

BC Liberals promise 10,000 new daycare spaces as part of platform ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) — The BC Liberal Party released its platform ahead of the leaders' debate Tuesday, promising 10,000 new daycare spaces and legislation for fixed election dates.

Much of the platform, however, consisted of promises made previously during the election campaign.

Liberal Leader Andrew Wilkinson, in Downtown Vancouver, reiterated promises to end the PST for a year and end the ICBC monopoly and open the sector up to private competition, while delivering more affordable childcare options.

"We will provide the provincial aid and supports to keep our small businesses alive through this pandemic," he said, including the elimination of the small business tax and creation of a loan program for vulnerable sectors.

"We're also announcing today that our intention is to fund and build and fit-out an additional 10,000 daycare spaces. We've talked to the operators, they've told us the cost of upgrading leased space. There's publicly available space that can be upgraded. We can do this," Wilkinson added.

More daycare spaces allow more people to get back to work, which aids the economy, he said.

"This is a very good thing because we need to grow and expand our economy as we come through COVID. And the best way to do that is to say that every working parent will have access to affordable daycare in their own community."

Wilkinson promised to create new legislation for fixed election dates, as well.

"We will also prepare legislation related to B.C.'s fixed election date to limit the premier's ability to manipulate election dates for partisan benefit and ban early elections during provincial emergencies," he added.

"It is unthinkable that in the middle of a provincial emergency, John Horgan broke the trust of the parties in the legislature and the people of British Columbia, to call this self-serving election."

Wilkinson further pitched a hybrid learning model — in-class and distance-based learning — for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12, if the party wins in the Oct. 24 election.

He also said the Liberals would build a new Richmond Hospital acute care tower, a second hospital in Surrey, and replace the Massey Tunnel with a new 10-lane bridge.

He promised to hire more police officers, prosecutors, and mental health workers, as well, and to end tent cities for people experiencing homelessness.

"Our streets are more disorderly than ever. Vulnerable people are being preyed upon by criminals, and the level of street disorder is unacceptable. We will build a real pathway to get people with addictions off drugs," Wilkinson said.

"And let's be clear, these are people suffering from addictions. It's a medical disorder. It needs to be treated. And that's what we will do. We will end the tent cities and get people the services and supports they need to get off life on the streets."

The Liberals pledged to help seniors stay at home longer and provide access to their own private room when they require long-term care.

"We've allocated \$1 billion over five years — it's \$200 million a year — to provide for seniors facilities to be upgraded to private rooms for anybody who wants one. This will control the spread of disease, it will lead to a better way of life for our seniors, and it's a very sound investment."

Wilkinson further promised a tax credit for seniors up to \$7,000 a year for items such as home care and repairs, and housekeeping.

“We have to do better and caring for our society’s most vulnerable people.”

Wilkinson said half of Vancouver residents live in condos and that the NDP has not addressed skyrocketing insurance rates for them.

“So we will take action quickly to get a more sensible insurance market going for condominium owners with the advice that we’ve received from the industry of real steps that can be taken for things like self-insurance and mutual Insurance to give people the break they need.”

Furthermore, the Liberals promised to complete the six-laning of Highway to Whatcom Road in the Fraser Valley, as well as expanding public transit options and electric vehicle charging stations.

Wilkinson, along with NDP Leader John Horgan and BC Green Party Leader Sonia Furstenau are to take questions after the televised debate Tuesday.

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