and Together for Students have been the drivers behind this. The assault on school choice is not going away.

UPDATE AND ARPA CALLS TO ACTION

As noted earlier in this election guide, most of the ARPA calls to action for education-related matters centered on the issue of safe and caring schools. However, the issues of school choice and SOGI 123 curriculum came up during discussions with our grassroots and also our MLAs. School choice is a blessing that we can be thankful for and therefore it is prudent to engage our candidates on this issue to let them know its value to us and how

it benefits all Albertans. It is also imperative to respectfully engage candidates on the ideology behind SOGI 123 and its harmful effects on children. Finally, parents would do well to participate in town halls, forums, and other sessions hosted by Alberta Education when they seek input on the new curriculum overhaul.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- 1.) *Would you support those schools who desire to teach sexuality according to the mission, vision, and values of the school? Would you support legislation that permits parents to opt out of any school activity (including clubs) pertaining to gender ideology and/or sexuality?*
- 2.) *Would you support a curriculum update that is focussed more on knowledge and skills and less on social issues?*
- 3.) *The government should maximize the choices available to parents for effectively educating their children. How would you promote this principle?*

CONVERSION AND REPARATIVE THERAPY

NDP WORKING ON BILL AIMED AT BANNING CONVERSION THERAPY

Conversion therapy refers to any treatment, counselling, or behaviour modification to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Alberta government has formed a committee to determine the most effective way to ban conversion therapy. The committee consists of health representatives, legal professionals, faith leaders, and LGBTQ representatives. This committee will be working together for the first half of 2019 and then drafting recommendations.

Alberta's Health Minister, the Honourable Sarah Hoffman, has stated publicly that she believes the practice is both damaging and hateful. Alberta Liberal Leader David Khan said the government should ban the practice immediately. Meanwhile, United Conservative Opposition Leader Jason Kenney has stated that he will not comment on legislation he hasn't seen, but said he would keep an open mind on whether to support such a bill.

By banning this kind of therapy, the government effectively takes away the freedom of doctors, psychologists, and even parents to deal with gender dysphoria – in children or adults – as a psychological issue. It would force the celebration of a discordant gender identity, subvert good medicine and scientific research, and label as hateful anyone who suggests treatment is needed for anyone struggling with a identity disorder. In the greatest irony, (or by Orwellian design) banning so-called conversion therapy

would allow surgeons to “convert” male bodies to look like female bodies and vice-versa through life-altering chemical injections and dramatic surgical removal of healthy body parts, but outlaw counselling to make people struggling with their identity comfortable in their own bodies. So, who's converting who?

UPDATE AND ARPA CALLS TO ACTION

Conversion therapy has been previously banned in Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia. So, ARPA Canada is keeping a close eye on the situation in Alberta. To date, no official call to action or campaign has been launched. To get a perspective on how serious the implications of such legislation would be, read this article about what happened in Manitoba and Ontario.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- 1.) *A conversion therapy ban has the potential of impacting our vulnerable youth by limiting the ability of doctors, counsellors, and parents to question the underlying reasons for their gender identity issues. How would you ensure that Alberta's health care system would still seek to fully understand the reasons for gender dysphoria or requests to transition to the opposite sex?*
- 2.) *Will you commit to ensuring that parental consent is required before any child begins experimental treatments like puberty blockers, opposite-sex hormone injections and surgery?*
- 3.) *Will you commit to opposing any bill that supports banning conversion therapy? Please elaborate.*

PRE-BORN HUMAN RIGHTS

BILL 9 – PROTECTING CHOICE FOR WOMEN ACCESSING HEALTH CARE ACT (BUBBLE ZONES)

On April 5, 2018, the Alberta government introduced Bill 9: *Protecting Choice for Women Accessing Health Care Act*. The bill passed that spring, creating “access zones” or bubble zones around abortion clinics. Within these zones, it is now illegal to attempt to persuade someone not to get an abortion, to attempt to inform someone about issues related to abortion or alternatives to abortion, or to merely express disapproval of abortion in any way.

Despite the rhetoric about putting a stop to harassment and threatening conduct, this bill is really about censorship. Harassment, intimidation, and uttering threats are already illegal under criminal law. **ARPA is strongly opposed to any threatening or intimidating conduct.** The way to prevent that is to enforce existing criminal law. Bill 9 was designed to prohibit peaceful pro-life outreach. This law is especially unjust because it

censors one side of the abortion debate while permitting the other side to speak freely.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT WITH A MINOR'S ABORTION DECISION

Advocates for pre-born human rights question why there is no requirement for parental consent or even notification prior to providing an abortion to a minor, though teenagers need parental consent for school field trips, among other things. This is an important issue that election candidates need to hear.

UPDATE AND ARPA CALLS TO ACTION

Bubble Zones

Bill 9 received Royal Assent on June 11, 2018 and came into force the same day. ARPA Canada launched an Easymail campaign prior to the vote. The UCP refused to debate or vote on the bill.

Parental Involvement and Consent

ARPA Canada has worked on a parental consent law extensively in Saskatchewan, and we are beginning to explore ways to advance this initiative in Alberta as well. During this election campaign we urge you to talk to friends, family, neighbours, and candidates (future MLAs) about the issue. Tell them parents should be involved in medical decisions for minors. The decision to have an abortion is a serious one with physical and psychological consequences. A minor will generally benefit from the involvement of her parents, rather than making this decision alone.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- 1.) *Would you repeal bubble zone legislation? Although abortion legislation is a federal issue, it is the provincial government's responsibility to administer health care and protect free speech in our province.*
- 2.) *A female high school student requires parental permission to receive medication like Tylenol, but she does not require parental consent to receive an abortion. Do you see this as an unacceptable double standard? And will you commit to amending health care law to ensure that minors require parental consent for such procedures?*
- 3.) *Undergoing an abortion is a life-changing procedure for a young woman. Will you protect her right to benefit from the advice and care of her parents when making that decision?*

EUTHANASIA AND ASSISTED SUICIDE MONITORING AND REPORTING ASSISTED SUICIDE

When the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the law that prohibited assisted suicide, it said that the risk of abuse of

vulnerable persons could be minimized through a "carefully designed system that imposes strict limits that are scrupulously monitored and enforced." However, we fear that assisted suicide and euthanasia are being performed in Alberta with next to no oversight.

Demand for medical assistance in dying remains steady. Within one year after Bill C-14 came into effect, 150 Albertans chose medical assistance to end their lives. Since then, a report indicates the rate increasing to an average of four assisted deaths performed each week in the province.

The issue remains contentious. First, some physicians remain uncomfortable with the practice, especially those who hold firm moral or religious objections. Second, an Alberta study suggested that doctor-assisted suicide can save Canada up to \$139 million per year; this could put society on a path where suicide becomes more acceptable or even pushed as it provides a cost-efficient solution to avoid health costs that come with end-of-life care. Alberta Health Services has formed three panels of clinicians to discuss if and how access to assisted suicide should be increased in the future.

UPDATE AND ARPA CALLS TO ACTION

The federal government passed regulations that require doctors performing euthanasia to report the deaths to the Coroner's office. Provincially, Alberta has a self-reporting system, meaning the doctor who approves the injection is the same doctor who does the injection, and the same doctor who reports the injection. This system is ripe for abuse. Doctors are very unlikely to self-report abuse.

To date, ARPA's calls to action regarding euthanasia and assisted suicide have been federal. However, it is within the province's jurisdiction over health care to require careful record keeping and reporting of all instances of "assisted dying" to the Coroner and Health Minister. We encourage you to remind candidates and MLAs of the dangers of legalized assisted suicide and euthanasia and of the necessity for "scrupulous monitoring and enforcement" so that the risk to vulnerable Canadians would be lessened.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- 1.) *Does your party respect conscience rights of its MLAs and allow them to open up debates about euthanasia? Will you commit to addressing this issue and initiating or supporting legislation?*
- 2.) *Do you believe that the province should require detailed record keeping and reporting (to the Coroner and Health Minister) of all instances of medically assisted dying in order to make it possible to watch out for troubling trends and to prevent abuse?*

- 3.) *Three years ago, if a doctor killed his patient, he'd be guilty of first-degree murder and liable to the harshest penalty in our Criminal Code. Now, some people want to force doctors to do this very thing. Do you believe that medical professionals should be free to conscientiously object to participating in assisted suicide, without reprisal?*
- 4.) *Allowing doctors to dissent is more likely to result in doctors pursuing the best medicine for their patients and will enhance rigorous scientific research and better expose false assumptions in the field of medicine, instead of being motivated by political pressure. Will you commit to supporting legislation to protect their freedom of conscience?*

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE! PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION!

We encourage you to communicate with candidates leading up to the election, to vote, and to stay in touch with whomever is elected to represent you and your riding in the Legislative Assembly. Use ARPA Canada's **12 STEP ACTION PLAN** to help you build a relationship with your MLA! Use the information and questions in this guide to engage with candidates and MLAs about issues that are close to your heart.

The recent political climate in Alberta has given cause for anxiety. With election 2019 rapidly approaching, it is natural to wonder about the future of our province. What will our province's society and political landscape look like after another election term? It's not always easy to predict, and it is easy to worry. But whatever the outcome of this election, one thing is clear: God is sovereign; He is in control. The Bible reveals that He rules the world and that He ordains governments, rulers, and nations. God rules Alberta! He will defeat all earthly and spiritual powers that defy Him or oppose His followers. And he uses you. He uses his people to achieve His purpose. So, be eager to work with Reformed Christian communities and ARPA chapters to educate, equip, and encourage each other and many others to be politically engaged and to bring a biblical perspective to our civil authorities.

"For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him." — COLOSSIANS 1:16

**"POLITICS IS TOO SERIOUS A
MATTER TO BE LEFT TO THE
POLITICIANS."**

CHARLES DE GAULLE

APPENDIX ONE: ALBERTA ELECTION GUIDE RESOURCES

All of the following resources take a more in-depth look at the issues above. Feel free to share them with friends, family, neighbours, candidates, and MLAs.

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON GOD AND GOVERNMENT

Respectfully Submitted - Supremacy of God
God and Government - Biblical Perspective

GENDER IDEOLOGY IN OUR HOMES AND SCHOOLS

Respectfully Submitted - Gender Identity
Respectfully Submitted - Pornography
Respectfully Submitted - Prostitution
Protect Them All - Safe and Caring Schools
ARPA Canada - Bill 24 FAQs
ARPA OpEd - Engaged Parents Make a Difference
Parents for Choice in Education - Toolkit
JCCF - How Bill 24 Violates Charter Freedoms

CURRICULUM AND SCHOOL CHOICE

ARPA Blog - Gender Ideology in Ontario
ARPA Blog - Public Education is not Neutral
ARPA Canada - Highlights from BC SOGI Curriculum
**Note: The above resources aren't Alberta specific but the issues are similar in Alberta*
Alberta Education - Draft K-4 Curriculum
AISCA Defends School Choice

CONVERSION THERAPY

What Banning Conversion Therapy Will Really Stop

PRE-BORN HUMAN RIGHTS

Respectfully Submitted - In Vitro Embryo
Respected Submitted - Surrogacy
WeNeedALaw Provincial Initiatives Parental Involvement
ARPA Blog - Treating Peaceful Pro-Life Persuasion as Hate Speech
Alberta Bill 9 OpEd
WNAL - International Standards Abortion Law

EUTHANASIA AND ASSISTED SUICIDE

Respectfully Submitted - Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia
ARPA Canada - Canada Must Start Monitoring Medically Assisted Dying
ARPA Canada - Parliament Considers Protecting Physician Conscience Rights

