

Gil McGowan's advice for Jason Kenney

Video Transcription:

Jason, old buddy, it's time for you to admit you made mistakes.

It's time to admit you made the fourth wave much worse than it had to be.

It's also time to apologize: to the health care workers you've traumatized; to the people who've had important medical procedures cancelled or postponed; and perhaps most importantly, to the families of the 700 Albertans who died after you essentially declared the pandemic over on July 1st.

The Legislative session that starts tomorrow is an opportunity for you to make it up to Albertans.

Instead of vilifying and demonizing your many critics, you should try to listen to them.

Instead of scapegoating Albertans who care about public health, about the environment, about workers rights – you should acknowledge that they are as much real Albertans as any other Albertan.

Above all else, you should make this session of the Legislature about learning the lessons of COVID and fixing past mistakes, instead of doubling down on them.

If you want to regain the moral authority to government – the authority that you have so clearly lost, you need to do at least four things.

First, bring in 10 permanent paid sick days for all workers. We'll never get a handle on the pandemic until people can afford to stay home when they're sick.

Second, make sure all workers have the mental health supports they need.

That means you need to reverse your government's decision to deny presumptive WCB coverage to workers who suffer psychological injuries on the job.

Many of our front-line health care workers are being traumatized right now by the tsunami of the fourth wave. We cannot and should not abandon them in their time of need.

Third, you need to acknowledge the global scientific consensus that COVID-19 is airborne.

This has huge implications for the strategies we need to employ to keep Albertans safe in the workplace and in public spaces like schools and malls.

It's time for government to literally fund efforts to clear the air.

Fourth, and finally, you need to acknowledge and take action on what the pandemic has shown us day after day: namely that our public services are woefully understaffed.

Whether it's our hospitals, which were constantly on the brink even before the pandemic, or our schools with classes of 35, 40 or more students each – the pandemic has shown us what happens when our vital public services are underfunded and understaffed.

Will you, Mr. Premier, listen to my advice and make this session about learning the lessons of COVID.

Or will you turn it into yet another circus of blame, distraction, finger-pointing, scapegoating and anger generation.

Sadly, given your track record Jason, I'm not holding my breath that you will do the right thing.

But, please, for the sake of our province and the sake of our fellow citizens, prove me wrong.