

Annual Report 2010 - 2011.....



# Public Interest Alberta

Building a Better Alberta For All





## Message from the Chair

Annual general meetings and annual reports of organizations offer an important opportunity to go beyond the requirements of accountability, and to reflect on essential questions related to where we have been and where we are going.

I am pleased to report that, from my perspective as Board Chair, this past year has been the most successful period in Public Interest Alberta's seven years of advocacy efforts. Our organization is stronger than ever, and our work on behalf of the public interest is becoming more sophisticated and effective.

We are very pleased to have Alberta Union of Provincial Employees become a Sustaining Member over this past year, and we also have been able to hire a Communications Assistant for the first time; both of these developments have added to PIA's capacity to deliver the kind of advocacy efforts that are essential to our goals. Our Environmental Intern has also greatly increased PIA's capacity to address crucial environmental concerns. In addition, our new office space in the Ironworkers Building is both economical and more functional.

The work of our task forces has been increasingly important at a time when continued cuts to provincial government spending have threatened public education at the K-12 level, post-secondary institutions, seniors, childcare, and human services as well as other areas of public services.

This year, working closely with partners such as the Parkland Institute, Friends of Medicare and the Alberta Federation of Labour as well as other member organizations, PIA has helped to provide leadership in the Join Together Alberta campaign, which focused attention on the need to support public services at this critical time. This work has provided a foundation for further efforts based on community mobilization for advocacy across the province. These efforts have also been effective in shifting the debate toward a necessary consideration of government revenue issues and the need to pay for our valuable public services through progressive taxation and fair royalties. PIA's annual advocacy conference, this year entitled, "*Mobilizing for a Better Alberta: Strong Communities, Public Solutions*," also provided an effective vehicle for advancing these efforts.

We are engaged in these advocacy efforts not simply to make a point, but rather to make a difference in building a better Alberta for all, based on preserving and enhancing public services, public institutions and the public good. On behalf of PIA's Board of Directors, I want to thank our organizational and individual members, superb staff, task force members, volunteers and supporters for their role in these important efforts.

Larry Booi

### Larry Booi, President

Larry is the former President of the Alberta Teachers' Association and was a member of the Executive Board of the Canadian Teachers' Federation. He is also currently on the Board of Directors of Canadian Council on Learning. He has played a central role in the establishment and growth of Public Interest Alberta.



## Report from the Executive Director

Public Interest Alberta has certainly had a busy year working to “Build the Alberta We Need”. Given the changing political dynamic in our province, it is vital that we are helping to build a movement that is able to articulate a clear and positive vision for our province that counters the right-wing mantra of corporate tax cuts and cuts to public services.

As you will see in the following reports, we continue to establish the foundation of our advocacy network in partnership with our member organizations through our eight task forces. Thanks to the hard work of our task force members, we have had another successful year of engaging in the political debate and expanding the capacity to mobilize people to take action on these key public interest issues. It has been my pleasure to spend considerable time meeting with and making presentations to our member organizations and helping to make the connections between the various public interest issues.

PIA is also helping to build working relationships and action between different organizations and public interest sectors. Our annual conference was again an important opportunity for our members to learn from excellent speakers and to build connections and collective action with each other. The next phase of the Join Together Alberta campaign will also be a major effort by many unions and community organizations to work collectively together to advocate for public services. As an important part of this process, we are very pleased to be able to have community mobilizers supporting this work in Red Deer (Stephen Merredew), Calgary (Julie Hrdlicka), Lethbridge (Lorinda Peel), Medicine Hat (Alison Van Dyke), Grande Prairie (TBC) and Fort McMurray (TBC). With the support of these new community mobilizers we will be able to strengthen the advocacy work in each of these cities.

We also have greatly increased our communications capacity this year as we were able to hire Russell Charlton as our communications assistant, thanks to the increased support of our members. He has done an excellent job launching and maintaining our new website designed by Rob Andruchow and Tina Faiz and using many social media tools to outreach and distribute our advocacy messages. He has also been instrumental in helping to get our voice out into the media through the coordination of many media releases and conferences.

As in past years, all of this success would not have been possible without the incredibly dedicated and wonderful Karen Werlin, our office manager that keeps everything running smoothly. We are also blessed to have such a committed and hard working board of directors. We have also greatly benefitted from having Julia Dalman working with our Environment Task Force on an internship program sponsored by the YMCA. We continue to support the “Next Up Alberta” youth leadership program coordinated by the Parkland Institute, as both Julia and Russell are a testament to the success of this project.

### **Bill Moore-Kilgannon, Executive Director**

Prior to joining PIA, Bill worked in Ottawa as the Director of Campaigns and Communications with the Council of Canadians. He was the Executive Director of the Parkland Institute at the University of Alberta from 1997 – 2001, and coordinator of the Global Visions Festival from 1992 – 1997. He is also the producer of two documentary films. He studied Canadian and Latin American history, political science and economics at the University of Alberta and l’Universite de Sherbrooke.



# Our Board:



## **Nancy Furlong, Vice President**

Nancy Furlong is the Secretary Treasurer of the Alberta Federation of Labour and has been active in the trade union movement for over 30 years. She began her labour career as a union steward for the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) in 1976 and progressed to holding office in her local. From there she joined the staff of AUPE and in 1993 she became the Executive Director. In 1998 she went on to work for the Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA) as a Labour Relations Officer and became a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1158. Nancy is a strong supporter of networking and coalition work and an advocate for social change.



## **Dennis Theobald, Treasurer**

Dennis is the Alberta Teachers' Association Coordinator of Communications. In this role he assists in the planning and implementation of the Association's communications and lobbying strategy as well as administering the Association's initiatives to promote teacher engagement in the political process. He played a key role in establishing Public Interest Alberta.



## **Lori Sigurdson, Secretary**

Lori has been employed as a social worker for over 20 years. She has worked in various fields of practice, including children's services, mental health, social policy and education. Currently, her work involves membership support for the over 6000 Registered Social Workers in Alberta. Larger systems advocacy to promote progressive social policies, as well as the profession of social work, are also part of her role. Lori received her Master of Social Work Degree from the University of Calgary. She lives in Edmonton with her 3 sons.



## **Heather Smith, Director**

Heather is the President of the United Nurses of Alberta. She came to Alberta in 1976 to work as a nurse at the Edmonton General Hospital and quickly became involved in her union. She was first elected president in 1988 and has been re-elected many times since. Heather has also played a major role in political action to defend public health care in Alberta.



## **Cherie Langlois-Klassen, Director**

Cherie Langlois-Klassen is a Labour Relations Officer with the United Nurses of Alberta (UNA), where she advocates for the rights of Alberta's nurses. Cherie is a member of the Law Society of Alberta, and previously practiced union-side labour law as an associate with the law firm of Blair Chahley Severyn in Edmonton. Prior to that, Cherie served for several years as the Executive Director of the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation (ACGC) and the International Panel of Experts on Partnership Programming for the then Federal Minister of International Cooperation. She is active on the AFL's Women's Committee and also serves as co-chair of PIA's Taskforce on Childcare.



## **Dorothy McKenna, Director**

Dorothy is the past Executive Director of Womanspace Resource Centre in Lethbridge. Womanspace focuses its research and action on policy issues affecting women. Since 2000, Dorothy has acted as co-chair of the South West Alberta Coalition on Poverty, which has initiated a number of innovative projects related to the role of poverty in creating social exclusion and as a major social determinant of health.



**Elisabeth Ballermann, Director**

Elisabeth has been President of the Health Sciences Association of Alberta since 1995, becoming the first president elected by the membership. Elisabeth joined HSAA in 1980 when she started her health care career as a physical therapist at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital. In 1986, she joined the HSAA Staff Association. In order to enhance her academic background in labour relations, Elisabeth graduated with a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Alberta. Her extensive community service was recognized in 2005 with the awarding of the Alberta Centennial Medal.



**Brian Staples, Director**

Brian Staples is a retired educator and has been chair of the Seniors' Action Liaison Team from 1998 to 2009. He suffered quietly from the fact that both his parents were rural Alberta teachers. In his work life he has been a young army officer, a teacher, superintendent of schools and an Alberta public servant. He developed the province's further education councils and its program of designated community schools. He will take anyone sailing at any time.



**Ricardo Acuna, Director**

Ricardo is the Executive Director of the Parkland Institute, Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta – a position he has held since May 2002. Previous to that he worked for nine years as Projects Coordinator for Change for Children Association, an Alberta-based international development organization working in Latin America. He has a degree in Political Science and History from the University of Alberta, and has over 20 years experience as a volunteer, staffer and consultant for various non-government and non-profit organizations around the province. Ricardo is a regular speaker to students, teachers, and community groups around Alberta. He has spoken extensively and written on issues of water, NAFTA, commodification of the commons, and energy policy in Alberta.



**Bev Ray, Director**

Bev Ray is the Local President of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (730) Edmonton and has been a letter carrier since 2001. Prior to being employed by Canada Post, Bev worked for the Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL) and the Family Centre. During those years Bev was directly involved in providing advocacy support to families with developmental disabilities, as well as being a representative voice during the dismantling of Social Services and the creation of provincial boards. She has been a long-time advocate for human rights and has spent the last 25 years working on social justice issues that impact persons with developmental disabilities.



**John Nicholls, Director**

John is the Executive Director of the Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations (CAFA), which has been a member of PIA since its inception. He has played an active role on PIA's Post-Secondary Task Force, and previously sat on the PIA Board of Directors when he served as Research and Liaison Officer for the Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculties Association (ACIFA). John is passionately committed to the principles of accessibility, affordability and quality in post-secondary education in Alberta.



**Gerald Wheatley, Director**

Gerald is Coordinator of Calgary's Arusha Centre, which has brought community activists together on various social justice and environmental issues since 1972. He is a founding member of Calgary Dollars, a complementary currency system, volunteer Chair of the Calgary Alternative Transportation Cooperative, which operates a car-sharing service, and co-chair of PIA's Environment Task Force.

# Democracy Task Force

Better Alberta

Building a

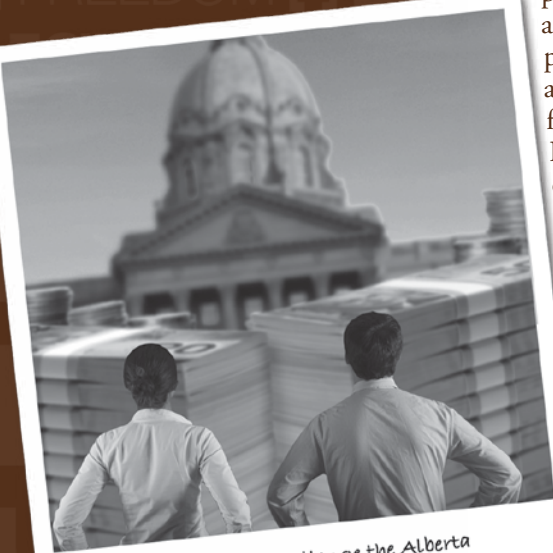


The Democracy Task Force's work over the past year occurred in a context of ongoing political change and uncertainty on the provincial scene. The upheaval in the Progressive Conservative party culminating in the pending departure of the Premier and a resulting leadership contest, the increased profile of the Wild Rose Alliance, the resignation of the Liberal leader and ensuing leadership contest, and the emergence of the Alberta Party all presented challenges and opportunities for promoting democratic reform and renewal in our province. PIA's co-sponsoring of an ongoing legal challenge to irregularities in the 2008 provincial general election provided a continuing opportunity to focus attention on the need to ensure democratic practices at the time of elections.

However, the bulk of the task force's work was centred on ongoing efforts to promote PIA's six-point proposal for democratic renewal in Alberta. Two key initiatives in the past year were the development of specific proposals for campaign and party finance reform, and a ten-point proposal in the area of gender and democracy. The two draft proposals were designed to be used in the three party leadership campaigns, as well as in the upcoming provincial election. In addition, the two draft proposals provided the basis for discussions in the task force's two sessions at PIA's annual advocacy conference in April.

PIA also hosted a public meeting featuring Dr. Joel Westheimer in May 2011, on the topic, "More Than Voting: How can we bring about a stronger democracy based on citizen engagement?"

The Democracy Task Force's efforts this past year were substantially enhanced by the work of Jon Weller, who served as an intern through the University of Alberta's Community Service Learning program.



PIA continues to challenge the Alberta government to make campaign laws more transparent and accountable

**Task Force:** Larry Booi (Chair), David King, Harold Neth (Alberta Teachers' Association), Janet Buckmaster (Equal Voice – Alberta North), Lynn Odynski, Ricardo Acuna (Parkland Institute), Steven Patten (Political Science, U of A), Heather MacIntosh and Charlotte Kingston (Sheldon Chumir Foundation), Jon Weller (Student Intern), Julia Dalman (PIA – Intern), Sherry McKibben (Health Sciences Association of Alberta), Steve Bradshaw (Centre for Civic Governance).

# Childcare Task Force

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"I want to congratulate Bill Moore-Kilgannon and Public Interest Alberta for the work that they are doing to protect Alberta's children and the future of Alberta."

Stephanie, Calgary

Early childhood education and care is one of the most important public service we could be providing to support young children and their families in those most crucial early years. Yet, our provincial government sees childcare primarily as a market commodity rather than a vital public service.

This past year, our task force continued to be the primary advocates for quality early childhood education and care in the province. When a private Edmonton area childcare was shut down for serious issues of quality, PIA was extensively in the news challenging the government to improve our childcare quality standards and the voluntary accreditation program.

PIA also challenged the provincial government on its market approach to developing new childcare spaces. Instead of really supporting a planned approach to increasing more quality childcare programs in under-served areas, space creating funding was provided to any business or not-for profit centre that wanted to expand. While this did create some much needed spaces which was so desperately needed from years of underfunding, the funding could have been used in a much more targeted away. We further challenged the Alberta government in the media when they announced they were ending the space creation program, even though the federal government continues to provide over \$25 million a year to the province for childcare space creation.

Our most recent advocacy success was our work to advocate that Edmonton Public Schools not to allow EDLEUN, the largest childcare corporation in Canada, to lease space in four public schools. We raised many concerns and questions about the implications of having a publicly traded corporation renting space inside a public school system, and were very pleased when the vast majority of school board trustees agreed not to allow this to happen. This advocacy work will continue to be one of the central focuses of the task force, as this corporation has very aggressive plans for rapid expansion across Alberta and Canada.

**Task Force:** Cherie Langlois-Klassen (Chairperson and UNA), Avril Pike (Oliver Care Society), Christopher Smith (Muttart Foundation), Teresa Ebbert (Oliver Head Start Program), Bev Ray (Canadian Union of Postal Workers), Vivian Turner (Garneau-University Childcare Centre, Sandra Azocar and Karen Sputek (Alberta Union of Provincial Employees), Carol Sullivan (Terra Association), Shannon Phillips (Womanspace Resources Centre Lethbridge).





# Human Services & Poverty Task Force

Despite Alberta's incredible wealth, far too many people are struggling in poverty and unable to access enough quality human services and programs. While giving away billions in subsidies and tax cuts to corporations, the cuts to support people in poverty and in need of human services has left far too many Alberta individuals and families struggling.

The task force members were very involved this past year in building support for a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy. Last June, we released new statistics about low-wage workers in Alberta and task force member organizations presented to the Standing Committee on the Economy's review of Alberta's minimum wage policy. We made many presentations to encourage organizations and local governments to support the call for a poverty reduction strategy. In November, we release a new report, *Time for Action: Working Together to End Poverty in Alberta*, in partnership with the Edmonton Social Planning Council. PIA was involved in the coordination of a large provincial forum in partnership with Inter-City Forum on Social Policy and Family and Community Supports Services Alberta Association. This has led to a plan to work together to establish a provincial poverty reduction network supported by most municipalities and many community organizations. This coming year, we will continue to reach out to provincial government ministries to support a public consultation plan to develop a strategy that will set clear timelines and targets to prevent, reduce and ultimately eliminate poverty in Alberta.

Our advocacy work with many human service organizations has continued from the success of past campaigns. Despite these successes, continued lack of funding has resulted in a two year wage freeze of front line staff working with people with developmental disabilities and changes to government contracts will lead to more privatization and elimination of small community organizations. This will further reduce the chances of increasing the professionalization and quality of the staffing, particularly as we see the economy starting to heat up again and staff turnover rates increasing. As many human service organizations have been intimidated to not speak out about the lack of support for human services in this province, PIA must increase our advocacy efforts for real commitments to these vital public human services.



Bill Moore-Kilgannon speaks to media at "Red Tent" campaign for a federal housing strategy on October 19th

**Task Force:** Lori Sigurdson (Chair and Alberta College of Social Workers), Dan Meades (Vibrant Communities Calgary), Janice Melnychuk (Vibrant Communities Edmonton), John Kolkman (Edmonton Social Planning Council), Mezzun Lakha-Evins (Cerebral Palsy Association, Calgary), William MacAskill, Ann Nicol (Alberta Council of Disability Services, Ryan Geake (Calgary Scope Society), Joanne Currie (United Way of Greater Edmonton), Mary Dahr (Health Sciences Association of Alberta), Bob McKeon (Social Justice Office, Catholic Archdioceses of Edmonton), Sharlyn White (Family and Community Support Services Alberta Association), Joe Ceci (Inter-City Forum on Social Policy), Jane Hirst (Bissell Centre), Vasant Chotai (Quality of Life Commission).



# Education Task Force

Advocating for a public education system that can develop the full potential of all Alberta students continues to be the central theme of PIA's education task force. While Alberta does have much to celebrate about our education system, we also know that we have many serious issues to address.

PIA's Education Task Force helped to raise many critical issues during the school board trustee elections in October 2010. We did an extensive survey of Trustee candidates on issues like support for special needs education, school maintenance, infrastructure and closures, and the independence and transparency of local boards. We published the results of this survey and actively encouraged our members to review the results prior to voting.

The Minister of Education's review of Education and Special Education was concluded this past year and Bill 18, the new School Act was tabled on April 27. The task force has been reviewing the implications of the various changes to the act and will be actively participating in the advocacy efforts in the lead up to its passage in the fall sitting of the legislature.

Of course, the largest issue currently facing our education system is the fact the government has underfunded the system by \$100 million. School boards across Alberta are currently in the process of laying off essential staff and teachers, and are not able to address their huge infrastructure deficits and many are exploring possible school closures. The task force will be working to launch a public advocacy campaign that brings all of the education partners together with our other members to mobilize people across the province to take action. The next phase of the Join Together Alberta campaign will certainly feature how education is being cut while the government gives away billions to corporations.

Building a  
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My congrats to Larry Booi on his articulate and inspiring letter featured in today's Dec 6 The Journal. As usual, Larry is bang on in terms of the needed direction for Trustees. "Use it or lose it" are the five most powerful words spoken in the trustee arena in some time. As a Catholic Trustee candidate in the October 2010 election, I ran on a platform based on the importance of a governance model of democratically elected trustees. I also pledged to be visible in the community, connected to our schools and school councils, receptive and responsive. I too have disdain for the secrecy of in-camera meetings and the ruse of Public Meetings that are re-enactments of feigned democracy. Larry Booi, you have inspired me to proudly ask to be a member of PIA.

Danny Kinal  
Edmonton AB

**Task Force:** Harold Neth (Chair), Kathryn Burke (Learning Disability Association of Alberta), Christopher Spencer (Trustee, Edmonton Public School Board), Gloria Nordin (Edmonton Public Teachers), Danny Burrell, Wilma Ellenburgh and Rick Klimchuk (Communications, Energy and Paperworkers), Dennis Theobald (Alberta Teachers' Association), David King, Natasha Krec (ATA Local 18 - Wetaskiwin), Lynn Odynski and Susan O'Neil (Parent advocates), Laura Shutlak (Calgary Association of Parents and School Councils), Larry Booi (PIA).

# Environment Task Force

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Councillor Linda Sloan speaks at the launch of the "Our Water is not for sale" campaign

While the environment remains one of the top priorities and concerns for most Albertans, the provincial government's policies are more about public relations and pleasing our energy industry, than about protecting the public interest.

PIA is one of the core members of the advocacy campaign, "Our Water is Not for Sale", that was launched last June to raise awareness and stop the government from establishing a market for water allocations throughout Alberta. The campaign has strong support from many municipal decision-makers, first nations communities, rural land-owners and the general public and currently has over 60 organizations and 1500 people who have signed on to the campaign. Our partner organizations and our two environment interns, Russell Charlton and Julia Dalman have put on many presentations, spoken in the media and distributed our campaign literature at many events. We also raised the awareness of this issue during the October municipal elections by getting over 140 candidates to fill out our on-line survey on water markets. We hosted a major event in the fall featuring Council of Canadians chairperson Maude Barlow and also hosted a series of events during world water week in March.

The task force continues to support environmental action by promoting advocacy campaigns to our broader membership. We have hosted and spoken at many events, including sponsoring the screening of the film "Dirty Oil" at the Global Visions Festival and many other events coordinated by Task Force chairperson Gerald Wheatley from the Arusha Centre in Calgary. Russell Charlton, our environment intern helped promote climate justice issues and attended the climate change negotiations in Cancun where he video blogged and made presentations about his experiences.

The PIA advocacy conference also featured an excellent presentation from Rob Hopkins, the co-founder of the Transition Towns movement in the UK. The task force will be looking at further ways to promote community solutions to transition away from reliance on fossil fuels towards a green, sustainable economy.

**Task Force:** Gerald Wheatley (Chair - Arusha Centre, Calgary), Sheila Muxlow (Sierra Club), Scott Harris (Council of Canadians), Sandy Kyle (Alberta Union of Provincial Employees), Ricardo Acuna (Parkland Institute), Russell Charlton and Julia Dalman (PIA), Mike Hudema (Greenpeace), Rene Michalak (Rethink Red Deer), Kristin Marquardt (Sustainable Alberta), Alana-Dawn Eirikson (Sustainability Office, Mount Royal University).

# Post-Secondary Education Task Force

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Albertans recognize post-secondary education as a public good. No one doubts that it is the key to our future prosperity and to our development as a society. Most new jobs already require some form of post-secondary qualification, and Alberta's chronic shortage of skilled labour and 'highly qualified personnel' has long been seen as a major barrier to the diversification of our economy. To ensure that we can equip our citizens to take up the opportunities offered by the developing global knowledge economy and help build our common future, we need to address access and affordability issues, lagging post-secondary participation and completion rates, as well as threats to the quality of the education our public universities, colleges and technical institutes are able to provide.

Alberta's ability to meet these challenges is limited by the continuing freeze on provincial funding to post-secondary education. The freeze, mitigated only by some modest new expenditures to ease enrolment pressures, will trigger another round of debilitating cuts at our post-secondary institutions in the coming year. Without an increase in public investment across the system, we can expect to see reduced student intake, fewer programs and larger classes, more layoffs of academic and non-academic staff, increased reliance on casual hires and contracting out, more private-sector partnerships, and more user fees. Student debt will continue to balloon. At the same time, the growing emphasis on targeted research funding and the commercialization of publicly-supported research is putting new pressure on the teaching budgets of our post-secondary institutions.

The Alberta government is not unaware of the need to maintain its investment in PSE – what is needed is the political will to make this a priority, even in the face of calls for ever-deeper cutbacks in public spending. Building on its 'Don't Cut Us Out' campaign, the PIA PSE Task Force has been working this year to develop strategies to challenge the assumptions behind the often-heard assertion that Alberta 'just can't afford' to re-invest in post-secondary education unless and until the government's fiscal position improves.

Our advocacy for increased spending on PSE needs to be seen as part of the larger debate going on in this province over the future direction of public expenditure and public services. The PSE Task Force is committed to making investment in post-secondary education a major theme of the second phase of the 'Join Together Alberta' campaign. At the same time, we will continue to seek ways to reinforce and broaden the scope of our advocacy by drawing connections with issues facing other public service sectors, such as healthcare and K-12 education.



*The 2010 budget cuts have led to a decline in access, quality and affordability at our post secondary institutions*

**Task Force:** John Nicholls (Chair – Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations), Duncan Wojtaszek and Aden Murphy (Council of Alberta University Students), Carol Neuman and Steven Kwasny (Alberta Students' Executive Council), Lynn Devlin (Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculties Association), Russell Eccles (Non-Academic Staff Association, University of Alberta), Betty-Anne Ross, (NAIT Academic Staff Association), Jennifer Krygier (Faculty Association of the University of Calgary), Salima Punja (Alberta Graduate Council), Jason Heistad (Alberta Union of Provincial Employees), Kelly Garland (Health Sciences Association of Alberta).



# Seniors Task Force

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I read Noel Somerville's article in the Edmonton Journal this morning and could hardly breathe. Everything he said were feelings I have had over the last year, but did not know how to articulate. I lived and breathed many of those experiences as I navigated the health care system as my aged mother, became ill... I have had so much anger with the system since that time (year ago) that I have been unable to find a proactive way of dealing with it. Cudos to you for your efforts and ability to inform the public with such a good article. I have been looking for a way of getting involved to help make a difference in a positive way.

Irma Coumantarakis  
Edmonton, AB

Seniors should have the support they need to stay in their homes as long as possible and to get quality public care provided for them as their health requires. Even though there are a growing number of seniors, the province is not investing in building a public seniors' care system. Rather, the government is continuing with its policy of transferring the delivery of seniors care to private, expensive and largely unregulated home care and assisted living facilities.

While the province brought in the new Health Act, public pressure from the task force and others seems to have successfully delayed the government's plans to consolidate the various pieces of health legislation, including the elimination of the Nursing Home Act. Noel Somerville and the Seniors Task Force members have done an excellent job educating the public about the privatization of seniors care through public events, rallies, media interviews and opinion editorials. The task force continues to mobilize our volunteer base of "MLA Contact Teams" to engage the politicians in their constituencies to address seniors care issues.

The Task Force will be actively involved in the Join Together Alberta campaign as it advocates building a quality public seniors' care system. The latest provincial budget does not provide enough funding to address the lack of qualified staffing to meet the growing seniors population. The stories of the impact on seniors and communities of the underfunding and privatization of seniors care need to be brought out into the public discourse if we are going to succeed in our efforts to change the direction this government is going with seniors care. The Task Force is also developing a strategy to reach out to all of the leadership candidates and existing leaders of the main provincial political parties to see where they stand on seniors care issues.

**Task Force:** Noel Somerville (Chair-Seniors Action Liason Team), Brian Staples (SALT), John Bachynsky (Seniors Community Health Council), Bernice Rempel and Richard Perry (Canadian Association of Retired People), Sam Denhaan (Central Alberta Council on Aging), David Eggen (Friends of Medicare), Jason Heistad (AUPE), Frank Horvath (Whitemud Citizens for Public Health), Jack Hubler (Plumbers and Pipefitters Retirees), Lynda and Ron Jonson (Seniors I Care - Hinton), Gary Pool and Norman Bezanson (Alberta Council on Aging), Baldwin Reichwein (Alberta College of Social Workers), Heather Smith and Keith Wiley (United Nurses of Alberta), Don Mock (Alberta Retired Teachers' Association), Gordon Voth and John Macdonald (Seniors United Now), Louise Yarrow and Geri Keith (Health Sciences Association of Alberta).

# Privatization Task Force

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Challenging the privatization of public services is at the core of what Public Interest Alberta does in many of our task forces and advocacy campaigns. In order to be effective in our fight against privatization, we need to see the connections between the privatization of different public sectors and to work together to build a stronger movement for public services.

Public Interest Alberta continued to support the work of the Our Power Citizens Group in their on-going efforts to challenge the privatization of Edmonton's electrical generation assets. The Our Power Citizens group kept the issue in front of the candidates during the October municipal election with lawn signs, interventions during candidate forums and an on-line survey to see where all candidates stood on the issue. The group has done further research into the potential conflicts of interest in EPCOR's creation of Capital Power, and they are lobbying Council to launch an independent investigation into a series of troubling questions surrounding this sell-off of public assets.

**Our Power: Bohdan and Elaine Harasymiw, Aileen Tayler, Ray and Dorothy Lopatka, Jim Darwish, Mitch Makowsky, Paul Greene, Sylvia Krogh, Peggy O'Neill, Harry Mandryk, Robin Hunter, Greg Plouffe, Nick Zukiwski.**

## Join Together Alberta

The many member organizations of Public Interest Alberta have also been developing the next phase of the Join Together Alberta campaign. Building upon the successful 22 town halls we held across Alberta last year, the campaign will again reach out to mobilize people across the province to reframe the debate about government revenues and support for public services. We are setting up "community mobilizers" in the six cities (other than Edmonton), to build local campaigns that support the objectives of the Join Together campaign. We will be hosting a provincial telephone town hall and seven town halls and advocacy training sessions around Alberta in June. Thanks to the strong support of our many member organizations, the campaign will be a major effort that brings our task forces to advocate together in these changing political times.

**Join Together Alberta: Larry Booi and Bill Moore-Kilgannon (PIA), Gil McGowan, Ishani Weera and Jerry Toews (AFL), Heather Smith and Keith Wiley (UNA), Elisabeth Ballermann and Doug Meggison (HSAA), Carol Henderson and Dennis Theobald (ATA), Ricardo Acuna and Diana Gibson (Parkland Institute), David Eggen (Friends of Medicare), Lori Sigurdson (ACSW), Ann Nicol and Ryan Geake (ACDS), John Nicholls (PIA – PSE Task Force), Noel Somerville (PIA – Seniors Task Force), Don Boucher (CEP).**



*PIA helped to organize a major rally with Join Together Alberta partners on March, 19th 2010 to challenge the government to invest in public services*



## Mobilizing for a Better Alberta:



Statement of Operations - Year Ended March 31, 2011

	2011	2010
Revenue		
Membership Fees	206540.00	204436.00
Campaign Income	8340.00	40334.00
Conference Income	22998.00	38084.00
Sublease	4810.00	11519.00
Fundraising Income	0.00	10187.00
Expense Reimbursement	2651.00	1854.00
Speaker & Writer Honourarium	1475.00	350.00
Miscellaneous/Interest Income	991.00	244.00
General Advocacy Fund	10000.00	34238.00
Join Together Campaign	40300.00	50000.00
	298105.00	391246.00
Operating Expenditures		
Staffing	165650.00	126957.00
Communications & Outreach	13684.00	23480.00
Rental	18782.00	23178.00
Telecommunications	3987.00	3989.00
Audit Fees	3928.00	3561.00
Annual General Meeting	1351.00	3200.00
Amortization	4900.00	2750.00
Insurance	2024.00	1677.00
Stationery & Supplies	1289.00	1573.00
Board Meetings	1400.00	1035.00
Re-location Costs	1726.00	0.00
Janitorial	982.00	0.00
Miscellaneous	137.00	495.00
Furniture	286.00	422.00
Interest & Bank Charges	463.00	411.00
Equipment/Programs	1153.00	397.00
	221742.00	193125.00
Program Costs		
Childcare Task Force	248.00	260.00
Democracy Task Force	3438.00	2735.00
Education Task Force	75.00	77.00
Environment Task Force	958.00	884.00
Human Services & Poverty Task Force	3241.00	30635.00
Post-Secondary Education Task Force	186.00	2354.00
Privatization Task Force	3456.00	9364.00
Seniors Task Force	513.00	1199.00
General Advocacy Campaign	0.00	15686.00
Join Together Alberta Campaign	1517.00	45872.00
2010 Conference	24376.00	0.00
2009 Conference	0.00	24129.00
Loss on disposal of assets	0.00	1972.00
	38008.00	135167.00
Excess of Revenues over Operating Expenses		
General Fund	-428.00	58826.00
Join Together Alberta	38783.00	4128.00
	38355.00	62954.00



Public Interest Alberta (PIA) is a non-partisan province-wide organization focused on education and advocacy on public interest issues. PIA exists to foster in Albertans an understanding of the importance of public services, institutions and spaces in Albertans' lives, and to build a network of organizations and individuals committed to advancing the public interest.

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