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## **Albertans more politically diverse than Tory streak suggests**

Voters values and beliefs don't fit neatly into left vs. right camps

**Edmonton** – With Albertans in the early days of another provincial election cycle, a new report released today by the Parkland Institute says that the values of Albertans are much more diverse than over 43 years of unbroken Progressive Conservative rule would suggest, and don't fall neatly into left-versus-right polarization.

The report, *A Monochrome Political Culture? Examining the Range of Albertans' Values and Beliefs*, is based on public opinion surveys conducted by the University of Alberta's Population Research Laboratory in 2014.

It found that on some issues PC supporters were just as close to Liberal supporters' opinions as they were to those of Wildrose supporters, and that the values of the small group of Green and Alberta Party supporters were more like those of NDP supporters than those who support the Liberals, with whom electoral cooperation has recently been promoted.

"Both those calling for a 'merger' of centre-left parties and those justifying last fall's mass floor crossing of the Wildrose to the governing Progressive Conservatives argue that Albertans fit neatly into left and right camps," says Trevor Harrison, one of the report's co-authors. "What the survey data shows is that in fact Albertans' values don't line up well with any party, and simply aren't consistent with such a binary political view."

The report also found that Albertans are less economically conservative than is commonly thought, with just one-third of Albertans – including small minorities of both Wildrose and PC supporters – agreeing that the province "gets a fair return on the royalties it charges oil companies." Only 39% of respondents agreed that "private industry is always more efficient than government" and only 43% thought that "allowing businesses to make good profits is the best way to improve everyone's standard of living."

"These results reflect the same sentiment that the government's recent budget survey found with respect to corporate tax rates, and suggest that Premier Prentice's refusal to even consider corporate tax hikes or increases in royalty rates are out of step with most Albertans," Harrison argues. "We'll see on May 5<sup>th</sup> whether that costs the PCs at the ballot box."

The Parkland Institute is a non-partisan public policy research institute in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta. The publication *A Monochrome Political Culture? Examining the Range of Albertans' Values and Beliefs*, written by sociologists Trevor Harrison, Harvey Krahn, and Katherine Hancock, is available for download on Parkland's website at [parklandinstitute.ca](http://parklandinstitute.ca).

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