



## BC Budget 2027 Consultation

A submission from the Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA) Canada

to

The British Columbia Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

### **Recommendation 1: Maintain or increase school funding for Group 1 independent schools, including religiously affiliated schools.**

Since 1977, British Columbia has funded most independent schools, including religiously affiliated schools. As of 2018/19, [almost 60,000 students](#), representing two-thirds of all independent education students, attended religious schools. Just over half of all independent schools – and 72% of all Group 1 independent schools – are [affiliated](#) with a religious tradition.

British Columbia should continue to provide public funding for Group 1 independent schools, including religiously affiliated schools, for several reasons.

First, independent schools save public funds. The province grants independent schools only 50% of the equivalent public school's per-student operating costs. Independent schools also cover their own capital costs. If the government withdrew provincial funding for just Group 1 independent schools and all of these students transferred to the public school system, the provincial government would incur over \$450 million in additional operating costs, to say nothing of the cost of building more schools to accommodate this influx of students.

Second, withholding funding specifically for religious independent schools while continuing to grant public funding for other independent schools would amount to religious discrimination. In every other province that funds independent schools, religious and secular schools are equally funded. In fact, Ontario and most of the other Western provinces fully fund some religious schools: a separate Catholic public school system.

Third, independent schools, including religious independent schools, raise model citizens. Independent school graduates in Canada are [more likely](#) to form lasting marriages, have more children, volunteer, and participate in civic and political initiatives than their public school counterparts. As more divisions appear in British Columbian society, we increasingly need citizens devoted to peace, order, and good self-government.

Preserving funding for independent schools, including religiously affiliated ones, will continue to save public funds, treat people fairly, and form model citizens.

## **Recommendation 2: Maintain or enhance charitable tax credits, including for religious charities.**

British Columbia currently offers a provincial donation tax credit of 5.06% for the first \$200 donated and 16.8% for most donations over \$200. The bottom rate of 5.06% is effectively tied with Ontario for the lowest among Canadian provinces, and the main rate of 16.8% is the third lowest in the country.

British Columbia should follow Alberta's example to incentivize more charitable giving. Rather than making credit on the first \$200 equal to the rate on the lowest income tax bracket (5.06%) as British Columbia does, Alberta provides an extremely generous 60% donation tax credit on the first \$200. Furthermore, Alberta's tax credit on donations over \$200 is six percentage points higher (21%) than the rate on its highest income tax bracket (15%).

Generous tax incentives signal that donating to charity is a commendable social activity, a form of altruism that is important in a thriving democracy. Increasing these donation tax credits would also help reverse the [recent decline in charitable giving](#) in Canada. Only about 16.8% of Canadians donated to charities in 2023, down from 21.9% in 2013. And the amount being donated is also falling. While 0.55% of all personal income was donated to charity in 2013, only 0.52% was donated in 2023, with a mean household donation of around \$500.

The province should also continue to recognize religious charities as eligible to issue charitable tax receipts. A study by Cardus, their [Halo project](#), estimates that for every dollar a religious congregation spends, the broader community receives \$3.39 in various benefits. The benefits that religious communities provide are over 10 times the cost to the government of charitable tax exemptions and credits. In the final analysis, rather than governments subsidizing religious institutions, religious institutions subsidize their communities.

## **Recommendation 3: Cease public funding for abortion, MAiD, medical gender transitioning, and assisted reproduction.**

Neither abortion, MAiD, nor medical gender transitioning are medically necessary procedures that improve human health. In fact, each of these procedures causes significant harm, violating one of the fundamental principles of medical ethics: do no harm. Abortion ends the life of a pre-born human being before they are born. MAiD, a form of non-culpable homicide, also deliberately ends a human life. Medical gender transitioning permanently impacts healthy bodies and ignores the fact that over 80% of pre-pubescent children with gender dysphoria naturally outgrow this dysphoria by the time that they reach adulthood. As Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States have all documented, there are many known harms

(e.g. diminished bone density, cardiovascular disease, infertility) and potential harms caused by puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and gender-related surgeries.

While assisted reproduction does not cause direct bodily harm to the same extent, it typically deprives children born through IVF or surrogacy of their biological parent(s), commodifies children, and complicates family law.

These non-medically necessary procedures also touch on fundamental and deeply held moral, conscientious, or religious convictions. Hundreds of thousands of Christians across the province believe that human beings are made in the image of God and that human lives should not be taken through either abortion or euthanasia. Each person is also born as male or female – that genetic code is implanted in every single cell. Our bodies are not ultimately our own to be harmed to fit our desired identities but are always to be nurtured and safeguarded from harm. And children are meant to be conceived, born to, and raised by their biological mother and father rather than any other collection of consenting adults.

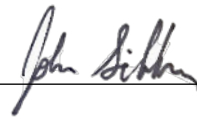
As such, provincial governments should therefore refrain from using tax dollars to fund abortion, MAiD, medical gender transitioning, and assisted reproduction.

Respectfully submitted,



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