

For immediate release  
February 27, 2008

10247 124 Street NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5N 1P8  
**P: 780.414.1124**  
**F: 780.414.1125**  
**T: 1.800.661.9201**  
**E: office@albertaliberal.com**

## **Chief Electoral Officer must assert authority** Edmonton-Castle Downs' Returning Officer scandal shows Elections Alberta must stand up for Albertans' right to a fair election

Edmonton – The Alberta Liberal Party formally demanded today that Elections Alberta Chief Electoral Officer Lorne Gibson assert the authority given him by the *Election Act* and ensure impartiality in the conduct of Alberta's election on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008.

Section 4(1) (a) of the *Election Act* (2000) states the Chief Electoral Officer shall:

*“enforce on the part of all election officers fairness and impartiality in the conduct of their duties and compliance with this Act...”*

Sun Media reported today that Linda Brown, who was appointed by Order in Council as Returning Officer in Edmonton-Castle Downs, is the former executive assistant to PC MLA Thomas Lukaszuk.

In 2004, Lukaszuk won the election over Alberta Liberal Chris Kibermanis by three votes on an appeal of a judicial recount after losing the unofficial count, the official count, and a judicial recount. The two candidates are again running against each other this election. If there is any constituency in which every vote does indeed count, this is it.

“The legislation is quite clear that the Chief Electoral Officer has the authority and responsibility to make sure elections, including this election, are free and fair and administered by impartial returning officers. The CEO has the duty and responsibility to ensure impartiality, without regard to any instruction from the government or fear of retaliation,” said Glenn Rollans, Co-Chair of the Alberta Liberal campaign.

The demand details supervisory measures required to restore Albertans' confidence in an impartial election, and notes that these measures are enabled by the Act and within the responsibilities of the Chief Electoral Officer.

These measures include retaining impartial outside assistance, including assistance from other jurisdictions, if the staff of Elections Alberta is insufficient to the widespread need for supervision and enforcement of impartiality in this election. “This election was not a surprise. Elections Alberta could have gone on a recruiting drive last spring to bring in qualified, impartial returning officers,” Rollans said.

The demand specifies that the Chief Electoral Officer himself should personally be present during the official count in Edmonton-Castle Downs.

A letter to Chief Electoral Officer Lorne Gibson from the Alberta Liberal Party's campaign co-chairs is attached.

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For more information contact:  
Kieran Leblanc  
(780) 414-1970

**It's time.**  
**AlbertaLiberal**