

Media Release

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Exposing the “Elephant in the Room”

EDMONTON – The “elephant in the room” in Alberta politics is big money. Nobody likes to talk about the role money plays in deciding elections, but it’s hard to deny its influence in these days of steep advertising costs.

Of course, money has always played a role in politics. What’s news is that the imbalance between the very deep pockets of Alberta’s PCs and the opposition parties has reached a critical level that makes a sham of democracy.

“All political parties depend on donations for survival. In fact, aside from voting, donating to the party of your choice is one of the best ways to support a strong democracy,” notes Alberta Liberal Leader Kevin Taft. “But in Alberta, where government doesn’t change for decades, the tendency of major contributors to favour the ruling party has created a huge barrier for anyone else in the race.”

Taft says overflowing coffers allow the PCs to buy up advertising space in advance and flood the province with their party’s message during the campaign period, not an option for opposition parties with modest budgets that depend mostly on individual donations. Voters hard pressed to see there is a strong alternative stay home on election day, or simply shrug and cast their ballot for the status quo.

To reinvigorate democracy in Alberta, the Alberta Liberals are challenging corporate donors to increase their contributions to opposition parties and level the campaign playing field. The party’s fall fundraising theme, ‘Put Your Money Where Your Dreams Are’ also urges donors to work with the Alberta Liberals to achieve the province’s potential in education, environmental protection, arts and culture and a sustainable future.

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For records of provincial political contributions in Alberta, visit

<http://www.elections.ab.ca/efpublic/>

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