

**Canadian Taxpayers Federation**  
**– 2017 United Conservative Party Leadership Survey –**

*Candidate: Jason Kenney*

**1) Will you balance the budget by 2021-22 without raising taxes?**

Yes, barring a major economic downturn.

As the first Director of the Alberta Taxpayer Association and first President of the CTF, I have spent most of my adult life fighting for governments to live within taxpayers' means.

We must eliminate the NDP deficit, and start paying down their debt by growing the economy, and restraining spending.

Growing the economy will require restoring investor and consumer confidence, which means reducing, not increasing, the tax burden.

As Ralph Klein used to say, Alberta has a spending problem, not a revenue problem. Alberta would have a balanced budget today if we spent at the same levels per capita level as British Columbia.

I was Minister of some of the biggest departments in the Canadian government, and I can tell you that there's definitely room to be more efficient. I oversaw a program of 10% reduction in operational spending. I'm proud to say that I achieved that goal with no noticeable effect on frontline services. With determination and the right set of experience leading our province, it can be done.

**2) Will you eliminate the carbon tax within 100 days of taking office?**

I am seeking to lead a grassroots party that develops its policies democratically, rather than having them imposed top-down by the Leader.

Having said that, my personal objective would be to call the Legislature into session within a month of the next election, and introduce the Carbon Tax Repeal Act as Bill 1, to eliminate the NDP carbon tax within weeks of taking office.

**3) Will you expand the Alberta Taxpayer Protection Act so that no new major taxes or tax hikes to major taxes can be imposed without a referendum?**

I am proud of my role as President of the CTF in successfully lobbying the Klein Government to adopt the Taxpayer Protection Act. The Act is the single biggest reason that Alberta does not have a sales tax like other provinces. That said, the legislation has not been updated in over two decades. I would support a modernization and expansion of the Act.

**4) Will you commit to bringing back Alberta's 10% single rate personal income tax?**

As President of the CTF, I lobbied the Klein government to introduce the 10% flat tax. When finally introduced in 2000, by Ralph Klein and Stockwell Day, it became an integral part of the Alberta Advantage that helped make Alberta the economic engine of Canada. While it will fall to the grassroots members of the United Conservative Party to determine specific policy, I personally support the principle of a flat tax as an effective policy to remove disincentives to work, save, and invest. Having said that, I cannot credibly commit a future government to specific tax rates at this point. We do not know how big the debt, deficit, or over-spending will be following the next election, and should maintain flexibility to make commitments on specific tax rates closer to the next election.

**5) Will you end all corporate welfare in Alberta?**

The policies of the UCP will be developed democratically by its members.

My own view is that government should not pick winners and losers by subsidizing corporations with tax dollars.

During my time with the Taxpayers Federation, I successfully lobbied the Klein Government draft the 'No More Boondoggles' legislation to end corporate welfare. Unfortunately, this legislation has been weakened as various forms of corporate welfare has crept back into the system. I would personally support a renewal of the 'No More Boondoggles' law as part of a complete review of corporate welfare programs.

**6) Will you push the federal government to reform equalization using all means available?**

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.

**7) Will you introduce and pass MLA recall legislation?**

The members of the UCP will determine its policies.

I personally support recall, and have done so since lobbying for it on behalf of the CTF in the early 1990s.

I believe that recall can be a useful tool to ensure ultimate accountability for legislators, but believe that the thresholds must be high enough to prevent frivolous abuse by special interest groups trying to prevent a government from implementing its platform.

***8) Will you eliminate unnecessary government employee positions, cut government employees' salaries by 10% and put new employees in a less costly pension plan (defined contribution)?***

It would not be credible for a leadership candidate to begin writing the 2020/21 budget in the summer of 2017.

Having said that, a UCP government will obviously have to restrain spending to balance the budget, and make it possible to boost economic growth through tax relief.

Such restraint will have to apply to public sector compensation, beginning with Ministers and MLAs. I value the contribution of those who work in the public sector, but Alberta taxpayers cannot continue to fund levels of compensation that are consistently higher than those in the private sector, or in the public sector in other provinces. In many areas, Alberta public sector workers are paid substantially more than, for example, their counterparts in British Columbia.

Restraint in public sector compensation should begin with attrition, i.e. by not replacing those who retire in non-essential positions. Reforming public sector pensions for future beneficiaries will also be required to manage huge unfunded liabilities. I led the fight to eliminate Alberta MLA pensions in 1993. If MLAs have no pensions, it is not unreasonable to suggest that future public-sector pension plans should avoid unfunded, taxpayer-guaranteed liabilities.

***9) Will you lead by example to reduce spending – eliminating MLAs' car-related perks and ability to expense both per-kilometer mileage and gas for travel?***

As the former head of the Alberta Taxpayers Association, I led the successful fight to reform the 'gold-plated' MLA pension plan in 1993. I would support a review of MLA expenses, including those mentioned above. MLAs must lead by example.

***10) Will you refuse to grant new taxing powers to municipalities and repeal any new taxing powers approved by the current government (without taxpayers approving the change through a referendum)?***

Yes. Municipal politicians cannot be handed new taxation powers without first consulting voters.