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**POLICY DIRECTION**  
**of the**  
**REFORM PARTY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**  
**As of January 15, 2005**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

To establish and protect certain inalienable rights of the citizens of British Columbia, which rights shall include but not be limited to life, liberty, justice, democracy and the ownership of property. To advocate initiative, referendum, recall and government which is accountable to the people and to promote these objectives through peaceful and democratic means.

**SECTION 1: GOVERNMENT BY AND FOR THE PEOPLE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**1.01 Elected Representatives**

**The Reform Party of British Columbia shall field Reform BC candidates in provincial elections and may field Reform BC candidates in federal elections.**

There would be no more confusion as to what political party to support. Other provincial Parties would be free to support their own federal counterparts. The precedent has been already set by the Bloc Quebecois whereby at the moment they are the only political party to completely represent themselves both provincially and federally. We believe that if the four western provinces considered doing the same (perhaps under Reform Party of Alberta, Reform Party of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, etc.), MPs and MLAs would work together under one set of principles to bring about real democracy. If the four western provinces succeeded in accomplishing this, the west would have a stronger voice in Ottawa.

**1.02 Direct Democracy**

**The Reform Party of British Columbia (“Reform BC”) will, upon forming government, enact into law these five objectives of direct democracy with a provision that they can be removed only by the people, using a referendum.**

British Columbians want to be part of the political process, to have a genuine opportunity of providing input into the system. They do not want their participation to be limited to a mere vote at an election every three to five years.

Direct democracy is a system of government which has built into it the means by which the electorate, on an ongoing basis between elections, may directly control the actions of its representatives in the legislative body. Direct democracy can be characterized by the following features:

1. **Free votes in the Legislative Assembly.** Allowing MLAs to vote freely in the Legislative Assembly, regardless of party line, provides an opportunity for the defeat of an unwanted government-sponsored Bill without causing the defeat of the government. Thus the party discipline system is curtailed, thereby allowing elected representatives to represent the wishes of their constituents.
2. **Fixed election dates.** The government shall have a fixed time to govern in accordance with a specific mandate and manipulation of elections called on a single issue will be eliminated. A Reform BC government shall pass legislation to establish fixed and certain election dates to be held every four years.
3. **Initiative.** This mechanism gives the electorate the right to initiate a binding referendum to repeal existing laws, whether new or old, or to propose a new law. A referendum to repeal an existing law

may be proposed by the electorate by presenting to the Provincial Secretary, within 90 days after the enactment date of a Bill, a petition certified to have been signed by electors equal in number to 3% of the votes cast for all candidates in the last provincial election. A referendum to initiate a new law would require a petition to have been signed by electors equal in number to 6% of the votes cast for all candidates in the last provincial election. In either case, the outcome of the referendum process would be determined by a majority vote.

4. **Referenda.** In addition to a referendum initiated by the electorate, the government also has an opportunity to hold a referendum before a Bill is passed by submitting to popular vote a measure proposed by the Legislative Assembly, the result of which is binding upon the government.
5. **Recall.** As an important step in the restoration of public trust in government, Reform BC intends to make MLAs more readily accountable to the electorate through the process of recall.

Recall procedures shall be available only upon completion of one session of the Legislative Assembly or upon the passage of twelve months from the date of the preceding provincial election, whichever is the later. A recall vote shall be called within ninety days of the validation of a recall petition without recourse to the courts or the legislature.

The *Municipal Act* shall also be amended to implement initiative, recall and referenda at the municipal level.

When an MLA's performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory, the recall process can be initiated by a valid petition signed by electors from the Member's constituency in a number equal to 12% of all the votes cast for all candidates in the said constituency in the last provincial election.

Following confirmation of the petition by the Chief Electoral Officer, a referendum would be automatically triggered that would give all registered voters in the constituency an opportunity to vote on the Member's recall from office. A majority of valid votes in favour of recalling the Member would result in the immediate vacancy of his/her seat in the Legislature, followed by a by-election within six months. Any person recalled from Office would be ineligible to run as a candidate in the subsequent by-election.

Reform BC believes that the existing *Recall and Initiative Act* is ineffective and should be replaced.

### 1.03 Preferential Balloting

**The principle of preferential balloting will be adopted for the election of all members of the BC Legislature.**

The legislation which introduces preferential balloting into law shall provide that in every ballot containing three or more candidates, the voter's choice may be marked for every candidate in order of the voter's preference, starting with 1 for their first choice, 2 for their second choice, etc.

Ballots will be counted in successive stages, dropping the candidate with the lowest number of votes and allocating his or her votes to that voter's next preference. If the next choice on any ballot is for a candidate who had been eliminated, the subsequent choice is then counted. When one candidate has achieved a majority of over 50% of the votes cast, he or she will be declared elected.

### 1.04 Bringing a BC Constitution and Electoral Reform to British Columbia

Reform BC is proposing to prepare and present a BC Constitution and Electoral Reform to the voters of BC in a provincial referendum. In order to run as a Reform BC candidate, one must agree to the following:

- (a) A written commitment to present and enact in the legislature the BC Constitution and Electoral Reform if passed by the voters of BC in a province-wide referendum within the first two years of forming government;
- (b) Resignation of the MLA's position in the Legislature, if the referendum is not held within the specified time.

### 1.05 Open Government

**A fundamental part of accountable government is an “open government.” The electorate should have the right to inspect and question the actions of its government; no more secret deals behind closed doors which mainly benefit friends of government.**

### 1.06 Provincial Referenda

**Reform BC will reduce the number of MLAs and divide the province into electoral regions. Whenever a referendum is held throughout the province, in order to pass, it would require both a majority of the total votes cast, and the referendum would also have to pass in a majority of the regions.**

In order to eliminate the inequality that currently exists because of B.C.'s population distribution, Reform BC proposes to apply a double majority to referendum decision-making in B.C.

On a provincial referendum, both a majority of the total votes cast and a majority of the regions would be required for the measure to pass.

On a regional referendum, both a majority of the total votes cast and a majority of the constituencies would be required for the measure to pass.

### 1.07 Accountability

**Reform BC would implement a computerized voting system in the Legislature to allow all votes to be instantly tabulated and recorded in Hansard. This would enable constituents to determine which votes their MLA was present for and how he or she voted on every issue—not just on votes where the division bells were rung. Local media in each constituency would be encouraged to report their MLA's voting record.**

### 1.08 Patronage Prevention

**A Reform BC government would institute a confirmation process for the appointment of senior bureaucrats, Crown corporation heads and high-level government appointees. The Public Service Act would also be amended to restore the principle of merit as the primary consideration for hiring public sector employees in every sector. Unless their term is renewed, the term of office for appointed officials shall expire upon the dissolution of the current government.**

### 1.09 Opinion Polls

**Government opinion polls can be a legitimate tool for ascertaining public opinion on policy options that will ultimately affect the public. However, any information gleaned through polling paid for by taxpayers should be available to the public within 30 days of the date on which it is received by government.**

## **SECTION 2: ADMINISTRATIVE AND CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES**

### **2.01 Constitutional Reform**

**We will work with the governments of the other provinces and territories and Canada to change the procedure for amending the Constitution of Canada. The constitution of a province or territory may be amended only by a similar process of Citizens' Initiative and Referendum among the citizens of that province or territory.**

Canada is a confederation of provinces and territories. This fact must be recognized in any new constitution, and must be protected by the establishment of a "Triple E" Senate—a Senate that has equal representation from each province and territory, is elected by the electorate of the province or territory, and is truly effective.

Any new constitution must recognize that all Canadians are equal, and must not extend special rights or privileges to any Canadian.

Property rights must be enshrined in the Canadian Constitution, and will be protected by Provincial legislation in B. C. as well.

### **2.02 Provincial/Federal Powers**

**Canada's Constitution should give more power to the provinces, allowing provinces the authority to legislate their own affairs as outlined in the BNA Act.**

In our large, and regionally diverse country often the best government is the one geographically closest to the people it serves. A Reform BC government will undertake a review of duplicated services and strive to eliminate such duplication being provided by the federal and provincial governments in order to provide improved, lower-cost services.

### **2.03 Municipal Government**

**The Reform Party of BC will initiate measures to eliminate duplication of services provided by municipal, regional, and provincial entities.**

### **2.04 Canadian Indians**

**Reform BC recognizes and supports the position that all indigenous people must have all of the same rights, benefits and obligations as other Canadians. The current Indian treaty process must be expedited and agreements concluded which are satisfactory and fair to both the Indian people and all other British Columbians. All agreements must be final and ratified by all British Columbians entitled to vote by way of a referendum**

As part of the agreement for entry of B.C. into Confederation in 1871, B.C. was to provide land for Indian reserves, which the province has done and which has been recognized as such by a federal government Order-in-Council in 1924. The agreement also called for federal responsibility of Indians, and Reform BC asserts that Indian affairs, including any compensation to be paid to Indians as a result of any legal decision, are the sole responsibility of the federal government.

In 1991, after a trial lasting 374 days, Chief Justice Allan McEachern of the B.C. Supreme Court dismissed native Indian claims to ownership and jurisdiction of British Columbia. After a two-month hearing and a further year of deliberations, in 1993 the Court of Appeal of B.C. also found no ownership or jurisdiction rights. However, after a hearing of only two days, on December 11, 1997 the Supreme Court of Canada overturned the Delgamuukw decision and recognized native Indian title in British Columbia.

Reform BC does not believe that the Supreme Court of Canada's judgment respects the opinion of the people of British Columbia. Therefore, as government, Reform BC would pursue legislation reflecting the decisions of the B.C. Supreme Court and the B.C. Court of Appeal.

### **2.05 Distinct Society**

**Reform BC will never support any Canadian Constitution that would give special status to any province or group of people. Quebec must not be recognized in a *constitution* as a “distinct society” or given any extraordinary constitutional rights or powers not available to every other province.**

British Columbians overwhelmingly rejected the Charlottetown Accord, largely because they are opposed to special status for any province or group of people. We emphatically agree that all Canadians and provinces must be equal under a Constitution.

### **2.06 Special Interest Groups**

**Special interest groups should provide their own financing and have no access to public funding.**

### **2.07 Equalization Payments**

**Reform BC believes the present equalization program is unfair and unacceptable. Reform BC is committed to pursuing changes that would make each province fully responsible for providing reasonably comparable levels of service at reasonably comparable levels of taxation.**

### **2.08 Charters**

**Reform BC supports the elimination of the “Charter of Rights and Freedoms” in its entirety, and the return of the common law.**

The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* has profoundly affected our justice system and the ability of duly elected legislatures to act in the interests of the voters to whom they are accountable. The principle of parliamentary supremacy has been compromised by the legal application of *Charter* rights, often to the detriment of Canadians. For example, the *Charter* has had unintended negative consequences that have favoured the rights of criminals over the rights of victims.

Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is a flawed document based on the principle of civil law. This Charter conveys limited rights to the people, while retaining all other rights for the rulers. The Charter has led to claims for specific rights for self-interest groups, the seizure of political influence, and the interpretation of the laws of the land by an un-elected body of Supreme Court judges.

## SECTION 3: FISCAL ISSUES

### 3.01 Taxation

**Exclusive jurisdiction over income taxes should be transferred back to the provincial level, including BC and other provinces. BC should be responsible for collection and distribution of its own taxes. Provinces that collect their own income tax could pay an assessment to the federal government for national programs. By collecting and disbursing income taxes, provincial governments would have better control over the services provided by the federal government.**

Transfer payments would be in reverse. The federal government would no longer control the decision-making process regarding the amount returned to the provinces. Instead, provinces would decide the amount to contribute to the federal government in return for federal services.

Provincial governments should be given exclusive jurisdiction over consumption taxes, including GST revenues. We need to implement a comprehensive, fair and simple single rate (flat) tax.

Reform BC supports the need for tax reduction, and taxpayers (through initiative and referenda) must be empowered to limit levels of taxation and direct the application of tax revenues.

A fundamental principle of taxation in a democracy is that it legitimizes the right of governments to collect a portion of the wealth created by individuals and spend that wealth for the collective good. What are missing are functional controls on the level of taxation and on the way the money is spent. The mode of taxation should best be decided by provincial governments that are closest to their electorate.

Reform BC believes that a clearer separation of tax jurisdiction available to all levels of government is required to reduce administration costs and facilitate a restructuring of government services based more on “dedicated funding.” That is, revenues should be more visibly dedicated to support government services (e.g., fuel taxes for highways construction), with only one level of government responsible for each service and the revenue source that supports it.

### 3.02 Budgets

**Law must guarantee balanced budgets, amendable only by referendum. The deficit must be eliminated through a combination of spending cuts and tax reforms that foster wealth creation—not by tax hikes.**

**A zero-based budgeting model should be implemented. The starting point for all public sector spending should be zero. Tax dollars should be allocated for each and every planned expenditure based on need, in order of priority and in keeping with a maximum budget “envelope” that caps overall spending. Any surplus left over at the end of the year would go into reducing the debt.**

This would require all proposed programs, services and capital expenditures to be justified annually, rather than having budget dollars allotted almost automatically on an incremental basis over the previous year’s spending level.

A Reform government would immediately move to reduce government spending with special attention to the following areas:

- Decreasing the government sector wage bill by at least 15 percent through a variety of measures, including staff reductions, privatization initiatives, wage policies, “no-strike” public sector labour policies, increased efficiency and program cuts.
- Eliminating the MLAs’ severance plan and costly perks.

- Limiting eligibility for MLA pension benefits to individuals age 65, with reduced pensions available prior to age 65, subject to normal actuarial reductions for early retirement. A Reform BC government will appoint an independent judge to ensure that the benefits are fair, affordable and equitable.
- Eliminating pension benefits to any Member of the Legislative Assembly or ex-Member of the Legislative Assembly for any term in which that Member is involuntarily removed or recalled from the Legislative Assembly.
- Implementing welfare reforms to combat welfare fraud and abuse.
- Eliminating costly government policies, patronage agencies and political pay-offs to pressure groups.
- Re-negotiating the federal-provincial cost sharing agreement on Indian land claim negotiations.
- Eliminating subsidies, loan guarantees and grants to businesses and special interest groups.
- Restricting government advertising expenditures to legal notices, public announcements and such other matters as are clearly in the public interest.
- Passing balanced budget legislation within one year of being elected as a Reform BC majority government.

### 3.03 The Debt

**As part of a new balanced budget law, a legal cap should be placed on the amount that a government could borrow in any given year without having to seek taxpayers' approval through referendum.**

**A Reform government would outlaw government debt for operating expenditures. New debt for capital purposes (schools, hospitals, etc.) would be limited to five percent of revenues.**

**The net proceeds from any sale of provincial assets must go toward paying down the provincial debt.**

### 3.04 Legislative Approval of Expenditures and Revenues

**Presently MLAs debate and vote on the government's Spending Estimates following the introduction of the budget. Reform BC believes that revenue measures should also be debated and voted upon in the same manner.**

This would result in much greater consideration of the government's revenue plans, projections and assumptions by all MLAs.

If the government finds it has not budgeted enough money to cover its expenses at any point in the fiscal year, approval for more money should be allowed only through debate in the Legislature.

### 3.05 Financial Statements

**A Reform government will undertake to regulate proper accounting methods for both the government and public business sector. Corporate executives and directors must and will be held accountable for their actions.**

Reform BC believes that the Summary Statements reporting method should be used, as the Auditor General has repeatedly recommended, because by including Crown corporations and public sector agencies they reflect a more honest accounting of the total government financial picture.

In addition, Reform BC supports the Auditor General's recommendations with respect to a more honest accounting of unfunded public sector pension liabilities and debt that has been improperly recorded as assets.

## **SECTION 4: ECONOMIC ISSUES**

### **4.01 Agriculture**

**To remain competitive with other jurisdictions, it is imperative that the agricultural industry be freed as much as possible from control and government “red tape.” To compete in a free trade environment, the agricultural industry—like all industries—requires a level playing field that is conducive to growth.**

**Marketing boards should be eliminated and replaced by voluntary cooperatives if warranted by the nature of the market or product.**

**Interprovincial trade barriers to agricultural products must be removed and federal policies which, through subsidies, grants and transportation tariffs, skew agricultural economics and activities to specific regions of the country must be stopped**

Agriculture represents a significant portion of B.C.’s gross domestic product. It must be maintained as a healthy contributor to the economy as well as provide a secure food supply.

The *Agricultural Land Act*, while purporting to protect agricultural land usage, is in fact a confiscation of an individual’s right to enjoy private property and should be repealed. Agricultural land use options should be incorporated into regional comprehensive land use plans that are approved by local residents through regional referendums. Such plans should also be administered on a regional basis, in keeping with provincial standards determined by the Legislative Assembly.

### **4.02 Energy**

**Reform BC policies on energy including, energy taxation and royalties, will provide for the orderly and sustained development of the energy industry in a manner which has acceptable environmental impact while keeping the cost and availability of energy to British Columbians at a level capable of maintaining a strong competitive economy.**

### **4.03 Fisheries**

**A Reform government would reinstate a moratorium on coastal fish farms until a satisfactory solution is found**

A Reform government shall pass legislation leading to constitutional amendments, which will result in the province assuming responsibility for British Columbia’s inland and offshore fisheries, and the tax revenue needed to manage them.

A Reform BC government will pass legislation requiring that all provincial fishing and wildlife regulations apply equally to all British Columbians.

British Columbia is in the fortunate position of having both an offshore and inland fishery. Current duplication of regulation and controls by both the federal and provincial governments leads to duplication of services, higher costs and often conflicting policies.

### **4.04 Forestry**

**British Columbia’s forest industry has long been one of our primary economic drivers. The economic health of this industry reflects on all British Columbians.**

**The challenge in BC is to establish a protected working forest land base, to maximize the production of timber on these working forest lands through intensive management, to provide a**

**climate of certainty for our forest industry and to vigorously pursue a program of “value added” manufacturing in the forestry sector.**

**Reform BC policies will be developed which take into account the foregoing issues.**

Provincial policies should support cooperation with the forest industry, promote sound forest stewardship and develop silvicultural policies and priorities that support sustainable and economic yields for the forest of a type and quality to satisfy current and long term domestic and international markets.

Taxation of the industry must be equitable across the forest industry and well as being equitable in relation to the taxation of other industrial endeavors.

Reform BC advocates:

- that a working forest reserve be established, dedicated to forest production in perpetuity.
- that a sustainable rate of harvest be established for the province that reflects the productive capacity of the land and will promote the most productive forest practices.
- that an accurate and current forest inventory be maintained that reflects all of the values of the forest.
- That an intensive forest management program be established including appropriate harvesting systems, prompt reforestation, stand tending, commercial thinning, fertilization, tree improvement and a program of advanced research. These could provide an excellent opportunity for smaller forest communities to be involved and add to their economy by way of small contracts or through a wood lot program.
- That the government should encourage small business in the forestry sector by ensuring that a fair share of the available timber supply be made available to this sector on a fair, competitive basis.
- That a program of forest husbandry be established to salvage damaged stands and, where feasible, to salvage normal stand mortality by allowing small business to get involved through a direct sale program.
- Where feasible to encourage salvage logging of newly logged areas where salvageable volumes of suitable timber remains on the area.
- A sound, practical Forest Practices Code administered without court challenges and extreme legal costs.

Reform BC supports a vastly simplified Code aimed at setting and enforcing essential forest practices and environmental standards without telling forest workers how to do their jobs.

Regional residents must have a direct say, by referendum, over any future land use plans that fundamentally restructure the forest industry and have an impact on job security and community stability.

British Columbia has a tremendous future in the forestry sector and Reform BC is committed to a strong forestry sector based on sustainability and sound environmental practices.

#### **4.05 Mining**

**Historically British Columbia’s development has been closely linked with and highly dependent on mining. Because it is endowed with great mineral wealth, it may, on a worldwide basis, continue to be a significant player. However, it can only do so by maintaining a viable mineral industry through security of title, realistic taxation and environmental policies, which are fair to the industry.**

The time frame from the discovery of a mineral deposit to its development and production may cover several decades. Security of title is of paramount importance to investors who, after allowing for exploratory risk, may not be able to realize a return on their investment for several decades. Rules of tenure must be clearly defined and stable. From time to time, if it is the will of the majority of British Columbians that, for environmental reasons (subject to standards which are obviously constantly changing) or for the desire for an alternative usage (such as parks), for the affected lands, the development of a mineral deposit may be questioned. Policies and procedures will be developed which, if it is the collective will to terminate development of a mineral property, then those wishing to do so must collectively compensate those who have made an investment in good faith of expecting a reasonable return on that investment. Compensation processes by arbitration, not confiscation, will be established.

A mineral tax regime must be designed to recognize the high capital cost of mineral development. Taxes should be based on profitable operations, which are economic without direct capital funding from government. Taxation should not be by way of royalties or by taxes on capital, which are unrelated to extraction costs.

Duplication of federal and provincial rules and regulations should end; mineral resources are clearly in the right of the provinces. Provincial services to the mineral industry will be geared to foster cooperation between the industry and the various government ministries involved in mineral development. Overlap of responsibilities should be removed and the number of ministries involved reduced.

Environmental standards which are uniform, equitable, and realistic and whose costs are borne equitably by the industry and the public will be developed using an open and public consultative process. The standards must be applied equally and fairly and should conform to those of other provinces.

#### 4.06 Free Trade

**A Reform BC government will place emphasis on eliminating both interprovincial and international trade barriers.**

Free trade, not controlled trade, is essential to our growth not only in our provinces but for our country as a whole. We must get rid of the quota system and inequities that favours political paybacks and allow the market place to freely produce and sell its goods and services.

#### 4.07 Transportation

**A healthy transportation industry is vital to B.C.'s economy.**

**Reform BC will review policies regulating the transportation industry. Independent business people who provide the majority of the province's transportation services must be allowed to operate under regulations which will assure public safety and which will provide a network of competitive services developed in response to the laws of supply and demand. Regulations must be basic and be applied equally and fairly to all operators.**

Reform BC commits to the utilization of motor vehicle fuel taxes for payment of all road, highway and bridge maintenance and construction. See section 3.01 re dedicated funding.

#### 4.08 Tourism

**Reform BC would support the tourism industry by dedicating the two percent provincial sales tax surcharge on hotel room revenues to marketing initiatives and skills training programs aimed at promoting BC tourism. We are opposed to the introduction of sales tax on restaurant meals.**

#### 4.09 Public-Private Partnerships

**Reform BC proposes the development of a policy to privatize government services, which can be provided more cost efficiently by the private sector than by the government.**

Reform BC would adopt the position that any public sector infrastructural needs that can be financed with private capital should be explored and, where practicable, implemented.

#### 4.10 Crown Corporations

**A Reform government, by way of Crown Corporations, would continue to protect the resources and core assets of the province for the people in the province. For example:**

BC Hydro would provide businesses and individuals with the lowest rates possible while encouraging private development of new energy by way of downstream benefits, wind power, etc. for local use with excess energy sold back to the province at fair market value.

The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia would control the underwriting of motor vehicle insurance while allowing for the direct sale of insurance by independent private agencies.

BC Rail, as the only railway linking the province from south to north, would remain a Crown Corporation.

Allowing for private monopolies is not in the best interest of all British Columbians.

## SECTION 5: EDUCATION

### 5.01 Choice in Education

**Reform BC supports greater choice in education through the introduction of a voucher system within both a public and private school system. Such choices are needed in our school system, in our view, to provide parents with “back to basics” schooling options for their children that stress excellence in education, traditional values and proven teaching methods. We believe that this could be greatly advanced through a more competitive education system that encourages better performance from parents, students and teachers alike.**

Parents have the prime responsibility for the education of their children. A voluntary voucher system, or alternatively the enactment of charter school legislation, would give parents the option of “shopping” for the best schooling possible for their children, whether public or private. Parents favouring this option would be given vouchers representing an equitable per-student funding allotment that could be directly granted by them to their school of choice anywhere in the province.

Such direct control over school funding by parents and students would result in a more responsive school system, as individual schools are driven to compete for funding vouchers by improving the quality of education delivered. The school system would also become more democratic, cost effective and accountable, as individual parents and students are empowered to demand better value for their share of school funding.

### 5.02 Curriculum

**Reform BC policies will reflect the need to restructure the educational system to make provision for, and encourage, acceleration of students at their own rate and to ensure that students can meet the prerequisites of post-secondary education.**

Teacher selection should be on the basis of academic ability, adaptability, character, practicability, aims and interests, verbalization, ability to stimulate others to want to learn, ability and desire to impart knowledge. Schools should continue to improve on the heritage and way of life of our country, stimulate pupils to become better students, provide the opportunity to acquire and develop the ability to read and to communicate in writing and verbally in the English language. In addition, schools should improve students’ mathematical skills, their knowledge of the community, province and country, and the contributions, which other countries have made to our culture and way of life.

### 5.03 Skills and Training

**Reform BC will examine skills training needs to determine areas for improvement, in cooperation with experts in various fields and provide resources to enhance worker skills in both the high tech and other areas such as the trades and service industry. The private sector has a vested interest, as well as an obligation, to assume greater responsibility for job training and re-training, and identifying high-demand skill areas and will be encouraged to actively participate**

The new knowledge-based economy demands that B.C. workers and companies are well equipped with the skills and training needed to successfully compete on a global scale. As our economy moves toward increased “high tech” and information-based industries, all workers will be challenged to meet the pace of change.

### 5.04 Advanced Education

**Of the many challenges facing our advanced education system, none is more pressing than the need to expand access to post-secondary education. More space is required to accommodate the**

**increasing number of students who are turned away from universities and colleges each year due to lack of space. Reform BC believes that BC residents should be given preferential access and tuition rights that improve their ability to gain the advanced education demanded in today's knowledge-based economy. Priority should be given to funding academic and technical areas that complement economic needs.**

Reform BC supports the creation of a new polytechnical university in the Fraser Valley. Increased access to existing post-secondary facilities should be promoted through extended evening, weekend and summer instructional options, financed through premium tuition rates. In addition, empty government office space throughout the province could be more creatively used for classroom purposes, to minimize capital investment costs.

Access to advanced education could also be dramatically improved through interactive video and computer systems located in satellite learning centres. The "information highway" offers tremendous potential for computer-linked learning that will ultimately reduce the need for ever-more classroom space.

Improved distance education options are a cost-effective means of bringing university- and college-level courses into students' homes, which results in significant savings for students and taxpayers alike.

#### **5.05 Student Loans**

**The existing student loan program should be modified, and all money loaned to students by taxpayers should be repaid. Needy students should be able to work off their post-secondary education loans through community service programs. Reform BC will explore opportunities for students to earn tuition and board credits through co-op programs offered in partnership with private companies.**

#### **5.06 School Governance**

**A Reform government will provide relief to local taxpayers and focus education dollars in the classroom. Measures will include reducing the size of the administrative bureaucracy and increase sharing between the boards.**

## SECTION 6: SOCIAL ISSUES

### 6.01 Health Care

**Reform BC believes that health care is a provincial matter. BC should be able to make its own decisions regarding cost-effective ways of providing better health care for British Columbians. To do so, the province cannot rely upon transfer payments from Ottawa (see section 3.01 Taxation).**

Health expenditures must be used more effectively in order to restore a high standard of health care. Reform BC supports health care delivery alternatives aimed at reducing waiting lists and improving service in specialized areas of medicine.

Reform BC policies will evolve through public input and will efficiently deliver required services to meet both province-wide needs and locally unique requirements.

They will emphasize:

1. Community involvement.
2. Health education, prevention of illness or injury and protecting health.
3. Strategies to make the system more efficient in delivery of services and monitoring of costs by reducing hospital boards and eliminating administrative duplication.
4. Improvement in the medical care system for the mentally ill, because de-institutionalization is not working, and a better balance of community services and institutional services is required.
5. Clinical laboratory service has grown significantly in recent years—a regulatory framework for monitoring and evaluating their use is required.
6. The aging population, which will require a re-evaluation of the needs of seniors and how their needs may best be met.
7. Legislation to implement procedures to eliminate or reduce theft, sale and wrongful use of Care Cards, including the use of photo identification, or such other technology as may be required.

We support the “Closer to Home” health care philosophy propounded by the Royal Commission on Health Care and Costs. We must find more efficient ways of delivering health care services, to secure the long-term affordability of the system that all British Columbians demand.

### 6.02 Social Welfare

**Reform BC will develop social policies that provide a fair, consistent social net for those who require it, but encourage through cooperation between government and the public, the role and effectiveness of family and charity services which meet real needs, some of which may be very specific and of a local nature. We will strike a realistic balance between the role of the state and the role of individuals and charities in providing a social net for those in need. British Columbians have acknowledged that there is a definite role to be played by the government in providing basic services and this should not change.**

**We believe that welfare should be available to those in genuine need, but not used as a means to avoid personal responsibility. Clearly the key is to prevent abuse, while providing welfare recipients able to work with the skills and incentives needed to find meaningful work.**

Specifically, Reform BC would implement the following:

1. Institute much tougher eligibility rules, including longer residency requirements that would restrict welfare to Canadian citizens who have resided in British Columbia for at least three months.
2. Introduce measures to eliminate welfare abuse to reverse British Columbia's growing reputation as a welfare haven. Consideration should be given to a province-wide identification system and the examination of all systems of identification to determine which will be most effective.
3. Implement workfare policies that would require employable welfare recipients to contribute their labour in exchange for assistance offered. Such policies may be in the form of deferred service to allow welfare recipients to gain the skills and/or education needed to find meaningful work.
4. Recognize that some welfare recipients are unable to manage money. A Reform government would implement a form of voucher system covering such items as rent, utilities and food to ensure that welfare recipients have their basic needs met.
5. Reduce the time frame for single parents to be eligible for welfare without having to seek employment. Currently single parents with any child 12 years of age or younger do not have to look for work to collect welfare

### 6.03 Labour

**Reform BC will develop labour legislation, which provides a balance between labour and investment, because an imbalanced labour environment ultimately leads to an inefficient, noncompetitive work force or in investors fleeing to other areas in Canada or elsewhere in the world with its consequent loss of jobs in B.C.**

**The right of labour to withhold its services in the private sector is and will continue to be an effective bargaining tool and must be retained. However, there should be no right of secondary picketing.**

B.C. taxpayers cannot generate sufficient revenue to pay public sector wages and benefits equivalent to the private sectors except during times of a healthy economy. As public sector salaries are not related to the ability of the taxpayers to pay, the terms of employment for public sector employees should exclude the right to strike. Anyone employed directly or indirectly by the provincial government should be considered an essential service.

Mediation, and binding final offer arbitration, may provide a solution to the current disruptive processes in the essential services sector.

Reform BC believes that workers must have the right to choose the political or social agenda the individual wishes to support, financially and otherwise. Union dues should be segmented into funding which is dedicated to Union activities. A Union should be held accountable to its members for its expenditures in the same way that the directors of a private company are held accountable to its shareholders.

A Reform government would also restore fairness to the current *Labour Code* by implementing the following changes:

1. Make the requirements for certification and de-certification the same, including restoring the democratic right to secret ballot vote on certification.
2. Modify certification requirements to prevent abuse by restoring the right of employers to communicate with their employees during certification drives.

3. Restore limited use of replacement workers in strike situations, to allow off-site managers and supervisors to perform work that is crucial to the struck company.
4. End secondary picketing in any form.
5. Restore reasonable, affordable successorship rules.
6. Guarantee that all senior Labour Relations Board appointees are subject to approval of the Legislative Assembly through ratification process suggested above (see Article 1.06).
7. Establish a Labour Ombudsman's Office to review and investigate labour and management complaints.
8. Treat every bidder on a government contract equally and not give an unfair advantage to any company, union or otherwise.
9. Minimum wage should apply only to employees who are of voting age. Employees receiving less than the minimum wage should not be required to pay income taxes.

#### **6.04 Provincial Pension Plan**

**The Reform Party of BC will develop a provincial pension plan to replace our CPP (Canada Pension Plan). This pension plan will be under provincial control similar to that of Quebec. This Pension Plan will be portable and made available immediately for all workers whether they are self-employed or not and will follow them no matter where or what they work at in the province.**

The QPP (Quebec Pension Plan) is fully funded, and has consistently maintained a high average annual rate of growth. Our Federal Government's projection of not being able to guarantee its pension obligations in the long term, in spite of an incredibly high contribution rate, should make such a pension plan a high priority on our list of social issues.

#### **6.05 Social Issues**

**Reform BC affirms the right and responsibility of parents to deal with the conduct of their own children in the careful exercise of their own conscience and belief, and that no person, or government or agency has a right in justice to interfere or meddle with parents in the exercise of that privilege, or proscribe them in their opinions so long as measures of discipline do not constitute personal abuse or family violence.**

**Social workers should be required to submit written justifications for their decisions and judgments, and written justification should be given, upon either written or oral request, to any party, which is affected by the decision or judgment. Any unjustifiable decision or judgment shall be followed by a public or private apology at the option of the offended party.**

**A Reform BC government would reverse the adoption rules, which allow same-sex partners the right to adopt infants.**

## **SECTION 7: ENVIRONMENT**

### **7.01 Environmental Activism**

**There is a real cost associated with environmental activism. Reform BC recognizes the environmental concerns of all British Columbians and will develop policies which:**

- 1. Determine, through public consultation at the constituency or regional level, the environmental standards, which are acceptable, and the price the industries and public are prepared to pay for those standards.**
- 2. Generate laws and appropriate punitive measures for non-compliance, which may be applied fairly, and equally throughout the province.**
- 3. Provide cooperative, coordinated government, industry and public programs, which will result in realistic, operable environmental standards and support programs, which ensure their continuing application.**
- 4. Cooperate with other provincial governments and the federal government to get uniformity of standards and uniformity of enforcement.**

### **7.02 Land Use Plans**

**Reform BC will establish policy on land use that reflects the views of all British Columbians. Comprehensive land use plans proposed by CORE or any other provincial entity must be developed in consultation with the local residents who will be most directly affected by them. All major land use plans, including proposed Indian land claims settlements should receive approval via regional referenda before being legislated into effect. Where regional imperatives conflict with provincial plans for land use, the government must establish acceptable alternatives.**

### **7.03 Parks**

**Reform BC believes jobs and community well being must be an equally compelling consideration in determining any comprehensive land use plan (see Article 7.02) that would foreclose resource extraction opportunities.**

### **7.04 Kyoto, Provincial Responsibilities**

**Reform BC believes in improving the environment but rejects the federal government's approach to meeting Kyoto protocol standards. Reform BC believes that a made in BC approach would provide cost efficiencies and greater real environmental results for British Columbia.**

## SECTION 8: CULTURE

### 8.01 Bilingualism

**Canada is not officially a bilingual country. It is bilingual only in the House of Commons. Reform BC believes official bilingualism is inappropriate in British Columbia, there being more people whose first language is neither English nor French, and whose limited knowledge of the English language exceeds by far the number of francophones resident in B.C. who do not speak English.**

Bilingualism was not intended to deny benefits to any group of people in Canada. Bilingualism is now spreading to all other provinces with the exception of Quebec, which is going unilingual French by its own legislation and use of the notwithstanding clause.

Whereas less than one percent (1%) of the population of British Columbia is francophone, it is desirable, particularly in these difficult economic times, to select English as the working language on the basis of majority usage in order to achieve effective and efficient government.

In accordance with the historic linguistic character of the province, stemming from the arrival of the first explorers and settlers from the British Isles, Reform BC would introduce legislation to declare English as the only official language in the public sector, including but not limited to the legislative assembly, municipal councils, the provincial courts, and provincial crown corporations, etc. However, individuals will be allowed to conduct trade and commerce in the language of their choice.

### 8.02 Multiculturalism

**Reform BC recognizes the contributions all of the ethnic groups, which contribute to and make up the cultural fabric of this country and all self-generated and self-funded cultural activity should be encouraged.**

**It is, however, against the policies of Reform BC to effect reverse discrimination through affirmative action, grants or funding which selectively favours any one group.**

### 8.03 Immigration

**Reform BC recognizes the positive contributions immigrants make to Canada. We believe that provincial governments must have a much stronger measure of input and control of the immigration quotas and skills which will be allowed into Canada, to protect the province against imbalances of costs and population growth.**

Persons entering B.C. claiming, and being given, refugee status, or entering Canada as part of family reunification by the federal government, should become the sole financial responsibility of the federal government, and should not become a burden on the medical, education, and social services systems of British Columbia.

BC should handle its own immigration, as Quebec does. Currently, Quebec receives more than 40% of the immigration budget, yet accepts fewer than 20% of the immigrants to Canada. However, 70% of the refugees and immigrants come to Vancouver and Toronto. Reform BC would strengthen the autonomy of the province in deciding who should be permitted to immigrate to BC.

## SECTION 9: JUSTICE

### 9.01 Policing

**Reform BC favours the establishment of the province's own police force, similar to the provincial police forces of Ontario and Quebec.**

The population of BC, which is currently the third largest province in Canada, warrants a move to its own provincial police force.

### 9.02 Intolerance of Crime

**Of all the issues facing our province today, perhaps the greatest single threat to all British Columbians is the growing problem of violent crime. This issue demands immediate attention, increased resources and firm leadership at all levels of government.**

As such, Reform BC has suggested many reforms to discourage crime and repeat offenders including:

- The introduction of a “Three Strikes and You’re Out” policy. Under this policy, anyone who has been convicted three times of an indictable offence would automatically receive a sentence of a minimum of 20 years, with no possibility for parole;
- The immediate introduction of a national sex offenders registry, to alert local residents and police to dangerous offenders living in their community;
- A provincial (or preferably, national) referendum on the reinstatement of capital punishment.

Respect for law and order must be enforced equally for all people in British Columbia. Illegal blockades on public or private property will not be tolerated and should be acted upon immediately without requiring a court injunction against such action.

### 9.03 *Young Offenders Act*

**Reform BC supports the abolition of the *Young Offenders Act*.**

### 9.04 Professional Associations

**Members in self-governing bodies, such as professional associations, should not be above the law. Misdemeanors and indictable offences should be dealt with by the justice system and not by the association itself.**

### 9.05 *Infants Act*

**Child and family support enforcement will be clarified and strengthened. Our social fabric is changing and the cohesiveness of the family, which has been the foundation of our society, is being eroded. Financial support for single-parent families is increasingly made a collective responsibility. Marriage partners who abandon their legal and moral obligation to provide financial support should be forced by law to assume a reasonable share of that responsibility.**

**The *Infants Act* will be amended to ensure that the responsibility for raising children rests with the parents or guardians, not the government.**

### 9.06 Gun Control

**Reform BC opposes the passage and implementation of Bill C-68, which requires the registration of all firearms and enables the confiscation of firearms, which are legally owned or acquired.**

We will assert and defend provincial regulatory jurisdiction over firearms, to the exclusion of federal regulatory jurisdiction. This is now especially important, in view of the federal government's intention to violate the property and civil rights of British Columbians by registering and confiscating lawfully acquired property, firearms, without compensation. Federal firearms license fees violate the exclusive provincial jurisdiction specified in s. 92(9) of the **Canadian Constitution, and federal firearms education programs violate the exclusive provincial jurisdiction specified in s. 93.**

### 9.07 Judiciary

**Members of the judiciary should be subject to recall.**

### 9.08 Gambling

**Reform BC is adamantly opposed to any major expansion of current gaming policies without the prior consent of British Columbians through a referendum. We believe that the social and economic costs associated with Las Vegas-style gambling anywhere in British Columbia far outweigh the short-term economic benefits.**

**The BC Lotteries Corporation should not have its mandate expanded to authorize new forms of gaming activities that would force greater reliance by government on gambling revenues. In our view, a major expansion of casinos, electronic bingo operations and the introduction of video lottery terminals are not in the public interest.**

**If gambling is to continue it must be under the full control of the BC Lotteries Corporation.**

### 9.09 Review of Provincial Legislation

**A Reform BC government will initiate a review of all provincial legislation to determine if the original intent of the legislation is in the best interest of the public.**

### 9.10 Human Rights Commission

**Reform BC supports the abolition of the Human Rights Commission.**

### 9.11 Parole

**The Reform BC supports the abolition of parole and parole boards, since the justice system already makes adequate provision for time off for good behaviour.**

## **SECTION 10: GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION**

### **10.01 Expenditure and Human Resource Accountability**

**A Reform BC government will review all government expenditures and policies. Department managers will be made accountable for all expenditures in their departments. A system of rewarding thrift and good business management by department managers will be instituted.**

**Reform BC proposes that an independent commission be appointed to audit the government bureaucracy to determine if every ministry is operating in an efficient and cost-effective manner and that the levels of staffing are appropriate. The commission's recommendations on staffing and structure will be binding and implemented without political interference.**

**Where government services can be provided more effectively by the private sector, those services will be contracted out.**

**A Reform BC government will make public an independently audited statement of government revenues and expenses every year.**

## **SECTION 11: POLICY STATEMENTS**

### **11.01 Committees**

**Reform BC will set up a policy committee, with subcommittees of specialists and persons interested in specific issues, to prepare position papers on all major policy issues.**

## **SECTION 12: DIRECT LEGISLATION ACT**

The *Direct Legislation Act* was initially prepared by Ron Gamble in February 1991 for The Honorable William N. Vander Zalm, Premier and submitted April 1991 to The Honorable Rita M. Johnston, Premier. In the October 1991 provincial election, British Columbians were given a referendum opportunity and voted overwhelmingly for recall and initiative. At the 1992 Reform BC AGM held in Kelowna, the *Direct Legislation Act* was ratified by the Party Members. In December of that year it was submitted to Mr. Ujjal Dosanjh, MLA, Chairman, Select Standing Committee on Parliamentary Reform (Recall and Initiative). Some three and a half years after the referendum was held, the NDP finally enacted a Recall and Initiative Act; however, many British Columbians believe it to be totally unworkable. Upon forming government, Reform BC would, in the first session of the legislature, enact the *Direct Legislation Act* that would truly empower British Columbians. At the 1996 Reform BC AGM held in Langley, Members voted to include the *Direct Legislation Act* as an appendix to the *Foundation for Reform*.