

April 10, 2012

Dear Fellow Union Members:

Send a message to the Tories, yes! But do your research first!

Recent opinion polls are suggesting that the long-ruling Progressive Conservative party may be on the brink of an historic defeat at the hands of the upstart Wildrose party, led by the telegenic Danielle Smith.

The good news is that Albertans are finally finding the courage to stand up to a party that has been in power for far too long – a party that has become arrogant and which has consistently put the narrow interests of its corporate supporters (especially in the energy industry) ahead of the broader public interest.

The bad news is that many justifiably frustrated voters are turning to the Wildrose as an alternative without actually taking a close look at what the party stands for.

That's why I'm sending this letter today. I know that many union members around the province are in a "throw-the-bums-out" mood. Frankly, so am I. But before any of our members decide they want to mark their "X" next to a Wildrose candidate, I want to make sure they understand exactly what a Wildrose government would mean to unions, working people and the things we value.

In particular, it's important for union voters to familiarize themselves with the Wildrose's positions on labour law, health care, public services, revenue, pensions and energy policy.

In each and every case, the Wildrose has staked out a position that is diametrically opposed to the positions embraced by the Alberta Federation of Labour and its affiliate unions. For example, we want to defend publicly funded and publicly delivered Medicare: they want to dismantle it in favour of American-style privatization.

Perhaps one of the biggest areas of divergence between Alberta's labour movement and the Wildrose party has to do with labour law. We believe that the laws should be drafted in a way that allows Alberta's to exercise their right to join a union and bargain collectively. The Wildrose party, on the other hand, wants to gut Alberta's labour laws and replace them with the same kind of laws that U.S. Tea Party Republicans have used to weaken unions and undermine the collective strength of working people south of the border.

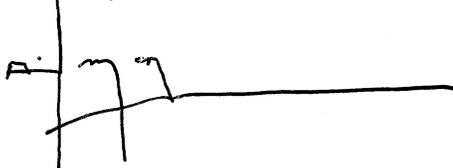
If elected, I'm convinced that Danielle Smith will become Canada's Scott Walker, the Republican governor that launched an unprecedented attack on unions in Wisconsin about a year ago.

In an effort to help our members better understand the choices in this election, we've put together an Election Information Sheet that explains how the Tories have failed us and how the Wildrose threatens us.

I urge you to distribute either this letter by itself or with the attached fact sheet to as many of your activists and members as possible before Election Day on April 23. Please also encourage your members to visit the AFL's election website at www.election2012.afl.org for more information.

We need to ensure that union voters are informed voters. And we need to do everything we can to stop Wisconsin from moving north.

In Solidarity,



Gil McGowan, President

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