

Democracy

Trusted, effective, representative government.

HOW WE'RE THINKING ABOUT THIS

Trust in government is built on seven factors: reliability, responsiveness, openness, integrity, fairness, commitment to addressing long-term and global challenges, and effectiveness in dealing with these challenges.

For a government to be seen as legitimate, it must be representative, trustworthy, and effective. Trust in government is crucial for it to effectively implement its agenda and be recognized as legitimate. For a democracy to work effectively, the government must be accountable to the public, reflect voters' choices and respond to the challenges we as a province and global community face.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

Our democracy is in trouble. Successive governments are viewed as more accountable to industry than to the public. There's a perception that the government lacks both the intent and the inclination to address the pressing issues people are facing. We can see the effects of declining trust in institutions through low voter turnout, a rise in personal security systems and a growing focus on alternative media sources.

Governments in British Columbia tend not to be representative of the voters' decisions. In the 2020 election, the NDP gained 66% of seats with only 48% of the vote, forming a majority government with only minority support. The BC NDP have subsequently embraced the worst parts of that majority, ignoring oversight, silencing committees and calling for closure on multiple Bills as they pass through the Legislature.

Successive governments in British Columbia have fallen short in addressing major challenges like climate change and rising inequality. Additionally, instead of being transparent about these issues, there has been a decrease in openness, including the introduction of fees for accessing government information. Instead of a commitment to addressing emissions, the BC NDP has approved new LNG

terminals and pipelines, while pretending to be acting on climate change. Instead of being a reliable partner, the government has failed to deliver solutions to the healthcare crisis, the toxic drug crisis, or the lack of infrastructure in education. Together, these failures have eroded trust in Government, contributing to a rise in right-wing populism.

POLICIES FOR ANNOUNCEMENT

We will enhance public trust in the political process.

- Within the first 100 days of being elected, the BC Greens will introduce legislation to implement a Proportional Representation system for the 2028 election. This will ensure that every vote counts and supports a truly democratic, multi-party system.
- A referendum will be held after the second proportional representation election to confirm whether the system aligns with voter interests.

Lower the Voting Age to 16

- The BC Greens will lower the voting age to 16 and introduce civics and voting education in schools, empowering young people to participate actively in democracy.

Implement a Standing Citizens' Assembly

- We will establish a biennial Citizens' Assembly, with topics selected by the Legislative Assembly. This Assembly will ensure ongoing citizen participation in major policy discussions and decision-making.

We will reform parliamentary practices to promote transparency, ensure thorough legislative scrutiny, and foster collaboration among all political parties.

- The BC Greens will commit to never using closure in bill debates, ensuring that all legislation receives adequate scrutiny. House Leaders will collectively develop a legislative calendar that provides enough time for debate and consideration of all bills.

- The BC Greens will establish all-party caucuses based on geography, common interests, and background. These caucuses will be mandated and supported to work collaboratively on shared priorities.
- We will commit to thoroughly considering Private Members' Bills and amendments from all Legislative Assembly members, fostering a more inclusive and participatory legislative process.
- We will strengthen the role of Legislative Assembly Committees as an oversight function, with responsibilities for keeping track of whether recommendations from oversight agencies, such as the Auditor-General and Representative for Children and Youth, are being implemented.
- The BC Greens will support Indigenous communities in meaningful consultation by providing appropriate resources and ensuring their input is thoroughly considered in government decision-making.
- To avoid conflicts of interest, we will enforce a minimum two-year stand-down period between holding a designated office in government and working in a lobbying role.
- We will implement a ceiling on public servant salaries, so that no staff member can earn more than five times the lowest-paid staff member. This will be implemented over time, to ensure no employment contract laws are broken.

We are dedicated to improving transparency and accountability in government operations by reforming executive practices, ensuring proactive information release, and supporting meaningful consultation.

- The BC Greens will remove the fee for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and require all government departments and ministers to respond to requests within the legislative timeframes.
- We will proactively release government materials, including ministerial calendars and briefing notes, to promote greater transparency and public accountability.

