



**BETTER
TOGETHER**
ALBERTA'S NEW DEMOCRAT CAUCUS

**TOWN HALL
REPORT**
OCTOBER 2025

A portrait of Naheed Nenshi, a man with glasses, wearing a dark suit, a light blue shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a solid orange color.

MESSAGE FROM NAHEED NENSHI

LEADER OF ALBERTA'S NEW DEMOCRATS

What a summer! As the days grew longer, my colleagues and I embarked on an ambitious project: Better Together. We knocked on over 100,000 doors, we showed up at dog parks and music festivals and block parties and barbecues, we flipped endless pancakes, and we held 10 remarkable community gatherings. Thousands of Albertans—over 3,500 at the community gatherings alone—came out, and shared their stories, their frustrations, and their dreams. You've inspired us, and we are grateful.

What started as an idea to counter the irresponsible rhetoric of a separatist movement turned into so much more. We found hunger and heart in Albertans. A hunger to reject the divisive politics of Danielle Smith and the UCP, and the heart to stand both as Albertans and Canadians, Better Together.

We didn't run these gatherings as traditional town halls with people grabbing the microphone for serial monologues. We first had people vote on what they wanted to discuss, and then actually talk to their neighbours about it. People moved their chairs around and formed real connections. While many shared their frustrations and exhaustion from this UCP government, so many came forward with their ideas and remarkable optimism about our future.

People certainly wanted to talk about the dangers of separation—and this was almost universally condemned—but they also wanted to talk about the issues that matter to them today: the cost of living, health

care, education, the economy, pensions. We have a government with an abysmal record on these issues that is constantly trying to distract us with things like book bans and gender tests. They're picking endless fights in the hopes we won't notice how badly they are destroying the Alberta Advantage. But Albertans are smarter than that. We won't allow ourselves to be distracted.

As you read this report from our Better Together summer, I hope that you can see the stark contrast between what Albertans want and what has been on offer for the past number of years. I hope you'll see that there is a better path forward with Alberta's New Democrats and the values that everyday Albertans bring to the table. I am proud to lead a caucus that is deeply committed reflecting these views of Albertans from all corners of our province. It is now our job to bring these voices to Alberta's Legislature and fight for the ideas that we know will build a stronger province, and a better country.

On a final note, I would be remiss if I did not end by saying how proud I am to be Canadian. I heard it from all of you too, loud and clear at every Better Together event this summer. What we learned is what we already knew: that Albertans will fight like hell for this beautiful country. We are proud Canadians. We are better, together.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Nenshi".

Naheed K. Nenshi

WHAT WE HEARD

At each of our gatherings and in all of our informal meet ups, we invited Albertans to discuss the issues that mattered most to them. We welcomed all participants to add their voices to the conversation.

While it's impossible to summarize everything, key themes clearly emerged across all events.

Separatism as a Distraction

The Better Together Tour was initially launched to engage Albertans in a conversation about separatism, the risks of leaving Canada, and how we're always stronger together.

While we did hear about separatism this summer, what we heard even more often was that Albertans want to focus on the issues that affect their everyday lives. Health care, education, affordability, and pensions were consistently raised as top priorities.

Albertans made it clear: they do not support separation from Canada. They see it as a reckless suggestion that threatens everything from our personal identity as Canadians to the viability of our province.

At the same time, many expressed frustrations with Premier Danielle Smith's repeated focus on separatism. They see it as a political distraction designed to pull attention away from Danielle Smith's failures to address the real challenges facing families across Alberta.

"Separation is just a distraction by Smith to mask corruption."

- Red Deer town hall participant

Alberta's New Democrats know that Albertans are proud Canadians. This country is worth fighting for. We won't use it as a distraction or a political tool. Our focus remains on what truly matters—strengthening our public services like education and health care, supporting families, and building a province where everyone can thrive.



Health Care

Albertans overwhelmingly expressed that they feel worse off than they did just a few years ago.

Many are falling through the cracks of our health care system, especially since the UCP government's chaotic restructuring of the Ministry of Health.

Access to care has become more difficult, and new barriers are emerging, including out-of-pocket costs for services like COVID-19 vaccines.

When it comes to health care, Albertans are worried about a system that feels increasingly unstable, underfunded, and inaccessible.

"I was proud to be a nurse in this valley. Now I'm embarrassed to say I'm from Alberta when we talk about health care...I'm one of the unhealthy seniors in this town. I'm a health care consumer, and I'm scared stiff I'm not going to get the care that I need."

- Canmore town hall participant

"I have a four-year-old daughter that's never seen an actual doctor."

- Grand Prairie town hall participant

"I work in health care, and I'm glad I'm at the end of my career. Everyone's exhausted. There's too much work and too few people."

- Sherwood Park town hall participant

Every Albertan should get the care they need, when and where they need it. That's why access to care is always at the top of every priority list for Alberta's New Democrats. That means making sure Albertans have access to a family doctor, keeping emergency rooms open, reducing wait times, and ensuring vaccinations don't come with financial barriers.



Education

Alberta's New Democrats were fortunate to hear from hundreds of parents and educators. The message was clear: the current state of Alberta's education system is devastating.

Teachers are being forced to work in under-resourced, overcrowded classrooms with poor working conditions and inadequate pay. Students are suffering as their learning environments deteriorate, and Alberta continues to fund education at the lowest per-student level in the country. Parents are deeply concerned that their children are not receiving the education they deserve.

Meanwhile, the UCP government is more interested in banning books than preventing a teachers' strike. The UCP government's failure to invest in our children's education is not just letting down teachers, students and families, it's undermining the future of Alberta itself.

"I am a proud Alberta teacher. For six years the UCP government has treated teachers and public education with disrespect. They created a weighted moving average to fund education while stopping the collection of class size data. This has led to the underfunding of education and crowded and complex classrooms as the norm."

- Airdrie town hall participant, teacher

"We had about 1,100 students at the beginning of my career, and right now we have the same number of teachers in the math department and it's over 1800 students... On top of inflation, we have actually had a decrease in pay when the workload has been increased."

- Calgary town hall participant, teacher

Every student deserves a learning environment where they can thrive. Every teacher and educational support worker deserves the tools, resources, and working conditions to succeed. Every parent deserves the confidence that their children are receiving the best education in the province that they call home. Alberta's New Democrats know that by properly funding education, we're investing in Alberta's future.





Cost of Living and Jobs

Albertans are struggling with the rising cost of living. Across the province, people are feeling the pressure — from groceries and utilities to auto insurance and rental rates, life has become increasingly unaffordable under this UCP government.

On top of rising costs, wages in Alberta are falling further and further behind and too many people are struggling to find good-paying jobs that cover the bills. Alberta has the lowest minimum wage in Canada, and the UCP government has refused to raise it. At the same time, youth unemployment is soaring. This summer under this government, Alberta had the highest youth unemployment rate in the country at 17 per cent, with young men facing an alarming 20 per cent unemployment.

This summer, we heard story after story from parents who spoke about the heartbreak of watching their children grow up with fewer opportunities than they had.

Alberta has long been a place where people come to build a better life, not just for themselves, but for their children, but under the current UCP government, many Albertans feel that the dream is slipping away.

“My 35-year-old son is still trying to pay off student debt and feels he cannot complete further education because it is just too expensive. He is in a job that just doesn’t pay well enough nor live up to his potential as a result.”

- Airdrie town hall participant

“[I’m afraid to lose] my mobility, savings, health, and ultimately a real possibility of losing my life due to not being able to afford vaccines, medication, food, etc.”

- Spruce Grove town hall participant

Alberta’s New Democrats will continue to fight for lower everyday costs while building a stronger economy. By partnering with businesses, non-profits, and innovators across all industries, we’ll focus on creating jobs and building a province that works for everyone, not just a select few.



Pensions

Seniors built this province. Now, they feel abandoned by a government more focused on picking fights with Ottawa than protecting their futures.

When Danielle Smith and the UCP talk about pulling Alberta out of the Canada Pension Plan, they are risking the hard-earned pensions of hundreds of thousands of seniors. It's reckless and deeply unpopular.

When it comes to pension, Albertans could not be clearer: Danielle Smith, Hands off my CPP.

"I am less than 7 years away from qualifying for CPP; I am so afraid!"

- Red Deer town hall participant

"As a senior, the current pension plan provides me with economic security; paid for with a lifetime of contributions through a working lifetime. I am not about to risk it all by giving it to a financially incompetent group."

- Lethbridge town hall participant

"I just turned 65 and am scheduled to start receiving CPP after contributing for the last 47 years so the prospect of losing it scares me and infuriates me! This is my money! How can the UCP take it from me?"

- Edmonton town hall participant

The Canada Pension Plan is stable and secure. No one should be gambling with your retirement. Alberta's New Democrats will protect your pension, supporting the seniors and generations that helped build our province.



NEXT STEPS

This summer, our conversations extended far beyond the Better Together town halls. At festivals, union barbecues, family gatherings and dog park visits, Albertans raised important conversations about what matters to them: their hopes, their fears, their dreams and their worries.

Across communities and conversations, Albertans spoke with urgency and honesty. There were deep challenges, but there was always optimism.

They shared their frustrations with a government that feels increasingly out of touch, and their desire for leadership that listens, understands, and acts.

Albertans want solutions, not distractions. They want a government that makes life more affordable and builds an economy with great jobs. One that invests in public health care, supports students and teachers, and protects the retirement security of seniors.

These conversations with Albertans reaffirmed what we've always believed: Albertans care deeply about their communities, their families, and their future, and they're ready to stand together to build a province that works for everyone.

These conversations also reinvigorated Alberta's New Democrat caucus. We're more focused than ever before, with our priorities sharper and our commitment to Albertans even stronger—all thanks to you.

As we return to the legislature this fall, we're bringing with us the voices, the concerns, the frustrations, the hope, the motivation, and the energy of people across the province. We're ready to hold the government accountable on the issues that matter most and put forward our own plan to build a better Alberta.

And we will always fight for Canada.

But we can't do it alone.

The work we started this summer can't end here. We're counting on Albertans—all of you—to keep the conversations going in your homes, in your workplaces, and in your communities. Talk about what kind of Alberta you want to see and what it will take to get us there. Every story shared, every neighbour reached, moves us closer to that vision.

Keep the conversation going, and keep listening to your neighbours. Help build bridges rather than fanning fear and division. Let's bring out the best of us so that we can build the Alberta we need and the Alberta we deserve. An Alberta where we are Better, Together.

