

campaign for a **smoke-free** alberta

- NEWS RELEASE -

WORLD NO-TOBACCO DAY, WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 2006

RESULTS OF POLITICAL LEADERS AND CANDIDATES SURVEY ON MEASURES TO REDUCE TOBACCO USE IN ALBERTA

Edmonton – Today the Campaign for a Smoke-Free Alberta released the results of a survey of all provincial party leaders and leadership candidates regarding their position on several evidence-based measures to reduce tobacco use. The questionnaires were delivered by registered mail to 14 eligible respondents earlier this month.

The questions addressed tobacco taxation, smoke-free workplace legislation, restricting tobacco sales and marketing, and suing tobacco companies to recover a portion of tobacco-related healthcare costs.

Completed surveys were returned by the following individuals:

- Lyle Oberg, Progressive Conservative Leadership Candidate
- Mark Norris, Progressive Conservative Leadership Candidate
- Kevin Taft, Liberal Party Leader
- Brian Mason, New Democrat Party Leader
- Paul Hinman, Alliance Party Leader

Of the completed surveys, Lyle Oberg and Kevin Taft supported all of the tobacco control policies and measures listed in the survey. Brian Mason and Mark Norris each responded favourably to eight out of nine tobacco control measures listed and Paul Hinman replied “yes” to five out of nine questions. The full survey results have been posted at www.smokefreealberta.com/survey.

“We are confident that this survey will help to make tobacco control a major leadership issue” said Dan Holinda, Executive Director of the Canadian Cancer Society Alberta/NWT Division. “Tobacco use is the leading avoidable cause of premature death in this province and it deserves the full attention of our political leaders. We are very pleased with the overall quality of the responses received to date and we will continue to press party leaders and leadership candidates for their positions on this critical public health issue”.

The coalition will post any future responses that are submitted by party leaders and leadership candidates on its website.

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"Alberta is lagging behind other provinces on tobacco policy measures" said Les Hagen, Executive Director, Action on Smoking & Health. "At present, Alberta's tobacco taxes are the third lowest among provinces, we have the weakest smoking restrictions in Canada, and we are the only province without any laws to restrict tobacco sales and marketing. These policy omissions are having a significant impact on our quality of life in Alberta and we cannot allow another generation of Albertans to fall prey to the tobacco industry".

The coalition is very concerned about a recent Health Canada survey revealing that smoking rates are up 30% among young Albertans aged 15 to 19. Health groups are also concerned about a 9% increase in tobacco shipments since 2003.

Numerous public opinion polls, including those commissioned by the Alberta government, reveal widespread public support for various policy measures to reduce tobacco use.

The Campaign for a Smoke-Free Alberta represents 17 prominent provincial organizations that are working to reduce tobacco use.

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CONTACT:

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SURVEY OF PARTY LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP CANDIDATES ON TOBACCO POLICY MEASURES

QUESTION	RESPONDENT				
<i>As the present or future leader of your party, which of the following evidence-based measures do you support to reduce tobacco use in Alberta:</i>	Lyle Oberg Progressive Conservative Leadership Candidate	Mark Norris Progressive Conservative Leadership Candidate	Kevin Taft Liberal Party Leader	Brian Mason New Democrat Party Leader	Paul Hinman Alliance Party Leader
<i>1. A provincial tobacco tax increase of at least \$1 per pack of 25 cigarettes and equalizing tax rates on loose tobacco based on cigarette equivalents.</i>	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
<i>2. Provincial legislation to make all indoor workplaces completely smoke-free including liquor and gaming facilities.</i>	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
<i>2(a). Would you support a free vote on a Private Member's Bill in the Legislative Assembly that would achieve the same objective?</i>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
<i>3. Provincial legislation to prohibit all retail tobacco displays (powerwalls).</i>	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
<i>3(a). Would you support a free vote on a Private Member's Bill in the Legislative Assembly that would achieve the same objective?</i>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

<i>4. Provincial legislation to prohibit tobacco sales in pharmacies, healthcare facilities and educational institutions.</i>	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
<i>4(a). Would you support a free vote on a Private Member's Bill in the Legislative Assembly that would achieve the same objective?</i>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
<i>5. Legislation to enable the recovery of a portion of tobacco-related healthcare costs from tobacco companies for contributing to the ill health of Albertans.</i>	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
<i>5(a). Would you support a free vote on a Private Member's Bill in the Legislative Assembly that would achieve the same objective?</i>	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
TOTALS	9/9	8/9	9/9	8/9	5/9

The following individuals have not responded as of May 30, 2006:

- Jim Dinning, Progressive Conservative Leadership Candidate
- Dave Hancock, Progressive Conservative Leadership Candidate
- Ted Morton, Progressive Conservative Leadership Candidate
- Ed Stelmach, Progressive Conservative Leadership Candidate
- Laverne Ahlstrom, Alberta Social Credit Leader
- Ralph Klein, Progressive Conservative Leader
- Bruce Hutton, Separation Party Leader
- Naomi Rankin, Communist Party Leader
- George Read, Alberta Greens Leader
- Bruce Stubbs, Alberta Party Leader