



23 November 2023

Honourable Jim Dinning, ECA
Panel Chair
Alberta Pension Plan Engagement Panel
Comments@albertapensionplan.ca

RE: Call for resignation of all panel members

Dear Panel Chair Dinning:

When your panel was formed, Albertans were told that its mandate would be to listen to Albertans and consult with them on the Alberta government's controversial proposal to pull all Alberta workers and retirees out of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). However, since the day the proposal was unveiled and your panel announced, it has become evident that your panel's REAL mandate is to promote a deeply flawed premise through a deeply flawed process. The government's proposal is based on a report whose authors wouldn't even put their name to the final version. And it is being promoted by misleading advertising – paid for by the public – who neither asked for this radical change nor who would benefit from it.

What the Alberta government is doing fits the definition of propaganda and your panel's telephone town halls have been nothing more than an extension of the government's deliberately misleading ad campaign. As Alberta's largest worker advocacy organization, we at the Alberta Federation of Labour are hearing from hundreds of working and retired Albertans from across the province. They are telling us disturbing stories about how they have been blocked from participating in your telephone town hall and denied opportunities to register their concerns. There isn't even an email address listed for the panel on the website. The bias in the government's online survey and the polls conducted by your panel, as well as the misleading, political nature of your comments during your telephone town halls have undermined your panel's credibility and eroded public confidence in its work.

Gil McGowan, President

Karen Kuprys, Secretary Treasurer



#300, 10408 - 124 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5N 1R5



1-800-661-3995



780-483-3021



afl@afl.org



www.afl.org

You claim the panel's role is to listen, not to advocate but you consistently use politically driven rhetoric that is obviously meant to persuade. These include phrases such as using "hostile central government", "subsidizing the rest of the country", and "strengthening the position of Alberta". Responses from the panel in the telephone town halls have been more fulsome and exploratory when questions and comments are favourable, but Albertans who are critical or express legitimate concerns are contradicted or shut down. The panel has shown significant bias in favour of leaving the CPP in their language and conduct.

When the chair of a panel tasked with conducting public engagement on a proposal cannot speak confidently to the credibility of the details of the proposal, but instead echoes the fringe narrative the Premier is promoting, the public cannot possibly take the process seriously. Telephone town hall participants have rightly described this entire process as "an outcome in search of legitimization".

With all of this in mind, on behalf of the Alberta Federation of Labour and all Albertans who see your panel's work for the sham that it is, I am calling for the resignation of your entire panel. Albertans deserve to have direct access to all correspondence your panel has received to date without interference from the Premier's office. That should be the final act of your panel before you disband and cease any further use of public resources to promote a proposal that is clearly not in the public interest. Let us end this charade that your job has been to consult Albertans when it has clearly been to convince them to swallow a bitter pill that they never asked for and know, in their guts, would not be good for them.

For your reference, I have included just a few of the many comments we have received from our members and other concerned Albertans:

"I attended online the farce of a town hall as did my husband and we both submitted questions both at the beginning and periodically throughout. The folks in control obviously cherry picked the ones that seem to be most supportive or that would allow the leaders of this mess to tell the questioner exactly what they want them to hear."

"I am outraged at the tax money being spent on advertising something Albertans did not ask for and was not campaigned on."

"I believe questions and feedback are being cherry picked, I have listened to 3 town halls, including tonight, submitted feedback and/or questions in the first 5 minutes, but not chosen."

"The panel says the Lifeworks report does not have data on interprovincial migration or on Albertans who retire abroad. Why is this not being addressed when talking about the amounts? The government is using public dollars to force feed us misinformation. How can we stop this?"

"The panel says that residents in other provinces would not have their CPP affected by Alberta leaving. But they also say the opposite—that others are being subsidized by Alberta's share. Which is it?"

"The CPP is stable and operates at arms length from the government. How can we trust that an Alberta government would leave a pension at arms length? AHS is supposed to be arms length, how has that worked out?"

"The argument from the UCP that Alberta is supporting the rest of Canada bespeaks that either they don't understand the nature of a pension plan or they are flat out and deliberately misinforming Albertans. The Pension Plan is between the individual and the Pension. We contribute to our own personal pension plan which is portable with us. We don't pay into a CPP fund that gets redistributed proportionately somewhere else."

"How can this proposal and what the panel says be taken seriously when they are dealing only in hypotheticals—'maybe, could, might'--and cannot tell Albertans what exactly we would be deciding on and what the risks are?"

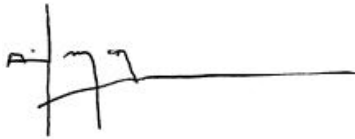
"I have tried to fill in the survey sent out by the GOA and it was designed with the intention of this new plan already being decided upon. I have written to my MLA but afraid my letter has fallen on deaf ears. The radio interview with Danielle Smith that was on indicates to me that no matter what the people of Alberta have to say , the UCP is committed to getting this done."

"The survey they sent out was a joke and it will likely be the same for a poorly worded referendum. Jim Dinning was supposed to be impartial and observe/note carefully what the majority of Albertans want. He has not shown

impartiality and argues in favour of Danielle's plan. This is all so ridiculous and shameful on the part of the UCP. So many of us are so angry and fed up."

"Albertans have consistently told the UCP that we are not in support of an Alberta pension plan, so why have they spent well over 7 million of our dollars to convince us that we are wrong? We paid our money into the CPP and that is where it should stay. This government could do so much better in helping Albertans in this time of high inflation but they seem to have their own agenda and have no problem spending taxpayer money to pursue their fights with the federal government."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gil McGowan', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gil McGowan

President

Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL)

cc: Premier Danielle Smith

premier@gov.ab.ca

President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance Nate Horner

tbf.minister@gov.ab.ca