

Advocate

Official news magazine of the B.C. Federation of Retired Union Members (BC FORUM)



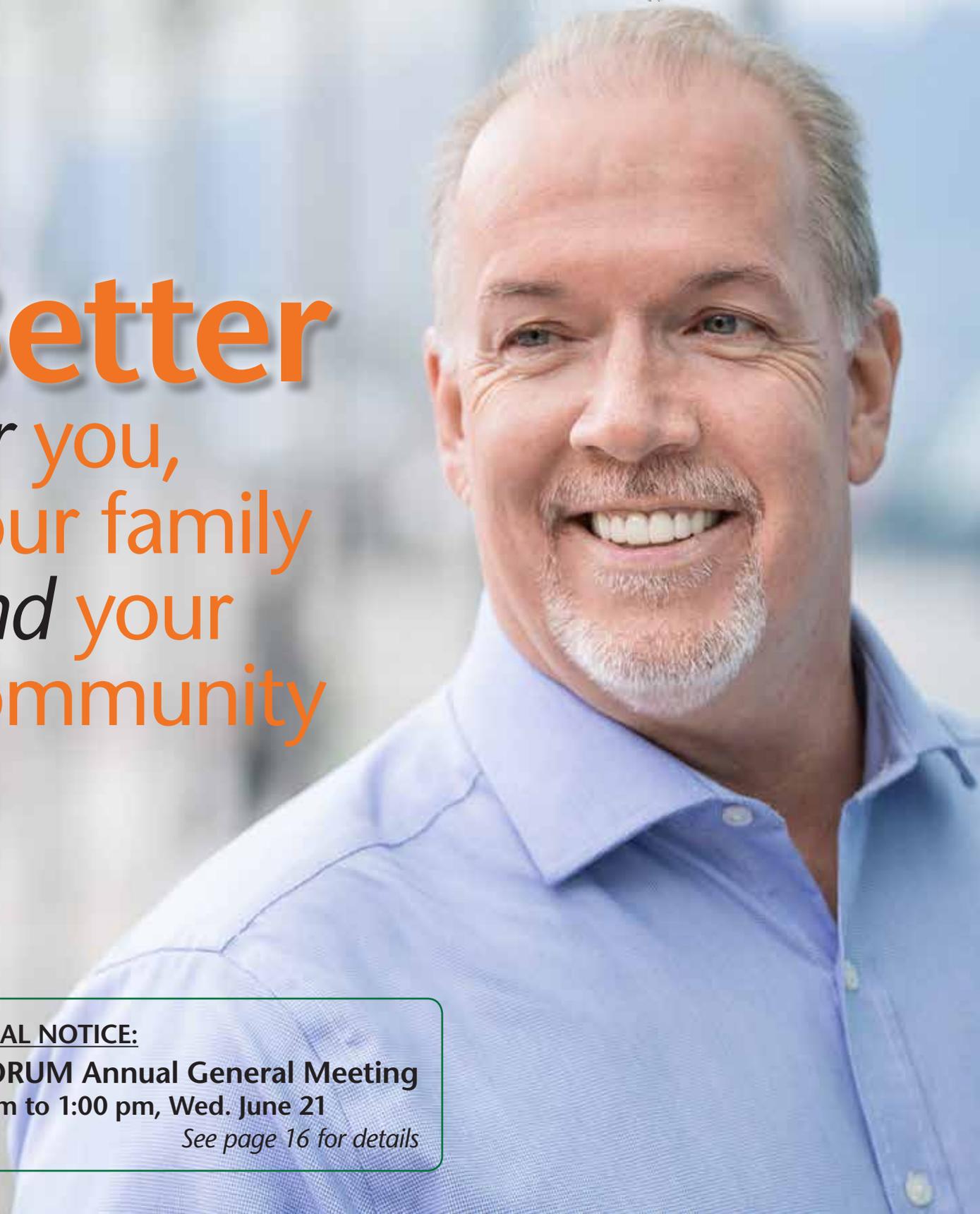
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for you,
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community

OFFICIAL NOTICE:

BC FORUM Annual General Meeting
9:30 am to 1:00 pm, Wed. June 21

See page 16 for details



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Advocate

The Advocate is published by the B.C. Federation of Retired Union Members. BC FORUM – supported by WE Consulting and Benefits and affiliated with the B.C. Federation of Labour – is dedicated to representing the interests of members and their families, continuing into retirement the relationship they enjoyed with the union movement.

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In this edition

With the BC election only days away, we feature greatly expanded coverage of provincial issues, and how the lives of ordinary people have been changed by 16 years of Christy Clark's party.

We urge you to vote on May 9.

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Who, exactly, is Christy Clark working for?

He who pays the piper calls the tune – and the rich are raking it in at our expense

By Diane Wood
President, BC FORUM

IN FEUDAL times kings, dukes and princes gave themselves lives of comfort and luxury by crushing the lives and hopes of peasants. They enriched themselves by taking from the poor.

Today, Christy Clark has turned British Columbia into what the Globe and Mail calls “a pay-to-play empire.”

And boy, do corporations and the super-rich ever pay her.

Tons of cash

REAL ESTATE developers. Foreign fossil fuel companies. European big pharma corporations. Chinese investment firms. Corporate lobbyists. Millionaires.

They’ve given tons of cash to Christy Clark’s party. In the last year alone, the BC Liberals have collected *three times more* than the \$4.4 million political parties are allowed to spend during the campaign period.

In grateful recognition of her role as chief fund-raiser, the BC Liberals have given Christy Clark a personal share in the takings – just over \$300,000 since she became premier.

Christy Clark has variously described this as “a car allowance” and a “stipend.”

In other contexts, it would be described as money laundering,

influence peddling or corruption.

As the Globe and Mail points out, “the perception that corporate money is influencing government decisions is impossible to avoid.”

Who benefits?

IT IS self-evident that the super-rich are not pouring millions into Christy Clark’s Liberal party to help people like you and me.

Just look at the outcomes:

- Our province is hugely unequal. The gap between the wealthy and the rest of us is the largest in Canada.
- A steady increase in regressive taxes and fees has rewarded the rich. The wealthiest 1% now pay a lower rate of taxes in relation to income than everyone else.
- Good jobs have been replaced by low paid, part-time precarious jobs – what you might call profit before people positions.
- Poverty is among the worst in Canada. Too many children go to school hungry.

Disappointments and failures

IN THE last election, Christy Clark promised she would take us to an LNG Shangri-La where families came first.

She has instead consistently favoured the rich and said “No!” to the dreams and hopes of ordinary people.

Her record is one of disappointments and failures on fair taxes,



Diane Wood

affordable housing, home support, residential care, education, skills training, affordable child care, defending our coast and tackling climate change.

She has left us as the only province in Canada without a poverty reduction plan or even a Human Rights Commission to ensure all British Columbians are treated equally.

Seeking to divert attention from this sorry record, Christy Clark has subjected us to a \$16 million barrage of government advertising – twice the amount budgeted.

Third-party front groups funded by her corporate friends are spending more millions on untrue and misleading attack ads.

It’s up to us to understand they are driven by narrow self-interest.

By standing together on May 9, we can begin to create new opportunities, and make life better for ordinary British Columbians.

WE CAN MAKE BETTER HAPPEN HERE



MORE THAN A SLOGAN – Life can be better for ordinary people if we stick together to make it happen. The BC Federation of Labour and the BC FORUM Board of Directors urge you to make your vote count on Tuesday, May 9.

Better can happen here

HARD WORKING British Columbians and our families are grappling with urgent challenges around affordability and the lack of public services,” says BC Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger.

“While services for people have been cut to the bone for the last 16 years, the rich and powerful have done very well. It reflects the choices Premier Clark and the Liberals have made – and whose side they’re on.”

Public services

LANZINGER SAID this year’s budget does nothing to invest in vital public services.

“There’s nothing concrete for parents struggling to find affordable child care spaces. Seniors still won’t get the care they need and deserve. There are no new plans to build social housing that would deal with affordability issues. And nothing to expand public transit that’s such a high priority for communities across

the province.”

In addition, Christy Clark again chose to do nothing to address the growing problem of inequality between rich and poor in BC.

“There’s no poverty reduction strategy, and nothing to help the 500,000 British Columbians working for poverty wages, less than \$15 an hour.”

Skills training

WITH THE government announcing a number of capital projects in the budget, Lanzinger says she can’t understand why the government isn’t mandating that trades apprentices will be part of building public infrastructure.

“It’s a head scratcher,” says Lanzinger.

“A serious jobs strategy should be leveraging government investment in building things to help train the next generation of workers and give apprentices the practical experience to complete their certifications.”

Better can happen here

THE BC Federation of Labour’s “better can happen here” campaign focuses on key issues that can make life better for ordinary people in British Columbia.

The campaign calls for government action on:

- Better schools for our kids.
- Improved transit services.
- Good-paying, permanent jobs.
- A \$15 an hour minimum wage.
- Investments in affordable housing.
- Quality public health care.
- A comprehensive plan to reduce poverty.
- Better community care and home care for seniors.
- An inclusive BC, where all have legal protection against discrimination and abuse.
- Quality, affordable child care.
- Better access to post-secondary education and skills training.



Follow the money

- **In the last 10 years, corporations gave more than \$30 million to the BC Liberals**
- **In the last 6 years, the BC Liberals gave \$300,000 to Christy Clark**

THE NEW YORK Times calls B.C. the “wild west” of political cash in North America. When you think about it, however, what’s happening here is more like a banana republic where politicians use their position to enrich themselves. It’s an embarrassment to everyone, except, apparently, Christy Clark.

For six years, wealthy individuals and large corporations – including foreign energy conglomerates – have seen a portion of their contributions go directly into the pocket of the Premier of British Columbia. How can this be described as anything

other than influence peddling? How can we believe she’s working for us when she’s personally being paid by them?

Only after intense criticism, and with the possibility of it being an election issue, did Clark suspend the \$50,000 a year “stipend” which topped up her \$195,000 a year salary. Perhaps her pockets are full enough.

RCMP steps in

ELECTIONS BC has asked the RCMP to investigate reports by the Globe and Mail that lobbyists are illegally funneling even more corporate cash to Christy Clark’s party.

These lobbyists allegedly made contributions in their own name and were subsequently reimbursed by their clients. Our weak Elections Act does not prevent foreign corporations from using their cash to try to influence our elections, but it does insist that they do so in their own name.

“British Columbia’s governing Liberal Party routinely accepts significant donations from foreign interests – a practice that is banned in

many other Canadian jurisdictions,” reported the Globe and Mail. “The party’s overflowing campaign war chest includes cash from offshore oil and gas companies, European pharmaceutical companies and Beijing investment firms.”

Ban big money

I’M EXTREMELY proud to be a British Columbian, but I’m embarrassed by our premier,” says NDP Leader John Horgan. “A tiny number of millionaires have our premier in their pocket. It has to end.”

With no limits on political donations, just 1.5 per cent of donors contributed half of the \$12 million raised by the B.C. Liberals last year.

“Millionaires gave big to Christy Clark, and she promptly turned around and gave those same millionaires a billion dollar tax break, paid for by hiking ICBC and Hydro costs for regular British Columbians.”

Because governments must work for people, not big money, Horgan says an NDP government will ban corporate and union donations.

AN UNFAIR TAX



Christy Clark's BC Liberals have more than doubled MSP premiums – an unfair tax that targets seniors and vulnerable workers for the biggest hit

AFTER YEARS of relentless increases in Medical Services Plan premiums, Christy Clark said this year would be different. She said she would “cancel” the 4 per cent increase her government had planned.

Temporary freeze turned into 10% hike

FOR MORE than 500,000 British Columbians, the feeling of relief lasted only until the bill arrived in the mail. Couples with no children at home – mostly seniors, many on fixed incomes – discovered she had increased their premiums by 10 per cent. Instead of getting a break, their increase was 2.5 times worse than if she'd left things alone.

Only in B.C.

BRITISH COLUMBIA is the only province that charges such a regressive tax for medical services. It is a key component in the range of B.C. Liberal decisions that have favoured the wealthy and given our province the deepest inequality in Canada.

And we're getting less for our money. While they have steadily

increased MSP premiums, the B.C. Liberals have also eliminated coverage for paramedical services such as chiropractic, massage therapy, physiotherapy and more.

The MSP must go

ELIMINATING MSP premiums is a matter of fairness,” says John Horgan, Leader of the BC NDP.

“It doesn't make sense that a person making \$42,000 a year pays the same amount as a person earning \$400,000, or even \$4 million,” he says.

Responding to an email from Diane Wood, President of BC FORUM, Horgan said MSP premiums do not have any relation to the actual cost of health care and increases to MSP premiums are rising faster than increases in health spending and faster than inflation. Since Christy Clark became premier, she has increased MSP fees every single year.

“Christy Clark thinks senior couples living on fixed incomes, and young people who are just starting their professional lives don't deserve a break. She is not putting British Columbians first – and that is certainly the case when it comes to the unfair Medical Services Plan premiums,” said Horgan.

“MSP premiums are another cost to B.C. families, especially those already struggling to make ends meet. We recognize that the current system only benefits those at the top, and this needs to change.

“I think all British Columbians should be treated fairly and if the BC New Democrats become government, we will eliminate MSP premiums,” he said.

Responding to the B.C. Liberal promise to reduce premiums in 2018, Horgan said British Columbians shouldn't forget their record.

Actions speak louder than words

IF CHRISTY Clark wanted lower taxes for ordinary people she wouldn't have doubled the MSP, and jacked up Hydro rates and ICBC premiums,” said Horgan.

“British Columbians have a clear choice. My plan will get rid of the unfair and inefficient MSP tax on families, entirely,” said Horgan.

“Because they can't trust Christy Clark, who doubled MSP when she claims she will lower it a little bit for a year or two until she raids the pockets of families again.”

Horgan noted British Columbians have made it clear that they want the MSP gone for good, not just lowered a little bit for a little while.

“Christy Clark's millionaire friends and donors will have to give up their billion-dollar tax break so that ordinary families can have life a little easier, and I'm okay with that,” said Horgan.

“The rich and big corporations have had their premier. It's time for everyday people to have leadership that works for them.”



With Christy Clark's inadequate funding, nine out of ten residential care facilities fail to meet the government's own minimum staffing requirements to care for vulnerable seniors. BC FORUM and our board of directors are proud to support the Hospital Employees Union's "Care can't wait" campaign.

Health care in BC pushed to near lowest level in Canada

EVEN AS they more than doubled unfair MSP premiums, Christy Clark and the B.C. Liberals have steadily underfunded health care. In 2001, our province was second out of ten in health care investments per capita. By 2016, we had crashed to eighth place.

In Clark's 2017 budget, health care continues to decline as a share of our economy, dropping from 7.8 per cent of GDP in 2015/16 to a projected 7.4 per cent by 2019/20, even as the population ages.

In short, British Columbians are not getting the level of care they need and deserve.

Stunning understaffing

THERE IS stunning understaffing in seniors' residential care. Data released by B.C.'s Seniors' Advocate shows that 91 per cent of care homes fail to meet the government's own staffing guidelines.

In addition, the now chronic shortage of residential care beds places heavy pressure on acute care hospitals. In Sechelt, for example,

40 per cent of acute care beds are occupied by people who should be in residential care. This both costs more and makes hospitals less able to meet the acute care needs of their communities.

Home support declines

THE NUMBER of seniors in B.C. has increased by 4 per cent in the last year, but in three out of five health authorities the Christy Clark government is providing fewer home support hours.

Access to home support services has declined significantly since 2001.

Home support clients are likely to be older, with serious health problems, and more complex needs.

Reduced access to home support is also destabilizing the health of seniors with moderate care needs who cannot get timely services. These services would keep them healthy and living at home. Some find they can't qualify for home support services until a health crisis puts them in hospital. This is expensive and a needless threat to their health.

Near breaking point

AREPORT by the Integrated Care Advocacy Group (ACA) and the B.C. Health Coalition (BCHC) says home support is near the breaking point.

The report found the lack of home support leaves seniors unsupported, family caregivers overburdened, and costly hospital services overcrowded.

"The home support system could be doing so much more to help seniors stay healthy and live independently," said Marcy Cohen, a researcher with ICA and BCHC and adjunct SFU faculty member.

"In the face of rising health costs and an aging population, investing in home support will maximize the health and well-being of seniors and the cost effectiveness of our health services."

While the number of seniors in B.C. nearly doubled, the number of seniors receiving home support in 2013-14 was virtually identical to the number receiving home support in 2001-02, said the report.

People need good jobs – not part-time precarious work

SENIORS TODAY are rightly worried that their children and grandchildren will be worse off than we were. Jobs that offer a living wage and opportunities for advancement are disappearing. Too many young people are stuck in low-wage, part-time precarious work while still carrying huge student loans.

Raw log exports soar

AS ONE example of what's gone wrong, you would think that the provincial government would want to ensure that B.C.'s publicly owned resources are used to benefit British Columbians. That doesn't seem to be the case.

Raw log exports have soared. Between 2013 and 2016, Christy Clark allowed the export of more raw logs than in any other four year period. In 2016, more than 6 million cubic meters of raw logs were exported – six times more than the average before the B.C. Liberals took office.

Under their watch, 30,000 forestry related jobs have been lost.

Had those unprocessed logs been milled in B.C., the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives estimates at least 3,650 more men and women could have been working in the neglected forest sector.

Jobs shipped overseas

FORESTRY, a renewable resource that was once our province's engine of growth and jobs, is not the only area where Christy Clark's government has put local people last.

They have exported the construction of B.C. Ferries to Germany and Poland, creating jobs and profits in foreign lands while local ship builders are left high and dry.

They have awarded over 90 per cent of almost \$700 million a year in information technology contracts to foreign multinational corporations. Only \$60 million went to local companies and workers.

An economy that works for people

WHILE CHRISTY Clark personally profited from catering to her corporate donors, John Horgan and the NDP have charted a course towards an economy that provides opportunities for ordinary people, not just mega-corporations and billionaires.

Horgan's initiatives aim to create good jobs, make taxes more fair, and put people first. It's a dramatic contrast to Clark's approach.

Horgan's proposals include:

- Stopping the raw log export free-for-all and job losses, and focusing on new opportunities for forest workers and their families.
- Power BC, a vision for clean, sustainable energy and new jobs in every community.
- Elimination of MSP premiums, a massively regressive tax that punishes seniors and workers in precarious jobs.
- Increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour during the first mandate of an NDP government.
- \$10 a day child care to give kids a good start in life and allow more parents to contribute to our economy.
- Ensuring that government information technology projects are creating jobs and opportunities in B.C., not handed to multinational corporations that fail to deliver what they promise.



Raw log exports from publicly-owned old growth forests have soared while BC jobs disappear.

Christy Clark's "pay-to-play empire"

BC ALLOWS corporations, unions, individuals and foreign interests to make unlimited donations to political parties. The Liberals have used that to parlay their 16-year stretch in power into a pay-to-play empire, raking in millions from companies and wealthy individuals seeking access to the Premier and to cabinet ministers.

"Because of this, the perception that corporate money is influencing government decisions is impossible to avoid."

– *Globe and Mail editorial, March 14, 2017*

- Three-quarters of companies awarded sole-sourced contracts by Christy Clark's government are Liberal party donors.
- "Taxpayers were billed \$6,054 for a Learjet to take Premier Christy Clark on a one-day visit to Prince George that included a photo op and the BC Liberals' annual northern fundraising dinner."

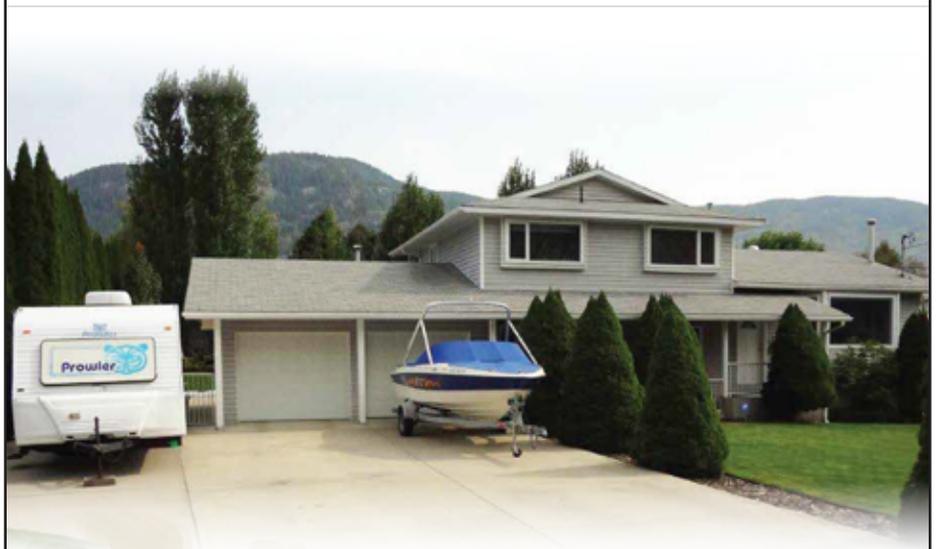
– *Bob Mackin, TheTye.ca, June 24, 2016*

- Christy Clark has billed taxpayers for over \$500,000 in private flights, including trips to her constituency in Kelowna. Air Canada and Westjet fly into the city about a dozen times a day.
- Sometimes referred to as Premier photo op, Christy Clark has cost us \$923,374 for the salaries and travel expenses of two full-time photographers.
- Until a former employee blew the whistle, and the Information Commissioner issued a blistering report, Christy Clark's government routinely "triple deleted" emails to foil access to information requests about public business.
- With no evidence, Christy Clark falsely accused the NDP of a criminal offence – hacking the B.C.

Liberal website. There was no hack. And it was independent MLA Vicki Huntington who discovered that private information about voters was publicly posted on the Liberal website in violation of B.C.'s privacy laws.

- It took a 15 year battle and an order by the Supreme Court of Canada to force Christy Clark – who was education minister when the battle began – to finally begin to restore funding to B.C.'s schools.

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PROMISES VS. DEEDS



"Seniors deserve better" is the theme of a BCGEU campaign to focus attention on the need to improve home support services.

The volunteer directors of BC FORUM, pictured above, believe all British Columbians deserve a government that works for them.

What she said, what she did

SOME COMMENTATORS say that Christy Clark is a great campaigner. She certainly makes lots of promises. Here's a short comparison of what she promised four years ago and what she actually did.

Freeze personal income taxes

- Gave a 2 per cent income tax cut to people who earn more than \$150,000 a year. Tax giveaways to the wealthiest 1% average \$38,711 per person per year.

Families first

- Hit ordinary families with a huge shift to regressive taxes and fees while ensuring the richest British Columbians pay a lower rate of tax than everyone else.

Provide affordable energy rates for families

- BC Hydro rates up 28 percent.

Affordable housing

- While the dream of owning a home died for thousands of ordinary families, Christy Clark pocketed millions in donations from real estate developers. She refused to close loopholes for speculators.

Improve health care

- Health care spending per person

reduced from second to eighth in Canada.

- Access to home support reduced by 30 per cent.
- Access to residential care beds reduced by 20 per cent, while shifting to private for-profit care.
- Failed to meet minimum staffing requirements at nine out of ten residential care facilities.

Recognize the unique struggle facing persons with disabilities

- Took away their bus passes.

Address classroom size and composition challenges

- Fought against it every step of the way until the Supreme Court of Canada ordered her to do so, the culmination of a 15 year battle started by Christy Clark when she was minister of education.

Grow a strong forest industry

- Six fold increase in raw log exports.
- 100 mills closed.
- 30,000 jobs lost.

Create and support jobs in the province's technology sector

- Government expenditure on information technology: just under

\$700 million a year.

- Amount that goes to B.C. firms: less than 10 per cent.
- The big winners: multinational corporations.

Support shipbuilding in B.C.

- New B.C. ferries built in Germany and Poland.

Protect our coastline

- Approved a seven-fold increase in oil tanker traffic.

LNG: "It's no fantasy"

- Hired former Liberal Leader Gordon Wilson as an LNG advocate at \$150,000 a year.
- Number of LNG facilities built: 0.

Christy Clark's "Debt free BC"

- Increased the provincial debt from \$45.2 billion to \$65.3 billion.
- Increased the debt to GDP ratio from 21.7% to 26.7%.
- Increased provincial debt per capita from \$9,969 to \$13,942.
- Approved long-term contractual obligations – mostly for expensive private for-profit power generated on public rivers and streams – that now total \$101 billion, far higher than any other province.

Community fights to stop privatization of long term care

By Ray Haynes
BC FORUM Regional Representative

VANCOUVER COASTAL Health plans to close the Shorncliffe and Totem Lodge long term care facilities on the Sunshine Coast. These publicly funded, not for profit, facilities would be replaced by one large facility built, owned and operated by a private for-profit company, Trellis Senior Services.

Community reaction to the announcement was swift. A survey conducted by the Hospital Employees Union asked the question: "What do you think about privatizing seniors care?" The results showed very strong support for seniors care remaining in the public health system with 74.19

per cent favouring that option. Only 4.3 per cent said they thought that private, for-profit seniors care is alright, while others were unsure.

At a Town Hall meeting more than 250 people voiced their concern. The capacity crowd's opposition was

unanimous. Agreement that such a decision should not be taken without consultation was also unanimous. VCH turned down invitations to attend and engage in meaningful consultation. Instead, it has pushed ahead with privatizing seniors' care.

QUICK FACTS

- About 40 per cent of beds at Sechelt Hospital are filled by patients waiting for residential care, reducing its ability to meet acute care needs.
- Since 2001, access to residential care and assisted living in B.C. has declined by 20 per cent compared to the number of people 75 and older.
- Even though research shows for-profit care is inferior, the number of public and non-profit residential beds has declined 11 per cent. For-profit beds are up 42 per cent.
- Access to publicly funded home support has declined 30 per cent.



Home health and home care

By David Porteous

MOST ARE NOT aware of the differences between home health and home care and use these terms interchangeably. Both are provided in a home setting but with key differences. "Home health" is clinical care and "home care" is non-clinical care.

Home health care is clinical medical care provided by a registered nurse, occupational therapist, physical therapist or other skilled medical professionals, and is often prescribed as part of a care plan following a hospitalization.

Home care is provided by care-givers, usually called home care aides, who are trained to understand the nuances of senior care. Home



David Porteous

care aides can help older adults with activities of daily living.

Unlike home health, home care is classified as personal care or

companion care and is considered "unskilled" or "non-clinical."

Unfortunately the current BC government lacks the willingness to treat and fund the different types of "home support" at a level that today's seniors need. Home support is the most cost-efficient way to take care of seniors.

With the BC election looming it's time to put pressure on the provincial government to "include" and "properly fund" all types of home support in its various forms.

Seniors do deserve better.

David J.A. Porteous, EPC, UFCW 1518 is President of Working Enterprises Consulting & Benefits Services Ltd. and a charter member of the Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies.

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Work should lift you out of poverty, not keep you there

Christy Clark describes an extra \$50,000 a year as a “stipend”

For hundreds of thousands of British Columbians it’s an impossible dream

WHILE CHRISTY Clark personally collected \$300,000 as a commission on large corporate donations to her party, she steadfastly increased the cost of living for ordinary people and kept B.C.’s minimum wage among the lowest in Canada.

“It is false to suggest, as the B.C. Liberals do, that the minimum wage only affects young people who are starting out,” says Diane Wood, President of BC FORUM.

“With inadequate pensions, many seniors are working minimum wage jobs. They are struggling to try to make ends meet even as Christy Clark’s government keeps increasing unfair taxes and rates for essential services.

“I’ve heard heart-wrenching stories from seniors who have exhausted their retirement savings to help their children buy a home,” she said.

“In addition, many other seniors still have adult children living at home because they are trapped in precarious low-wage work. Our political leaders should be working to help ordinary people get ahead, not to enrich themselves,” said Wood.

There are over 100,000 people earning the minimum wage of \$10.85 an hour in B.C. This is the lowest of all provinces except Saskatchewan and Newfoundland – both places



where the cost of living is dramatically lower and the average home costs less than half what it does in B.C.

A firm commitment to raise minimum wage

BC NDP Leader John Horgan says an NDP government will raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour within its first term.

“It’s not good enough that people are working full time or more just to keep their heads above water,” says Horgan.

“It’s not good enough that this generation will actually be worse off than their parents when it comes to affordability and opportunity.”

Horgan noted that Christy Clark has frequently promised to put B.C. families first.

“In fact, people have never been her priority. She is focused on the needs of her wealthy and well-connected

supporters at the expense of the rest of us,” Horgan said.

“Christy Clark has chosen to keep BC’s minimum wage one of the lowest in Canada.

“Minimum wage is no longer something earned just by teenagers in their first jobs. Students, parents, seniors, new Canadians in every part of the economy are paid minimum wage,” Horgan said.

“The premier, who took \$50,000 a year in a private top-up to her nearly \$200,000 public salary, thinks \$10.85 an hour is enough for people to get by on. I disagree.

“The minimum wage needs to be \$15 an hour, and New Democrats are going to get it there,” Horgan said.

In a 2016 poll, 76 percent of British Columbians said they supported a \$15 an hour minimum wage, and 83 percent said that a person working full-time should not be living below the poverty line.

How unions can take action to support their retired members

By Sandra Wright, President
Compensation Employees Union

OVER THE years the CEU has been exploring ways to get our retired membership involved in BC FORUM. We saw membership as a way to supplement benefits in retirement, as well as an opportunity to keep them connected to Labour.

In 2007 the CEU passed a Policy that we would pay the first year of membership in BC FORUM for retired members.

Although we had some uptake on the initial launch, it quickly petered out. The challenge was how to keep this at the forefront of people's minds when they move to retirement? Plus, we didn't always know who was retiring.

Then we came up with an idea – the employer has retirement seminars and retirement packages for all retirees. Would they be agreeable to allowing us to provide them with a brochure outlining our Policy and the BC FORUM pamphlet?

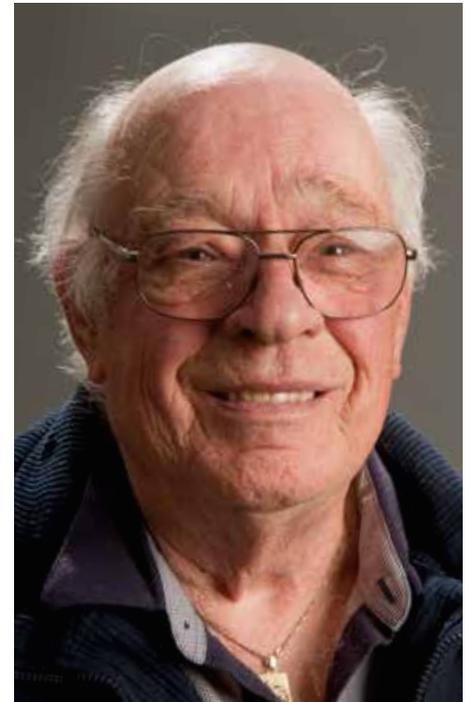
We approached them and they agreed to add this to every union employee's retirement information package.

We use the BC FORUM brochure and have created an insert that not only alerts people to our Policy, but also gives us the opportunity to congratulate them on their retirement.

It has worked very well. The uptake on new BC FORUM memberships has increased substantially.



Millie Canessa (1927 – 2017)



Ray Andrus (1931 – 2017)

Lives lived well

TWO REMARKABLE union leaders have passed away. Millie Canessa and Ray Andrus were both well-loved icons in their unions and continued to speak out for people long after retirement by serving as members of the BC FORUM board of directors.

"Millie and Ray made immense contributions to the labour movement, never backing down, and always fighting for what's right," said

Diane Wood, President.

"BC FORUM extends our deep condolences to their families and friends. Their vision, dedication and persistence will be missed. Thousands of workers are better off today because of their activism and advocacy," she said.

On the BC FORUM board, Millie represented the BCGEU. Ray represented CUPW.

Tom Dufresne appointed to BC FORUM Board of Directors

BC FORUM has welcomed Tom Dufresne to its volunteer Board of Directors. Tom is President Emeritus of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada.

Tom worked on the Vancouver waterfront for 42 years.

He was a member of ILWU Local 500, serving several terms as a Business Agent, Vice President and then President.

He was elected President of ILWU Canada in 1996 and was re-elected eight times until he stepped down in 2012. He is currently President of the ILWU Local 500 Pensioners club.

Tom takes over from Gordon Westrand who has represented the ILWU on the board for several years. Gordon made a significant contribution to our work, both as a director and as treasurer.



POWER TOOL

With thanks to
Dennis McGann



Election day:

- Tuesday May 9, 8:00 am to 8:00 pm Pacific time.



Advance voting:

- Saturday April 29 and Sunday April 30, 8:00 am to 8:00 pm local time.
- Wednesday May 3 to Saturday May 6, 8:00 am to 8:00 pm local time.

Information for retired workers

- If you plan to defer property taxes, apply well before they are due. Search the web for “regular property tax deferral program” to learn how to defer taxes on your principal residence if you are 55 or older, a surviving spouse, or a person with disabilities.
- Protect yourself against scam artists with info from the Canadian Centre for Elder Law. Google “Be a Savvy Senior Fraud Protection.”
- The People’s Law School has summarized benefits available to BC seniors. Search the web for “When I’m 64: Benefits for Seniors” to download or order a free copy.
- The Council of Senior Citizens’ Organizations of B.C. (COSCO) offers free workshops to seniors groups. Visit www.coscobc.org for a complete list of topics.
- The Deprescribing Network – deprescribing.org – offers information about safely reducing medications that may no longer be needed.

Annual meeting

You are cordially invited to attend the
BC FORUM Annual General Meeting:

9:30 am – 1:00 pm, Wed. June 21, 2017

UFCW 1518, 350 Columbia St. New Westminster

Please note that this is a scent free building

- **Come early** to visit the display booths, and chat with other members, guests and directors. Coffee will be ready at 9:00 am.
- All current members have the right to debate and vote on resolutions. Renewals and new memberships will be accepted at the sign-in desk prior to the meeting.
- The BC FORUM board will update you on activities over the past year, and plans for the future.
- **Irene Lanzinger**, President of the BC Federation of Labour and Chair of BC FORUM, will address current issues facing working families and retirees.
- **Don Davies**, Vice-chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, will discuss the need for national Pharmacare.
- You will be eligible to win **great door prizes** generously donated by our allies and supporters.
- Our location features easy access via public transit – about a block from Columbia Skytrain station – and is on major Columbia Street bus routes. Street parking is limited to two hours so if you come by car, please use the public parkade.

*Please mark your calendar today,
and feel free to bring a guest!*

New address? New e-mail address?

Please send your new address and e-mail address to BC FORUM.

You can mail in the form on page 15, or you can reach us by telephone or e-mail: 1.800.896.5678 (toll free), 604.688.4565, bforum@bcfed.ca



Please check the expiry date on your label. Is your membership due for renewal?