



Your Daily Report on BC's Provincial Legislature

BC TODAY

BC Today – Daily Report

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Today in British Columbia

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Quotation of the day

“Because I care deeply about our country and its future, I have never closed the door on the possibility of one day returning to politics.”

*Former BC Liberal premier **Christy Clark** tells iPolitics she [isn't ruling out a run](#) at the federal Liberal leadership, but the job is still occupied by Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**.*

Day 27: Today on the campaign trail

Written by Mark Page

On the schedule

Election day is Saturday.

Eby campaign

NDP Leader **David Eby** was on a four-stop whirlwind tour of Vancouver Island yesterday, starting in Nanaimo and ending in Victoria.

Appearing in his first stop with Nanaimo—Lantzville NDP candidate **George Anderson**, Eby highlighted his government's progress on health care, while continuing to slam BC Conservative Leader **John Rustad** and the Conservative party platform released Tuesday.

"It felt a lot like somebody turning in a homework assignment late that they hadn't spent enough time on," Eby said of the Conservative platform. "Major pieces were missing. It was confusing and incomprehensible."

As reporters asked about the NDP agenda, Eby kept steering the conversation toward controversial Conservative candidates.

Asked twice about a timeline for a new hospital tower at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (NRGH) and how a catheterization lab fits into that, Eby said his government would be "beginning the planning immediately," but added that the lab will proceed on a separate business plan.

He then spoke at length about the qualifications of **Jody Toor**, Conservative candidate for Langley—Willowbrook. Toor has used the title of doctor despite lacking legitimate medical certifications.

Rustad, meanwhile, said the catheterization lab would be part of the new tower outlined in Conservative plans.

Eby was in Ladysmith later yesterday, appearing at a campaign event with Ladysmith—Oceanside candidate **Stephanie Higginson**. His next stop was Duncan, then Victoria.

Rustad campaign

BC Conservative Leader **John Rustad** was in Nanaimo with Nanaimo—

Gabriola candidate **Dale Parker** and Nanaimo—Lantzville candidate **Gwen O’Mahony** for a health announcement.

Rustad announced a plan to expand the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, including building a new catheterization lab for heart-disease patients. He promised to bring the total bed capacity to 600, which will take eight to 10 years to complete at a cost of \$2 billion.

Rustad found it amusing that BC NDP Leader **David Eby** made an announcement at the same place earlier in the day, but said Eby must have got his geography wrong because he accused the Conservatives of bringing in American-style healthcare, though the Conservatives want to bring in European healthcare.

Rustad said Nanaimo is neglected in favour of Victoria.

Asked about accusations he would favour user-pay healthcare, he called it “another lie” and said he would model healthcare on European countries that have a single-payer system delivered by public and private providers.

Deficit

Rustad was asked by reporters about his costed platform, which includes a higher projected deficit than the NDP and Green plans do.

He said he will have to wait until forming government to see how bad the books are, but said getting rid of the carbon tax will cost \$3 billion.

“There’s going to be some pressure on the deficit, but we believe there are savings to be had,” he said.

Book outrage

Rustad thanked BC Conservative candidate for Surrey South **Elenore Sturko**, who accused Eby and NDP Surrey—Cloverdale candidate **Mike Starchuk** of supporting the “[sexualization of kids in schools](#).”

She shared two images of comics on social media, but did not say which school carried the books. *BC Today* reached out to the BC Conservatives to ask which schools carried the books.

One comic is from *Gender Queer: A Memoir* while another is from **Alison Bechdel**'s graphic memoir *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*.

"No public school library should have books with images like these," Rustad said.

In the evening, Rustad held a "blue wave" rally with Vancouver Island candidates in Nanaimo.

Ahead of the rally he ate a [Nanaimo bar](#).

Campaign difference

Rustad was asked about what makes the 2024 election campaign unique. He said there is always "poli-speak" but this time around, Eby is running against his own record and "lying" throughout the campaign.

Furstenau campaign

BC Green Party Leader **Sonia Furstenau** appeared alongside Cowichan Valley candidate **Cammy Lockwood** in downtown Victoria yesterday for a press conference about her party's plans to promote food security if elected.

The plans include creating and funding community food hubs, agricultural water reserves, local food processing facilities, Indigenous-led community food initiatives and a universal school food program.

"It fits into our bigger framework of creating a province that is oriented towards the well-being of everybody in B.C.," Furstenau said.

Calls LNG support a 'costly error'

Furstenau also took a moment to highlight an International Energy Agency report that found major new Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) projects are not soon needed.

She used this news to emphasize that provincial support for LNG projects by the NDP and the BC Liberals is a "costly error for B.C. to be making."

"John Rustad and David Eby are selling a costly fantasy to British Columbia

when it comes to LNG,” she said. “This was a fantasy started by Christy Clark, and like a fever dream, it appears to have become contagious.”

Teachers and trustees weigh in on platforms

During this election campaign, education issues have often taken a back seat to housing, health care and public safety.

That is, until the BC Conservatives’ education plank release that involved an “old version” being mistakenly sent out. Both versions include controversial education policies, such as the removal of diversity and inclusion supports, though the older version went further.

BC Today asked the BC Teachers’ Federation, representing 50,000 educators, and the B.C. School Trustees Association, representing all 60 B.C. school boards, what they thought of the platforms and the state of education in B.C. Both organizations are non-partisan.

The organizations’ leaders said recruitment and retention of teachers is the biggest challenge and that more needs to be done by whichever party forms the government.

Carolyn Broady of the trustee association wants “out of the box thinking,” to solve recruitment problems, particularly in Northern B.C.

Clint Johnston of the teachers’ federation called for the same, but was also highly critical of the Conservative platform, which he said “shows a deep misunderstanding of what’s actually happening in schools right now.”

“There's pieces in there that I don't really understand why they're in an education platform,” he said. “There’s just so much that’s problematic.”

The perspective of the school boards

Over the past six months, Broady’s association asked each school board to outline the most pressing issues in B.C. education.

Responses show three priorities: recruitment and retention, capital funding for school buildings and support for student success and graduation rates, with a focus on inclusivity.

All three parties address recruitment in their platforms, but Broady wants fresh ideas and specific financial commitments.

She sees solutions in blended learning that would allow people to earn degrees in their communities.

“If you train in your community and you stay in your community, you're probably going to settle in that community and have your roots there,” she said.

Broady is also glad to see commitments to build more schools but wants more definitive timelines, which she says are even lacking on current projects.

As for inclusive-learning programs, she said progress on that front needs to be protected.

“I just want to be very clear that sexual orientation and gender identity is protected under the Human Rights Code,” Broady said. “Our job as trustees and boards of education across the province is to ensure that our schools are safe and welcoming and inclusive for all staff and students.”

How the teachers see things

The BC Conservatives vow to remove Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) support from schools in favour of other anti-bullying measures.

Both Broady and Johnston said there is a misunderstanding about what SOGI is. It is not a curriculum, but a series of learning supports.

Johnston said studies have shown SOGI supports are effective at reducing bullying and harassment.

Removing those supports, Johnston said, would be a step backward. As would implementation of other Conservative ideas, such as restoring letter grades and standardized testing.

He said some Conservative proposals amount to bringing politics into the classroom.

“That's a road nobody should go down,” he said.

He is pleased with some items in the NDP platform, such as pledges to have an educational assistant in all Kindergarten to third-grade classrooms, and a mental-health counsellor in every school.

But despite progress on recruitment, the NDP has fallen short and not acted quickly enough for Johnston. He also said there could be a lot more done to address working conditions — long hours with pay that does not match up — along with more teacher education offerings in rural areas.

He has mixed views on building projects. He is happy to see progress but would have preferred that the government had not fallen so far behind.

And neither Johnson nor Broady like the idea of putting public money toward private independent schools, as the Conservatives have proposed.

“We have huge concerns with that,” Johnston said.

Broady and Johnston touched briefly on the BC Greens' platform. Broady highlighted ideas around inclusive education, while Johnston said he liked providing computers to students at no cost.

Inclusion BC 'disturbed' by Conservative platform

Inclusion BC, an advocacy non-profit for people with intellectual disabilities and their families, posted on social media that the group was “[disturbed](#)” by the BC Conservatives' education platform, saying inclusive classrooms teach values of diversity, cooperation and consideration of others, while segregated programs create barriers.

The BC Conservative platform includes new independent schools for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and recruiting more support workers to reduce the wait times for assessment.

Today's events

October 17 at 10 a.m. — *Lower Mainland*

NDP Leader **David Eby** will hold a media availability and make an

announcement in Vancouver. Later will hold campaign events in Surrey and Vancouver.

October 17 at 5:30 p.m. — Victoria

BC Green Leader **Sonia Furstenau**, BC Green candidates and environmental advocate **David Suzuki** will hold a rally at the Victoria Edelweiss Club with performances by OK Charlie.

October 17 at 6 p.m. — Surrey

BC Conservative Leader **John Rustad** will hold a rally at the Bombay Banquet Hall.

Topics of conversation

- Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** testified at a foreign interference committee on Wednesday that some Conservative MPs are “wittingly or unwittingly” either participating in, or being the targets of, foreign interference by hostile actors.
 - Trudeau was the final person to testify at the hearing. He told the committee he tried to direct the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) to warn Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** that members of his party were compromised, but CSIS was unable to do so because Poilievre refuses to get security clearance, saying it would bind him to secrecy.
 - Poilievre called on Trudeau to “[name names.](#)”
 - Trudeau said that a meeting during which he told Chinese president **Xi Jinping** to stop interfering in Canada [did not go well.](#)
 - Trudeau’s testimony comes days after he expelled six Indian diplomats.
- Is former BC Liberal premier Christy Clark [waiting to swoop in](#) to take Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**’s place?
 - Clark told *iPolitics* she “would want to be part of the conversation on the future direction of the Liberal Party and of the country” but said it doesn’t look like the leadership spot is opening up soon.
 - After the by-election loss of the Liberal seat in Toronto—St. Paul, Clark called on Trudeau to resign. She has been joined by Liberal backbencher P.E.I. MP **Sean Casey** amid reports of a growing

movement within caucus to [show Trudeau the door](#) amid slumping polls and multiple by-election losses.

Polling roundup

Mainstreet daily poll holding steady

- The BC Conservatives continue to lead in Mainstreet's daily poll, holding on to 44-per-cent support compared to the BC NDP's 40-per-cent support, followed by the BC Greens with 11-per-cent support and five per cent of decided voters saying they would vote for another party.
 - The poll was conducted on Tuesday and had 1,220 respondents.

On the campaign trail

- Advance voting for this election continues to break records.
 - According to Elections BC, the most advance votes ever in a B.C. election were cast on Tuesday, 181,669, toppling the previous record set on Oct. 10, the first day of advance voting, when 171,381 votes were cast.
 - The previous record was set in 2017 when 126,491 votes were cast in a single day.
 - In 2020 there were 1,883,632 votes cast, 671,231 of which were advance votes. With one day left to count, 778,424 votes have been cast this year.
- **Wendy Yuan**, a former BC United candidate now running as an Independent in Richmond Centre, is alleging a racist attack on her campaign volunteers by a person identifying himself as a BC Conservative member. The volunteers were holding roadside signs.
 - A [video](#) of the incident was posted to social media and shows the man cursing and telling the group to essentially go back to their country "instead of coming over here in your little boats."
 - "I am appalled by the behaviour of this individual," Yuan said. "These young volunteers were participating in our democratic process with passion and energy. They love their community and are committed to making a difference. It is outrageous that they were targeted with such hate."

NDP candidate for Bulkley Valley—Stikine **Nathan Cullen** released a statement saying an election sign was vandalized in a “violent and disturbing way” and that it was reported to the RCMP and Elections BC.

- West Vancouver—Capilano Independent candidate **Karin Kirkpatrick** held a news conference to [share](#) that she has 28 endorsements, from supporters including 15 current and former elected officials representing North and West Vancouver.
 - Kirkpatrick also said that in three-and-a-half weeks her campaign has raised almost \$60,000.
 - “To me that says a lot about the community and the community support for what we’re trying to do here,” she said.
- The Investigative Journalism Foundation (IJF) and the *Tyee* reported on \$47,000 worth of Facebook and Instagram ads from “West Coast Proud” in the lead-up to the BC election. The report did not include disclosures of who paid for the ads, but noted that people behind West Coast Proud are [Alberta-based conservatives](#).
 - The investigation found West Coast Proud has connections with the oil and gas group Modern Miracle Network and calls to West Coast Proud were answered by Alberta lawyer and activist **Andrew Crooks**.
 - Experts who spoke to the IJF called for more transparency in campaign advertising.
- A *Global News* reporter [showed up](#) at the Surrey South campaign office of **Brent Chapman** to ask about his controversial social media posts. The campaign manager told him to leave, saying, “This is pretty much the equivalent of breaking in” while Chapman stayed in a back office.
 - BC Conservative Party president **Aisha Estey** took to social media to [criticize](#) the reporter. “And the media wonders why no one likes them,” Estey wrote. “This journalist was politely asked to leave and instead filmed herself trespassing and giving a condescending rant to try and embarrass and bully a campaign manager.”
- Vancouver-based developer and Anthem CEO **Eric Carlson** wrote a scathing [op-ed](#) in the *Times Colonist* calling for BC NDP Leader **David**

Eby to be voted out.

- Carlson accused Eby of being a “new age autocrat [who] is steadily undermining the very foundation of our civil society — individual freedom, property rights and the rule of law.”
 - He blamed Eby for scaring away capital investment in housing, called hospital wait lists “death lists” and said the province’s credit rating is eroding.
 - Carlson wrote that Eby’s Indigenous policies are not reconciliation, but “societal suicide” and called BC Conservative Leader **John Rustad**’s policies “common sense.”
- Rustad is [heavily invested](#) in gold, per the *Tyee*.
 - In public disclosure statements filed in June, Rustad and his wife **Kim Royle** largely have investments in Horizon Beta Pro Gold.
 - The *Tyee* reports investments in gold are often made by people such as doomsday preppers who are concerned about inflation, or economic collapse.
 - Eby’s investments in RRSP, RESP and a tax-free savings account are in holdings not disclosed to him, while his wife **Cailey Lynch** does not list any investments, saying she is paying off medical school student loans.
 - BC Green Leader **Sonia Furstenau** has a mix of GICs, stocks and bonds, while her husband has investments in ESG funds.
 - NDP candidate **Mike Starchuk**, who is running in Surrey—Cloverdale, promised expanded cancer coverage for firefighters.
 - “As a former firefighter, I’ve seen dear friends and colleagues find out they have cancer,” Starchuk said. “It takes a devastating emotional toll on the person and their loved ones. Getting the care and time off they need doesn’t have to be an added worry.”
 - The plans would expand presumptive coverage to all cancer types, set the cumulative employment period at two years and work with the federal government to collaborate on a national framework for cancers linked to firefighting.

Appointments and employments

Brad Lavigne named president of Counsel Public Affairs

- **Brad Lavigne** was named president of Counsel Public Affairs in a [reorganization](#) of leadership responsibilities at the Toronto-based government and public relations firm
 - From 1998 to 2001, Lavigne served as an advisor to two BC premiers and was chief of staff to the BC Minister of Finance and a ministerial assistant to the BC Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology.
 - He was also the federal NDP's national campaign director in the 2011 election that led to the party forming official opposition, and was principal secretary and director of communications to former NDP leader **Jack Layton**.

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