

CTF Survey of UCP Leadership Candidates

Question 6: Will you push the federal government to reform equalization using all means available?

Jeff Callaway: “Yes, Ottawa has been using Alberta and the West as a cash cow to fund their endless credit card for far too long. This must stop. Albertans are still paying more than most Canadians into the equalization system, despite so many of our friends and neighbours being out of work in one of the deepest recessions in our history. That is an unsustainable program.”

Brian Jean: “Absolutely. Nobody has championed this cause for Alberta over the last 2 years more than I have. Within a year of the 2015 election, I struck an expert panel to produce a report on equalization fairness; their 20-page submission is available at fairequalization.ca. I also made my one motion in the fall of 2016 one requiring the government, in anticipation of the 2019 expiry of the current deal, to put a report out with their analysis and expectations of the renegotiation. And tomorrow, August 16, I will be announcing a “Standing up for Alberta” policy that features a call for a referendum on equalization to force the federal government back to the table, as well as a constitutional reference on whether resource royalties should even be factored in. To be clear, equalization is only a portion of the redistribution that goes to other provinces from Alberta’s taxpayers and I will fight Trudeau on all fronts whether it is new taxes that punish Alberta, or health and social transfers, or EI, or CPP, or infrastructure spending for Canada’s economic engine in Alberta.”

Jason Kenney: “Yes. While members of the UCP will develop its policies, my own view is that the Government of Alberta should have an aggressive strategy to demand a fair deal when the equalization formula is next subject to negotiation, in the spring of 2019. Should that fail, I think we should be open to forcing the federal government to renegotiate with Alberta bilaterally by holding a referendum, as proposed by former Finance Minister Ted Morton, invoking the duty to negotiate found by the Supreme Court of Canada in the Clarity Act Reference.”

Doug Schweitzer: “I will certainly do everything in my power to ensure that Alberta is treated fairly in the equalization process moving forward, but my colleagues have some explaining to do on this topic. Brian Jean and Jason Kenney voted in favour of the current formula that isn’t fair to Alberta.”