

## Partial transcription of Danielle Smith news conference

Brooks, Alberta

Thursday, April 6, 2023

**Dean Bennett, Canadian Press:** Premier, I'm wondering now where we go from here, now that you've insisted there's nothing irregular about your phone call with Artur Pawlowski. Specifically, it sounds like a *de facto* policy change. I want to know from you three things: Should Albertans facing criminal charges, or any charges, and feel they're being treated unfairly by the system, now consider themselves free to contact their local MLA or any cabinet minister to discuss this? Two, if these accused contact MLAs or cabinet ministers, with the intent to discuss their active case or criminal case, are these MLAs and cabinet ministers now free to accept the call and engage in this conversation? And if so, once these discussions have ended, are cabinet ministers and MLAs now free to pass the accused's concerns and outstanding questions on to Justice officials via the appropriate channels, i.e., yourself, or Justice Minister Tyler Shandro?

**Danielle Smith, Premier of Alberta:** Well, there's no change of policy. The policy is what it's always been, that the Crown prosecutors and the judicial system operates independently. That there is a lens that the Justice Minister can look at in assessing cases that is whether there's a reasonable likelihood of conviction, and whether it's in the public interest. That stays the same now, it's always been that way and it will always be that way. My job as a politician is to consult with a broad range of people, raise their concerns, and then ultimately in this particular case, take the advice of my Justice Minister. My Justice Minister said that we are waiting the outcome of several court cases and I accepted his advice. So there's been no policy change, Dean.

**Dean Bennett:** Premier, I'm sorry, yeah, with respect, I put it to you that this is gross hypocrisy on your part. That *you* get to contact and talk to accused before their criminal cases, but no other Albertans get the same opportunity. How do you justify that?

**Danielle Smith:** Look, every single one of my MLAs, their job is to talk to a broad range of Albertans. They're a broad range of Albertans raising concerns about whether there'd be an option for amnesty. This should be no surprise, Dean, I ran on that. I said that I would pursue and see if there were options for amnesty. And I asked my Justice officials if there were. They came back with some recommendations, and the recommendation was that we had to wait for the outcome of several court cases. And that's what we're doing. The conversations I had with my justice officials took place several months ago, the court cases still haven't come down, we're still waiting, and so that's where we find ourselves, is that we've gotta let the, once these processes are under way, we've got to let the system of courts play itself through to the end, and that's what we're doing, we're waiting for the outcome of a couple of court cases.