



AB Today – Daily Report July 31, 2019

Quotation of the day

“Calgary Pride doesn’t leave anyone behind.”

Calgary Pride parade organizers [said](#) Monday night that they are softening their politics-free stance, and that — while political parties still can’t march — approved organizations can invite politicians to march with them.

Today in AB

On the schedule

The House is adjourned until Tuesday, October 22.

Calgary Pride organizers uphold ban on political parties marching in the parade, but leave room for politicians to participate

Organizers of Calgary’s Pride parade said they [stand by a ban](#) on political parties marching in the city’s annual celebration, but will allow community groups to invite individual politicians to march with them.

The Pride Calgary Planning Committee made the announcement in a statement Monday night, after rescheduling a planned meeting with NDP MLA **Janis Irwin** of Edmonton—Highlands—Norwood, the Alberta legislature’s only openly gay member.

“Pride is, and always has been, political,” Irwin said.

Any politicians who are invited to march alongside community groups will be authorized to wear their political party-branded attire.

Pride Calgary, an independent non-profit, brought in a jury earlier this year to help with the selection of parade participants after receiving a record number of applications.

On July 12, the independent jury — whose membership was not made public, but comprised “community members with a diversity of lived experience across the LGBTQ2S+ spectrum” — decided the NDP was the only political party that met the criteria to march in the parade.

However, the festival’s board said it would be “inappropriate and preferential” to only allow one party to participate.

“As a political organization, we want to recognize the parties that have stood by our community, have taken risks, and have shown their allyship in numerous ways,” a statement from the organizers reads.

The festival organizers did, however, single out the governing United Conservative Party. The UCP’s application to march in the parade was rejected even before the jury process.

Organizers were disappointed with the UCP government’s decision to disband a working group tasked with banning conversion therapy in Alberta. Calgary Pride has also called on the government to immediately reverse changes under **Bill 8**, the Education Amendment Act, which critics have said will imperil gay-straight alliances in public schools by scrapping privacy protections for LGBTQ students.

Calgary Pride will host a public forum on Pride and politics as a part of the festival, and intends to invite representatives from multiple political parties, as well as LGBTQ elders and youth. “They will be invited to discuss the ongoing issues our community faces and speak to their future roles as part of the Pride movement,” the organization said in a statement.

Alberta Liberal leader invited

On Tuesday afternoon, Alberta Liberal Leader **David Khan** announced he had been invited to march alongside YYC VOICES, a Calgary coalition of two-spirit, trans, queer and straight people of colour. Khan is the first openly gay leader of a major political party in Alberta.

“We will continue to advocate for GSA protections, a ban on conversion therapy, and improving respectful relationships between visible minorities, government and police,” Khan said in a statement. “We will also walk together with Indigenous peoples on the long road to reconciliation.”

Only openly gay MLA wanted to march with her caucus

Irwin became the only openly gay MLA in the legislature after the April election, in which **Michael Connolly** (Calgary—Hawkwood) and **Estefania Cortes-Vargas** (Strathcona—Sherwood Park) chose not to seek re-election and **Ricardo Miranda** lost his seat

in Calgary Cross. Irwin called members of her caucus “incredible allies” whose accomplishments deserve to be recognized.

Irwin touted her party’s record on LGBTQ issues and called the decision to treat all political parties equally despite their different records “tough to accept,” saying she had hoped to march with her caucus.

Who can participate

The question of who gets to participate in Pride is being grappled with in festivals throughout the province.

Edmonton’s Pride parade, normally held in June, was cancelled entirely this year. Organizers abruptly called the parade off in April after facing pressure from activists who wanted greater representation of LGBTQ Indigenous people and people of colour, as well as a ban on corporate floats and uniformed police.

Last year and in 2017, Calgary banned uniformed police, but is in discussion with police about wearing uniforms this year.

The UCP was also not allowed to march in Edmonton and Calgary in 2018. Party members held their own barbecue during the Edmonton festivities and planned their own event in Calgary.

Last year, **Harrison Fleming**, then-Alberta director for LGBTory and now a communications staffer for Premier **Jason Kenney**, argued the UCP should be allowed to participate because it includes members of the LGBTQ community.

“It is short-sighted to deny those LGBTQ+ Albertans who believe in low taxes, individual liberty, smaller government, and a strong free-market economy the opportunity to stand tall and be proud of who they are at Pride festivals,” Fleming said in a statement. “Calgary Pride is an opportunity to move forward together, and to clearly show to Albertans that every major party stands for equality, compassion, and solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community. Instead, left-wing Pride activists choose to engage in ideologically-driven politics aimed at exclusion and settling old scores.”

Freedom Conservative Party interim leader **David White** said members of his party intend to join Pride festivities and would march if invited. White, a paramedic by trade, said he volunteered at various LGBTQ community events in the past, at a time when openly doing so could have cost him his licence.

He said festival organizers are likely making the right move by treating all political parties equally.

Today's events

July 31 at 10 a.m. – Edmonton

The Freedom Conservative Party will hold a news conference outside the Federal Building to discuss an initiative to tackle rural crime.

July 31 at 11 a.m. – Calgary

The Alberta Union of Provincial Employees will hold another information picket against **Bill 9**, Public Sector Wage Arbitration Act, at the Rockyview General Hospital.

July 31 at 1 p.m. – Lethbridge

Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women **Leela Aheer** will make a heritage preservation announcement at The Bow On Tong Co. building in one of Alberta's oldest Chinatown neighbourhoods.

Upcoming events

August 1 at 10 a.m. – Edmonton

Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women **Leela Aheer** will hold a photo op with Richard Block building owner **Ivan Beljan**. The photo op follows a heritage preservation announcement.

Topics of conversation

- An Alberta Court of Queen's Bench judge sided with lawyers for the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) who argued for an injunction on **Bill 9**, Public Sector Wage Arbitration Deferral Act, saying the UCP's recently-passed law violates their existing collective agreements.
 - Justice **Eric Macklin** ruled the government has an obligation to respect contractual obligations and collective bargaining rights.
 - "The judge said that delaying arbitrations made no sense. His opinion was that the government should already know what state the economy is in without waiting for a blue-ribbon panel to report. It could present whatever information it wanted to the arbitrator, who is an independent, third party in the hearings," said AUPE president **Guy Smith** in a statement.
 - The AUPE now has arbitration hearing dates set for next week for 60,000 of its members employed by the government and Alberta Health Services.
 - Lawyers for AUPE also plan to continue arguments in court that the bill is unconstitutional.
- Attorney General **Doug Schweitzer** joined his ministerial counterparts from Ontario, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick in Saskatoon on Tuesday to hunker down and come

up with a strategy for Alberta's constitutional challenge against the federal government's carbon levy.

- Schweitzer began laying the groundwork for the legal battle in June and is expected to file the case with the Alberta Court of Appeal on Friday. He has said the challenge will cost the province \$300,000.
 - Both Saskatchewan and Ontario's challenges to the carbon levy were struck down by provincial courts, but Schweitzer hopes that by getting Alberta's case moving, there is a possibility all of the cases could be heard jointly before the Supreme Court in December, when it is expected to hear Saskatchewan's appeal.
- About one-quarter of Albertans support the idea of so-called "Western separatism" and think Confederation has been a bad deal for the province, [according to](#) a poll from Abacus Data. Nationally, 86 per cent of Canadians think their respective province should remain within Confederation, but the pollster found 28 per cent of Quebecers and 18 per cent of Saskatchewan residents think their provinces should separate.
 - There are vast differences between these separatist movements when it comes to their feelings about combating climate change: Québec separatists rank higher than the national average when it comes to calling for immediate action on climate change, while Alberta and Saskatchewan separatists were overwhelmingly more likely to think climate change is a hoax or that nothing can be done about it.
 - Among Québec separatists, 72 per cent believe climate change is a crisis that requires immediate action. Conversely, 86 per cent of Alberta separatists told the pollster they either believe climate change is happening, but there's nothing that can be done about it, or that climate change is a hoax.

News briefs — Governmental

Community and Social Services

The ministry released the results of the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) review panel consultation on Tuesday afternoon.

In response to the feedback gathered by the PDD review, which was launched by the former NDP government, the province has created a new Disability Advisory Forum and a new Service Provider Partnership Committee.

"We are pleased government is taking steps to ensure ongoing collaboration with service providers in the community disability sector, and we are looking forward to being involved," said **Andrea Hesse**, CEO of Alberta Council of Disability Services, in a news release. "Working together on this new committee will inform improvements and strengthen services to benefit Albertans with developmental disabilities."

The Disability Advisory Forum will invite the participation of self-advocates, family members, Indigenous communities, service providers, community disability workers. The first meeting will be held in the fall to discuss program eligibility issues, one of the biggest concerns brought forward during the review.

The Service Provider Partnership Committee will liaise with the Alberta Council of Disability Services and the Ministry of Community and Social Services to address administrative challenges and operations related to assisting PDD.

The report's panel heard from 1,100 people during public engagement sessions held from October to December 2018 and a further 1,200 people via an online questionnaire.

The PDD program supports 12,000 Albertans.