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We're Fighting Back!

Pam Barrett and The New Democrats 

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Provincial Election 1997

We're ~~Fighting~~ Back!

The New Democrats 

Fighting Back for First Nations, Metis and Aboriginal Albertans

Conditions for many First Nations, Metis, & Aboriginal Albertans are far below standard in the areas of education, healthcare, housing, community infrastructure, employment, and delivery of social services. The Klein government cuts in these areas have put many Albertans at risk and nowhere is this more evident than with First Nations, Metis, & Aboriginal people.

Alberta New Democrats support the inherent right to self-government, at a pace determined by the communities involved, and control over traditional lands. We demand the Federal Government settle the issues surrounding treaty rights in a fair and just manner and in keeping with the spirit and intent in which these agreements were made.

We will fight for First Nations, Metis & Aboriginal equality & prosperity in Alberta.

New Democrats will work to:

- resolve outstanding land claims and place a moratorium on economic development in disputed areas.
- create a Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to deal with critical issues and to work with the communities to develop programs which would remove the discrepancy in living conditions between First Nations, Metis & Aboriginal Albertans and the general population.
- undertake a review of all statutes and laws governing wildlife management in the Province in consultation with those First Nations, Metis & Aboriginal peoples. This would include the creation of both a representative based trappers' review board and a wildlife management board with full powers to hear, set criteria, and judge validity of claims made and compensation owed by the government, oil and timber companies.

New Democrats will work to:

- involve First Nations, Metis & Aboriginal Communities in ongoing environmental assessments, and monitoring of projects which have an impact on their traditional lands.
- assure Urban First Nations, Metis & Aboriginal people fully funded opportunities for education, employment, and affordable and adequate housing.
- establish effective First Nations, Metis & Aboriginal-operated social services agencies and programs with funding from provincial sources.
- create a First Nations, Metis & Aboriginal community employment program to train and employ First Nations, Metis & Aboriginal people in their own communities.

Alberta New Democrats recognize the hereditary right of First Nations, Metis & Aboriginal people to their traditional lands.

Land settlements must be conducted with a view to preserving First Nations, Metis & Aboriginal rights through the creation of a viable economic and political base for all First Nations, Metis & Aboriginal Albertans including the right to establish effective self-government.

Alberta's New Democrats believe that this is best achieved through strong government support of First Nations, Metis & Aboriginal programs and services.

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The New Democrats



Fair labour laws Restoring the balance

Joining a union is one of the few ways workers can gain protection from unfair treatment on the job. Unions protect people from unjust dismissal, discrimination, and violation of basic employment standards. Union members also get better pay — 41.5% more than non-union workers doing the same job, according to StatsCanada.

Unfortunately, Alberta is the least unionized province in Canada. That's because Alberta has the worst labour laws in the country. Even though wages are up in other provinces and despite the fact that Alberta's economy is healthier than most — the average family income in Alberta is actually shrinking!

Pam Barrett and the Alberta New Democrats will defend your right to better pay and fair treatment at work by enacting a fair and balanced system of industrial relations that is in line with Canadian standards.

Protecting Freedom of Association

The right of workers to unionize and to engage in free collective bargaining is guaranteed by United Nations conventions and by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. But in Alberta, this basic democratic right is weakened by laws which allow employers to interfere with union organizing drives.

Pam Barrett and the Alberta New Democrats support legislation that would:

- Protect workers from employer interference with union organizing drives by granting certification to unions whenever employer interference is proven.
- Automatically recognize any union which has the proven support of the majority of workers in a workplace.
- Allow newly formed unions the option of binding arbitration during the crucial negotiating of their first contract.

We're ^{fighting} Back!

The New Democrats

End poverty in Alberta

Fight poverty, not the poor

Conservative policy over the past four years has created a level of poverty never before seen in Alberta. Almost a half a million Albertans including 120,000 children – now live under the poverty line.

Alberta now has the fourth highest poverty rate in Canada. Edmonton has the third highest rate of urban poverty and Calgary has the eighth highest.

To make matters worse, the depth of poverty is increasing. Food Bank demand across the province has doubled. In Edmonton alone, one in twenty people use the Food Bank to feed their families. Thousands more are only two pay cheques away from using it themselves.

In a province as rich as Alberta, there is no need for children to go hungry. Pam Barrett and the New Democrats believe we must fight poverty and put an end to government policies that punish the poor.

The Working Poor

Alberta has the lowest minimum wage (\$5.00 per hour) in Canada. At the same time, the fastest growing part of the Alberta economy is low-wage employment. This means more families are becoming part of "the working poor." Pam Barrett and the Alberta New Democrats would fight to turn the minimum wage into a living wage. We would also toughen employment laws to make sure employers treat their workers fairly.

Welfare Reform

The group of people hardest hit by the Conservative agenda have been families needing welfare. Benefit rates have been cut by almost 20%.

The Conservatives have made welfare a trap. Recipients often do not have telephones, transportation or proper clothing. Without these basic job search tools, welfare becomes a dead end.

Pam Barrett and the Alberta New Democrats believe welfare must lead to work. We would focus welfare money on providing the tools needed to find employment. We would also ensure every family has enough income to cover the basic necessities of life.

Child Poverty

The Conservatives have turned their backs on Alberta's children. Funding for programs such as hot lunch programs, headstart programs and child care subsidies have been cut from 20 to 50 per cent.

Pam Barrett and the Alberta New Democrats will fight to restore and expand these crucial programs. We will also fight for a family benefit that would provide support to low income families.

Standing up for Albertans

There are lots of voices speaking out for wealthy Albertans. The loudest voice of all is the Conservative government. Pam Barrett believes the wealthy can take care of themselves. What Alberta needs is a strong voice for the rest of us.

The New Democrats will fight for:

- A benefit for all families with children designed to help cover the cost of raising children.
- A minimum wage that allows families to make ends meet.
- Stronger employment laws to protect the interests of low income workers.
- Pro-rated benefits for part-time workers.
- Social assistance rates linked to the true cost of living.
- Levels of support that allow social assistance recipients to get back to work.
- Expanded children-focused programs such as Headstart and School Lunch programs to give kids living in poverty an equal chance.
- A province-wide child care program that ensures every family can afford child care if they need it.

"The Conservatives have turned their backs on average and low-income Albertans. Alberta needs a party willing to stand up for families and children living in poverty."

— Pam Barrett

Leader, Alberta New Democrats

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The New Democrats

Policies for Alberta's Seniors

Respect, dignity and support

The Conservative government has attacked seniors' programs claiming "millionaires" can pay their own way.

Decisions affecting seniors are being taken without or despite consultation.

New Democrats know seniors have worked to build a strong Alberta. It is unfair to single them out with program cuts to pay for government mismanagement.

The New Democrats will fight to:

- Preserve universality of social programs — half of older Albertans have incomes below \$14,000;
- Reform the tax system and make it fairer, to ensure support for important government programs;
- Reject health care user fees floated by Ralph Klein;
- Restore the Senior Renter Assistance Grant and the Property Tax Reduction Benefit;
- Support a range of housing and support services so seniors can live safely in their own homes;
- Initiate community-based health care alternatives like outreach and wellness programs and better home care services, to let seniors live with dignity;
- Provide long term care services where needed, day programs for seniors and respite care for family members caring for seniors at home. Eliminate accommodation fees for palliative care;
- Commit to full consultation with seniors on all issues of concern.

... caring for seniors

As our population ages we must pay special attention to the needs of seniors when we redesign our health care.

Our system is bursting at the seams. More and more, there are waiting lists and inadequate resources. Unless measures are taken, this situation will get much worse.

A shortage of long term care spaces is forcing Alberta to move toward a community-based system, by virtue of limited spaces in the long term care facilities. However, the support system is far from complete and funding levels are grossly inadequate.

New Democrats will fight to:

- provide training of personnel who understand, develop and work with the growing seniors population.
- develop a comprehensive system of community supports for seniors so they can remain in their homes for as long as possible.
- Health care provides only one example of where we must reconsider how services are delivered by government. All areas must be reviewed and innovative ways found to deliver the same level of service at a lower cost.

"I appreciate how older Albertans over the years have built our province. Maintaining necessary programs to assist them now is not too much for our finances if we act to end fiscal mismanagement. All of us will reap benefits as seniors continue to contribute to life in the province."

—Pam Barrett, Leader
Alberta New Democrats

We're Fighting Back!

The New Democrats 

Your strongest voice against the cuts We're back and we're fighting

We're fighting for everyday working Albertans. We're fighting for quality health care and well-funded education. We're fighting for good jobs and decent pay.

We're fighting to bring a voice back to the Legislature that has been absent for too long.

Too Much Pain

The Klein cuts have hurt all Albertans. Seniors, students, the poor, the sick -- thousands of Albertans have seen the underside of the so-called Alberta Advantage. There's been a lot of pain -- but very little gain.

To make matters worse, Premier Klein admits that he cut without a plan. He has been conducting major renovations without blueprints. The result has been unnecessary pain and confusion.

Now Klein is talking about re-investment. But a few pre-election promises do not make up for years of brutal cuts. Working families cannot afford to give the Conservatives another blank cheque to run the province.

A Strong Opposition

Albertans want a strong and effective opposition. They want fiery, passionate representatives who will stand up to Ralph Klein. That's what you get with Pam Barrett and the New Democrats. You get a watchdog, not a lap dog.

Fighting For You on Health and Education

Pam Barrett and the New Democrats offer a clear, strong voice for working Albertans.

We know that budget cuts have done serious damage to our health care system. We will fight not only to defend Medicare, but to enhance it -- now and for the future. Public health care is our proudest achievement and our most important legacy for our children. It's worth fighting for.

We also know that our children's futures are being put at risk by cuts to education. We will fight for high-quality public education -- because we believe it's the key to a more secure and prosperous future.

American-style Health Care

The Klein government is allowing for-profit health care to slip into our system. Pam Barrett and the New Democrats will fight hard to stop the slide towards American-style two-tier health care. We will fight to ensure that high-quality health services are available to all Albertans, regardless of income.

Putting People First

Many people are saying that the recession is over in Alberta. Businesses are setting record profits and the provincial government has recorded billion-dollar surpluses for three years. But job insecurity is still high and real wages are still falling.

Pam Barrett and the New Democrats will fight to ensure that the Alberta economy is working for all Albertans, not just a handful of wealthy individuals.

Strong Voice, Concrete Plans

Pam Barrett and the New Democrats have vision for a better Alberta and a plan that puts people first.

The New Democrats will:

- restore quality in health care by reviewing health care needs and re-investing in health services
- stop the spread American-style private health care by introducing a Medicare Protection Act that outlaws two-tier health
- guarantee a better future for our children by increasing spending on education
- enhance quality and accessibility of post-secondary education by freezing tuitions and increasing base funding for universities, colleges and technical schools
- protect young workers by increasing the minimum wage and introducing benefits for part-timers
- reduce poverty by putting an end to government policies that punish the poor

Our Promise

Tens of thousands of Albertans think Ralph Klein and his government cut too much, too fast. Many of these people have felt powerless – but that will change with this election. Pam Barrett and the New Democrats will be a forceful voice of conscience in the Legislature. That is our pledge to you.

"There has been an important perspective missing in the Legislature. We need to elect more New Democrats to ensure that the provincial economy is working for all Albertans"

—Pam Barrett, Leader

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We're ~~Fighting~~ Back!

**The New
Democrats**



We're Fighting Back for the Environment

Caring for the Earth, The New Democrat Plan

A political party's integrity must be measured by its commitment to long term ecological sustainability rather than a short term fiscal bottom line. Unfortunately, the Klein Government does not measure up.

Privatizing Our Public Parks

Last fall the Minister of Environment announced plans for the province to abandon two thirds of Alberta's park, recreational and natural areas. The Klein Government is currently selling off all park staff housing which means that staff will no longer be readily available for a variety of services such as nature conservation and recreation appreciation. They are determined to sell off the Pine Ridge forest nursery in spite of the important role it plays in the regeneration and stewardship of our forests.

As well, the Klein Government has just announced plans to privatize the Forest Fighter Unit of Natural Resources. These changes are part of a package of sweeping reforms to environmental protection in Alberta.

In 1994, the Klein Government created a Regulatory Review Task Force. Every environmental regulation came under attack preserving only the ones for which a compelling case could be made. They view environmental regulation as an impediment to business that must be done away with.

Protecting our Environment Policies to care for the Earth

The New Democrats are committed to making sure Alberta's ecosystems can feed and sustain our children and grand-children and provide true long term jobs for its population. Alberta must play a role in implementing the protocols agreed to at the Rio Summit in 1992.

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To Patrick Boie	From Robin
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New Democrats believe that ecological sustainability must permeate all economic and social policy. Human material needs should not use more of earth resources than can be renewed within each generation. Wastes produced in meeting needs must not endanger future generations' rights to clean air, pure water and productive soil. Life on earth is best protected by assuring biodiversity recognizing each species contribution to the planet's health. Consequently we have to view other species not as resources for human wants but as respected members of earth's living family. Human economic security may be assured by reducing consumption of limited resources, this is best achieved by community based conservation programs.

The New Democrats understand that the patterns of production and consumption must change for true sustainability to be preserved. Alberta's workplaces must become the main focus of activity. Partnerships and agreements between employers, workers, trade unions and community groups will be vigorously promoted to develop and meet local targets related to energy conservation, waste management and pollution control.

The New Democrats also see the direct relationship between promoting health and safety at work and environmental protection and would establish public education programs promoting better understanding of the vital role of workplaces in implementing both provincial and national sustainability plans for saving the planet.

The New Democrats, whether in government or in opposition will:

- Fight for Strict enforcement of existing pollution regulations.
- Establish air and water quality standards based on best available technology
- Enact an Environmental Bill of Rights which will guarantee access to environmental information, independent environmental impact assessments, public hearing and funding for intervenors before development proceeds.
- Support alternative energy sources such as wind power generation, and research and development of solar power generation.
- Declare the Castle Wilderness Area as a Wilderness Park.
- Prohibit industrial and commercial development, logging, mining, and motorized access within wilderness areas, crown forest and Wilderness preserves.
- Endorse the goals of the Endangered Species Campaign of the World Wildlife Fund.
- Promote the Canadian Heritage Rivers Charter and the resolution by the Environmental Advisory Committee on the Northern river Basins Study.
- Protect workers who report environmental violations with "whistleblowers" legislation.
- Promote eco-tourism and other green job creation initiatives
- Promote Reduce, Reuse, Recycle programs to reduce landfill needs
- Promote minimum standards for the recycled content of paper, glass metals and plastics.
- Fight to limit emissions of greenhouse gases and work towards meeting international protocols for air and water pollution.
- Promote healthy communities by working with local governments to improve services such as public transit, park development and sewage and water treatment.

"Albertans want to see Alberta play a leading role with other provinces in meeting world targets set at the 1992 Rio Summit to save the planet. Unfortunately the Klein Government is going in the opposite direction by eliminating enforceable standards and environmental programs. It's time to stop the rapid decline of services and aim for positive alternatives."

— Pam Barrett, Leader
The New Democrats

We're ~~fighting~~ Back!

**The New
Democrats**



Building the economy

Quality jobs for Albertans

The provincial economy is booming, but many Albertans aren't enjoying the benefits of increased economic growth. Many of the jobs being created are low-wage temporary or casual positions.

According to Statistics Canada figures, average hourly wages in Alberta have failed to keep up with inflation, falling by about 15% in real terms since 1983. When weekly paid and salaried employees are included, the decline is less dramatic (about 8% since 1983), but the downward trend remains.

While some of this wage loss was due to the decline in world oil prices and two major recessions, the policies of the current government have put downward pressure on wages.

When the current government came to power, the provincial economy was emerging from the recession of the early 90s. Since that time economic growth has been steady and world energy prices have risen. Nonetheless, in just the first two years of the Klein government's mandate, real hourly wages fell by almost 6%. If this decline took place during a period of growth, what will happen the next time the provincial economy takes a down-turn?

During this same period, direct and indirect taxes have risen, while public services such as Health Care and Education have been slashed. No wonder many Albertans are feeling the pinch – they are paying more taxes on less income, and getting fewer public services for the taxes they pay!

This is not the way to build a prosperous Alberta where our children can have a real future.

What do New Democrats propose Fostering job growth

- Rebuild our Health Care and Education systems to lay the foundations for future growth and prosperity.
- Consult with local and municipal governments to determine infrastructure needs, then put Albertans to work building that infrastructure.
- Restore the Department of Economic Development to provide market research and planning assistance to businesses producing for both local and international markets.
- Establish Community Bond Corporations to finance local economic development initiatives.
- Enact legislation to encourage union pension funds to invest in the province.

Real jobs, not McJobs...

Employment Standards legislation is designed to set minimum standards protecting the poorest and least powerful members of the labour force. This usually means women and young people.

Recent trends in the labour market show a shift to conditional, temporary employment. These kinds of jobs are frequently low-wage, and lack the benefit packages associated with permanent full time employment.

Far from taking action to counter this move to a "just-in-time" workforce, the government of Alberta has adopted the same strategy – replacing full time workers with casual and temporary employees whenever possible.

Worse yet, the Klein government has threatened to abandon its responsibility to the working poor by privatizing employment standards!

This is absolutely unacceptable. Minimum employment standards are economic human rights. The government is obligated by international agreements, including the Labour Side Agreement to the NAFTA, to protect these rights. New Democrats in the provincial legislature will resist any and all attempts to undermine government responsibility for the enforcement of labour standards.

Far from being downgraded, employment standards should be strengthened to ensure that women, students, new Canadians, young people and older workers are not victimized by new trends in the labour market.

The New Democrat Plan for

Employment Standards:

- Maintain public monitoring and enforcement of employment standards regulations.
- Enact legislation requiring employers to provide pro-rated benefits to part-time workers, removing the incentive to substitute casual and part-time positions for full-time jobs.
- Increase the minimum wage to a fair and reasonable level and index it to the average industrial wage.
- Review the exemption of certain workers from minimum rights and standards provided under the Employment Standards Code.
- Enact "Whistle Blower" laws to protect employees who report violations of employment standards, environmental regulations, or other laws.
- Implement measures to promote fairness for working women and their families.
- Honour the provisions of all international agreements and treaties regarding the rights of workers.

"You can't build a prosperous Alberta by attacking the wages and human rights of the working poor. New Democrats will not only fight against the privatization of employment standards, we will work to have these standards strengthened and improved!"

– Pam Barrett, Leader
Alberta New Democrats

"This is a wealthy province. We can and will work to create real jobs – jobs that offer decent wages and hope for the future of our children."

– Pam Barrett Leader,
Alberta New Democrats

We're ~~Fighting~~ Back!

The New Democrats 

Can your family afford American-style health care?

The truth about health care in Alberta

Since 1993, Alberta's annual health care budget has been cut by \$550 million, forcing hospital closures and drastic staff reductions. Despite these huge cuts, the Conservatives want us to believe that all is still well with health care. They say the cuts were necessary to eliminate fat in the system. Pam Barrett and the New Democrats know this is not true.

The truth is that spending on health care was not out of control. In fact, per capita health spending has been dropping since 1987. We can still afford the kind of high-quality health care Albertans deserve.

Too Deep, Too Fast

The consequences of the cuts have been devastating. We are paying more for health care and getting much, much less. Since the Klein government came to power:

- 15,000 health care workers have lost their jobs.
- over half the hospital beds in Edmonton and Calgary have been closed creating long waiting lists, bed shortages and cancellation of surgeries.
- health care premiums have risen 25 percent
- eye exams and other services have been de-insured
- the wait for cancer biopsy tests has grown from two days to over a week

Albertans are right to be worried about the future of Medicare. Our health care system is in crisis, heading fast into chaos.

The Fraud of Re-Investment

The Conservatives now claim they have fixed the problems by "re-investing" in health. In reality, the so-called re-investment does not begin to solve the problems. The new money will only hire one nurse for every 24 who were laid off. Much of the new money is going to pay off debts or capital costs – instead of paying for patient service. And there is no new money for many areas feeling the strain of cuts, like homecare or physiotherapy.

The Threat of Two-Tier Health

The Conservatives have a plan to privatize Alberta's health system and bring in an American-style two-tier health system. By supporting private, for-profit initiatives like Hotel de Health and allowing private eye clinics to charge patients directly, they are opening the door to two tier health care - a cadillac system for the rich and a sub-standard system for the rest of us.

The New Democrat Vision for Health

Premier Klein has admitted he has no vision for health care. His plan is about cuts and American-style two-tier health. Pam Barrett and the New Democrats have a vision for health care that would strengthen and enhance Medicare and improve service to all Albertans. We believe fixing Medicare means being serious about re-investment.

The New Democrats will:

Restore Quality in Health Care: Medicare needs a sound, reasoned diagnosis, not cuts without a vision. Pam Barrett will ask a team of health providers, patients and the public to review the health system and direct where money should go.

Implement a Medicare Protection Act: This Act will ban all private health clinics in Alberta, preventing the spread of two-tier health care. It would expand Medicare coverage to include community-based services like homecare, nursing home care and health promotion programs.

Eliminate Premiums: Alberta, one of Canada's wealthiest provinces, has one of the highest levels of health care premiums. Health care premiums are unfair to average and low-income Albertans. They are a tax on those who can least afford it.

Develop Alternative Payment Methods for Health Care Providers: Doctors are currently paid for each service they perform. This wastes money and does not encourage healthier Albertans. The New Democrats would put doctors and other health care providers on salary, saving money and making Medicare more effective.

Create a Prescription Drug Program: Drug costs are the fastest rising health care expenditure. The New Democrats would create a program to buy cheaper, generic drugs in bulk and distribute them free to patients through the Alberta Health Insurance Plan. This approach was recently endorsed by the federally-appointed National Forum on Health.

"Who do you trust with the future of Medicare? The New Democrats are the only party committed to nurturing and protecting Canada's most cherished social program"

-Pam Barrett, Leader

We're ~~Fighting~~ Back!

The New Democrats 

Education: Investing in our Future

The Myth of Over-spending

The Klein government claims that cuts to education funding were necessary because of escalating costs. But the government's own figures show this wasn't true. In fact, per capita spending on education has been declining since the mid-80s. Over the past ten years, education funding has never accounted for more than 13 percent of the provincial budget. Most Albertans would agree that high-quality education for our children is worth this kind of expense.

Can We Afford It? Yes, We Can!

After reporting three successive budget surpluses – with this year's surplus expected to top \$2 billion – it's clear we can afford to increase funding for education. The question is not "Can we afford it?" but rather "Can we afford not to?" Pam Barrett and the New Democrats believe education is the best way to guarantee a better future for our children.

The "Alberta Disadvantage" in Education

After four years of budget cuts, Alberta ranks in 7th place among Canadian provinces when it comes to spending on elementary and secondary education. A comparison of spending per pupil per hour among

the western provinces places Alberta dead last at \$6.09, with Manitoba at \$7.49, Saskatchewan \$6.25, and British Columbia \$7.57. Overall, Alberta's annual spending per pupil is \$937 below the national average. This is shameful in a province as wealthy as Alberta.

Declining Quality

What are some of the consequences of chronic underfunding? Over the past three years:

- about 1500 teaching positions have been eliminated
- Alberta now has the highest student-teacher ratios in Canada
- 64% of teachers have indicated fewer resources are available to help children
- 78% of teachers report a decrease in assistance for students with special needs
- 81% of teachers have reported less time with individual students

The funding situation in Alberta has become so bad that many schools are being forced to fundraise for basic resources, like books and computers.

Our Troubled Universities and Colleges

In the same way that budgets for primary and secondary education have stagnated, so has funding for our universities and colleges. Conservative politicians talk about educating our young people to meet the challenges of the "global market." But, so far, Premier Klein has refused to put his money where his mouth is.

At the same time, tuition fees have doubled (and in some cases tripled) over the past five years, making it difficult for people from average and low-income families to get an advanced education. More and more students are graduating with dismal job prospects and staggering personal debt loads. The average debt carried by graduating students in Alberta jumped by 35 percent between 1991 and 1995.

Privatizing Education

Since 1993, the private sector has been making inroads into our public school system. As a result of under-funding, more and more school boards have hired low-cost, low-quality contractors to clean and maintain their schools. Corporate sponsorships campaigns are giving business a chance to pitch their products to students in their classrooms. And significant public money is being diverted to finance so-called Charter Schools -- which are really private schools all but in name.

The New Democrat Vision

Pam Barrett and the New Democrats have a vision for education in Alberta -- a vision based on the notion that a strong system of public education is the best investment that we, as a society, can make in the future.

The New Democrats will:

Provide full and adequate funding from general revenue for all core educational services

Reduce class sizes

Guarantee Kindergarten programs of the full 475 hours to every child

Freeze all tuition and other fees charged by universities, colleges, and technical schools

- Increase funding from general revenue for post-secondary education
- Introduce a student loan system which recognizes the harshness of the job market and the student's ability to repay loans
- Target help for aboriginal education and those with significant barriers to school success
- Re-examine the use of tax dollars to fund Charter Schools
- Discourage privatization and unrestrained corporate access to students in the public school system
- Provide adequate funding and support for students with special needs
- Emphasize consultation and cooperation with all partners in education

"The question is not: can we afford to increase education funding? The real question is: can we afford not to? Education is the key to a more secure and prosperous future for all Albertans."

-Pam Barrett, Leader

We're ~~Fighting~~ Back!

The New Democrats

This election vote for a secure future for Alberta women

The Klein government has built a balanced budget on the backs of Alberta women

The heaviest burden of government economic policies has been placed on women, who earn less, own less, and control less. Funding cuts and layoffs have disproportionately impacted on women. The majority of nurses, teachers, and other public sector workers who have seen their jobs cut, reduced in hours or contracted out, have been women.

The Klein government has not created an infrastructure of community services to replace those services cut or reduced from hospitals, community care, social services and seniors' programs. While the government has talked about community based services, in reality these services are not being provided by the community organizations but by women and their families. The services cut have forced more women into the position of unpaid care givers.

Women must make their voice count on election day

The impact of the Klein government has been a dramatic increase in women's poverty. Devastating cuts in social services have left many women and children homeless or living in marginal housing, surviving on meager food allowances with limited access to health care and other services.

The Poorest of the poor

In just one Calgary housing agency last year over 500 women and 450 children sought emergency shelter because they became homeless, and food banks continue to report ever-increasing demands for their services. Drastic cuts in social services have reduced Alberta caseloads by 52,000, resulting in an estimated 105,000 people cut from welfare rolls, a large proportion of which are women and children. Many women are forced to remain in abusive relationships due to a lack of economic and employment alternatives.

Klein's economic agenda has refused to recognize the contribution that women have made, and continue to make, in developing Alberta's economy. Women in Alberta are expected to continue performing their unpaid work while absorbing the effects of the social services cuts.

Employment Inequalities, Training and Education

In 1995 Alberta took the shameful lead in having the widest wage gap between men and women in all of Canada. Nearly 3/4 of part time workers are women, with jobs that are typically low paying with few benefits. New Democrats support pay equity as a required condition for government contracts and will fight to establish a timetable requiring private companies to move towards pay equity.

Many women juggle child care, housework and jobs. New Democrats know that women require flexibility in their jobs and quality affordable child care. New Democrats support one year unpaid parental leave, job sharing and accessible child care provided by trained professionals.

Women's economic independence very much depends on eliminating discrimination in the access to quality education and training.

Health and Rights for Women

Women have been hit hard by cuts to health care. As health care providers, women are the first victims of massive lay offs. As mothers and family care givers, they are the first to suffer from poor services and inadequate support. New Democrats are committed to community based health care which emphasize health promotion and disease prevention for women.

It is important to support women's reproductive choice in the control of their own body and health. Sex education and contraceptive counseling are currently inadequate and must be enhanced. The health care system must provide and maintain fully funded and reliable abortion services.

Fear of violence and harassment are real barriers to quality. One woman in nine is assaulted by her partner. One in four is sexually assaulted. Sexual harassment in the workplace intimidates and holds women back from advancement. The New Democrats are committed to the provision of reliable funding for crisis lines, shelters and support services for abused women and children.

The Conservative agenda is indifferent to the plight of women in marginalized groups.

Disabled and elderly women have been disproportionately hurt by cuts to Home Care and Aids to Daily Living.

Women of colour, aboriginal women, immigrant women and lesbians are economically and socially impacted by a refusal to legislate pay equity and basic human rights.

Young women face an uncertain future with rising education costs, inadequate minimum wage, and few prospects for meaningful jobs.

Alberta New Democrats will:

- Implement pay equity in public and private sectors
- Set a fair minimum wage and equal access to good jobs
- Create full time work and improve part time benefits;
- Extend unpaid parental leave to one year and encourage job sharing;
- Ensure fair representation for women on government boards and agencies
- Reverse cuts in social assistance
- Promote equal access to quality education
- Provide training and education opportunities for aboriginal, immigrant and disabled women
- Raise standards for day cares, and establish a day care centre information registry for parents
- Encourage mediation in divorces;
- Promote legal education to ensure adequate child support awards
- Implement measures for the protection of women from stalkers, and for the appropriate sentencing and counselling for batterers
- Automatically deduct child support payments from income
- Grant widows, pension to persons regardless of marital status
- Include the rights of gays and lesbians in the Individual Rights Protection Act
- Support funding of crisis lines, shelters and services for abused women and children
- Ensure safe, affordable housing
- Implement health care reforms targeted to meeting the needs of women
- Include restrictions on working alone in the labour laws.

We're Fighting Back!

Pam Barrett and The New Democrats 

The Klein Government Has Made It Clear...Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals will not be getting Individual Rights Protection Legislation.

Klein and his caucus have taken it upon themselves to be the sole arbiters of Human Rights in this province. The ruling of the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta on the Delwin Vriend challenge was not to their liking so they appealed it. The subsequent ruling of the Court of Appeal of Alberta and most particularly the judgement of Justice McClung smacked of interference and gave the fundamentalist right of Alberta the ammunition to continue its attack on the rights of the homo/bisexual community of this province.

This Government is Promoting Its Own Special Interests.

The Klein government has taken it upon itself to uphold the status quo and promote bigotry as a means of appeasing a special interest group, the fundamentalist coalition of Alberta. The reason this government refuses to include "sexual orientation" in our Individual Rights Act is because it is unwilling to "cater" to special interest groups. Is the gay and lesbian community of Alberta a special interest group and if by the government's own definition, we are, which of these two positions is the government promoting? Are they listening to special interests or not?

How Much Is Klein Willing To Spend of Taxpayers Dollars To Deny Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals Their Basic Human Rights.

A challenge by Delwin Vriend in the Supreme Court of Canada is not going to be cheap. How much money is Klein spending on this case? How much money will he continue to spend fighting against providing basic rights for the citizens of Alberta. It is a reasonable expectation on the part of the people of this province that their government utilize its resources in the upholding of their rights rather than fighting to prevent the universality of rights for its citizens.

Same Sex-Spousal Benefits Are Not Going To Overburden Our Programs.

Public sector employees in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and the Yukon already have same-sex spousal benefits. Challenges are before the courts in Saskatchewan and Manitoba with amendments expected out of the "read into" decision of Newfoundland with regard to sexual orientation. It is clear that the majority of Canada has passed legislation in favour of recognition of same-sex unions and the need to provide basic benefit packages to these unions. Even Revenue Canada has amended its legislation by breaking down the tax barriers providing exemptions to employers.

Add to this the list of some of the corporations in Canada that have found the overall costs to their benefit portfolios to be minimal. Those corporations

with offices in Alberta are highlighted.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| * Acadia University | * London Life Insurance |
| * Air Canada | Lotus |
| * Apple Computer | * Mutual Group |
| * Bank of Montreal | Northern Telecom |
| * Bank of Nova Scotia | * NOVA |
| Bell Canada | Ontario Hydro |
| B.C. Hydro | Ontario Institute for Studies |
| * CBC | In Education |
| * Canadian Airlines | Oracle Corporation |
| * City of Edmonton | Oxfam |
| * CUPE (National) | * Sears Canada |
| CUSO | * Shoppers Drug Mart |
| Dalhousie University | * Sun Newspapers |
| Disney Corp | * Toronto-Dominion Bank |
| * Dow Chemical | * University of Alberta |
| * Edmonton Sun | University of BC |
| Falconbridge Ltd. | University of NB |
| Globe and Mail | Vancouver (City of) |
| * IBM Canada | |
| * Imperial Oil Canada | |
| Levi Strauss | |

The Klein Moral Majority Do Not Want Gays and Lesbians Raising Foster Children.

As recently as January 13, 1997, the Minister of Alberta Family and Social Services, the very moral Stockwell Day, has stated "it is the department's intention to place children for whom we are responsible in traditional families (underline by ABND). Therefore we are not approving non-traditional families as foster homes. In those instances where non-traditional families have had children placed with them in the past, we will not be placing more children in these homes."

The above statement begs the question. Are families that are comprised of non-married heterosexual spouses considered traditional?

Many members of the homo/bisexual community are parents. They have raised their children into healthy, contributing members of society. Their families were maintained by the same standard and in many cases a more secure standard than most traditional families. That standard is love, a sense of compassion for their fellow human beings and an understanding that the accepted diversity of a community is the ultimate blueprint of a society.

The Alberta New Democrats Have Taken Steps to Ensure the Rights of The Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community of Alberta.

- The Alberta New Democrats have seen the need for the homo/bisexual community to have a vehicle of its own within which to participate in the socio/economic and political debate in this province. To this end we have established a Caucus for the homo/bisexual community (the LGB) that has all the rights and privileges of any Caucus within the party. In the Alberta New Democratic Party, the homo/bisexual community has a seat at the table. With the Alberta New Democrats the LGB has a voice that counts. The LGB has a voting seat on the Provincial Executive and like other Caucuses, the LGB has five seats on Provincial Council.

- We are committed by resolution at Convention to seek amendments to the Individual Rights Protection Act of Alberta, either by insisting that the government amend existing legislation or by introducing an amendment as a Private Members Bill. We will not back down from this issue.

- We are also committed by resolution to recognize same-sex unions and marriages and therein promote the enactment of same-sex spousal benefits legislation.

- We are committed to the prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation in the renting of subsidized housing.

- The Alberta New Democrats are committed to ending violence against gays and lesbians and the promotion of tolerance and understanding through education, at all levels of the educational system.

- We are committed to promoting equal treatment in the courts on issues involving child custody, maintenance and accessibility.

- We will encourage amendments to the Alberta Family and Social Services legislation to allow for the placing of foster children with qualified same-sex families. We will further encourage amendments to the Child Welfare Act to allow for the adoption of children by same-sex families.