

Backgrounder

Securing Saskatchewan's Future Through More Accountable Government

The Saskatchewan Party's New Ideas to Secure the Future

Saskatchewan people deserve a government that values accountability and transparency; a government that respects the people of the province and has new ideas to make government more accountable to the people it serves. Saskatchewan people haven't gotten that type of government from Lorne Calvert and the NDP.

The Saskatchewan Party Plan

- The *Saskatchewan Growth and Financial Security Act*.
- Paying down \$250-million of debt in the first year, and making additional debt payments every year.
- Banning government advertising before elections and establishing fixed election dates
- Making government more accountable and investing in a professional civil service.

The Tired, Old NDP:

- Lorne Calvert has spent over \$11-million on self-serving advertising since becoming Premier:
 - "It's hard to imagine a bigger waste of money" – Regina Leader Post, October 13, 2006 (referring to the Imagine Campaign).
 - "Advertising that's really little more than thinly-veiled propaganda designed more for the benefit of the governing party's re-election chances than the benefit of the public." - Regina Leader Post columnist Murray Mandryk referring to the Health and Learning government ad campaigns, September 15, 2007.
- The Calvert NDP has failed to be accountable to Saskatchewan people:
 - "Calvert lacks accountability" – PA Daily Herald, January 27, 2005
 - "Why is NDP insisting on lying to us?" – Regina Leader Post, October 23, 2004
 - "Government too lenient on Accountability" – Saskatoon Star Phoenix, March 17, 2006
- Murdoch Carriere Scandal: Lorne Calvert delivered a \$275,000 severance cheque to Murdoch Carriere, a senior government official who was fired for harassing women and convicted of assault.
- NDP Fraud Scandal: The Calvert NDP promised to deliver another big severance cheque to Jim Fodey, the former NDP Caucus Chief of Staff who lost his job in the wake of the NDP fraud scandal and cover-up, which is still under RCMP investigation.

The Saskatchewan Party Plan

The Saskatchewan Growth and Financial Security Act.

A Saskatchewan Party government will pass the Saskatchewan Growth and Financial Security Act to ensure that the budget is balanced every year, surpluses are dedicated to debt repayment and economic growth initiatives and government departments and agencies remain accountable to Saskatchewan people for the services they deliver.

The Saskatchewan Growth and Financial Security Act will be passed in the first legislative session of a Saskatchewan Party government.

Balance the Budget Every Year and Dedicate Surpluses to Debt Reduction and Growth

- *The Saskatchewan Growth and Financial Security Act* will require the budget to be balanced every year, instead of every four years as is now the case.
- *The Saskatchewan Growth and Financial Security Act* will establish a fixed plan for budget surpluses, by ensuring that half of all surpluses are dedicated to reducing provincial government debt and half are dedicated to economic growth initiatives, such as additional funding for infrastructure.

Ensure the Size of Government Does not Growth Beyond the Rate of Population Growth in Saskatchewan.

- *The Saskatchewan Growth and Financial Security Act* will limit increases to the size of Saskatchewan's civil service to the rate of population growth. For example, a one percent increase in the size of Saskatchewan's population would provide the provincial government with the option to increase the net number of people working in the civil service by an equal amount.

Ensure Accountability in the Programs and Services Provided by Government Agencies.

As part of *The Saskatchewan Growth and Financial Security Act*, government departments and agencies will be required to review all programs and services as part of the annual reporting process, to determine and document whether they are:

- Serving the public interest;
- Being provided efficiently and effectively;
- Accountable to the taxpayer; and
- Achieving the goals of a healthy, safe, innovative and prosperous province.

Paying Down the Provincial Debt

- A Saskatchewan Party government will pay down \$250-million of the province's debt in the first year.

Fixed Election Dates

- A Saskatchewan Party government will establish fixed provincial election dates, so that provincial elections are held every four years.

Banning Government Advertising Before an Election

- A Saskatchewan Party will introduce legislation to restrict the amount and type of advertising a government can do in the four months preceding an election. Under the legislation:
 - Government advertising will be prohibited in the month leading up to the election campaign, except in the case of an emergency or compelling public safety concern;
 - In the four months leading up to an election:
 - Government could not increase the amount it spends on advertising in the four months leading up to an election and will have to provide complete public disclosure of the amount it is spending on advertising during that period.
 - Advertising would have to be non-partisan and intended only to inform the public about programs and services for the public benefit of Saskatchewan people or public safety issues; and
 - Advertising intended primarily to promote the province could only be directed to audiences outside Saskatchewan.

Supporting a Professional Public Service

- A Saskatchewan Party government will support the development of a professional public service by:
 - Ensuring that promotion in the public service is based on merit, not patronage.
 - Providing \$1-million over four years for the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy to assist in professional development opportunities for public servants and help educate the next generation of public service leaders in our province.

More Accountable and Transparent Government

A Saskatchewan Party government will strengthen accountability and transparency in government by:

- Placing all orders-in-council on-line, so the public can easily review government appointments;
- Broadening the scope of the Provincial Auditor to ensure current service agreements (such as those with third party agencies relating to protective services for vulnerable children) are being complied with;
- Strengthening protection for public servants and whistle-blowers in the workplace by establishing a Public Integrity Commissioner; and
- Requiring Crown Corporations to report to the legislature on a regular basis.