

For the Good of the Province

Question

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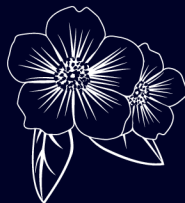
FIVE COMMON ARGUMENTS THAT PRESENT THE CASE FOR A SOVEREIGN ALBERTA.

01 There is the **historical argument** beginning with the founding of our province, its roots, its people, and the constant battles with Ottawa. “The Milch Cow” image, a political cartoon first published in 1915, has become iconic. The cow represents Canada. The farmers of Alberta are feeding the cow and the leaders in Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal are milking the cow. For more than 100 years, people in Western Canada have felt like a colony, existing for the wealth of Upper and Lower Canada. Michael Wagner’s books are essential reading to learn more about the history of Western alienation, the National Energy Program, and the failed efforts to address grievances.¹ A key part of the historical argument is that Alberta has sent the best and brightest to Ottawa to fix Canada, but they couldn’t do it; making sovereignty the best choice.



02 Next is the **economic argument**, based on imbalances in the Federal Equalization Program. Studies show that \$20–40 billion is transferred from Alberta to the provinces of Central and Eastern Canada each year. From 2000–2023, \$544 billion has been transferred out of Alberta. Quebec, one of the greatest critics of Alberta’s industry and culture, receives \$13.9 billion a year through the Federal Equalization Program—over 50% of total equalization funds. The province of PEI is now reliant on equalization as payments make up 20% of their annual budget. Since 1965, even in years of recession, Alberta has received a total of \$0 through equalization. Therefore, many contend that equalization disadvantages Alberta for the sake of Central and Eastern Canada.

03 There is also the **political argument**. Federal laws continue to hurt Alberta’s primary industries like oil, gas, and beef. Federal laws, like the Carbon Tax, Bill C-69 (the impact assessment bill or “no more pipelines bill”), and Bill C-48 (the tanker ban, banning Alberta’s exports on the west coast while still allowing tankers on the east coast as Central Canada imports foreign oil) stifle development, block energy projects, and prevent access to global markets which represents the loss to Albertans of hundreds of billions in lost projects. Studies show that investment in Alberta has dropped 61% in the last ten years. Sovereignty puts Alberta’s future in the hands of Albertans.



¹ See Wagner, Michael. No Other Option: Self-Determination for Alberta (Domino Effect Publishing, 2021); Wagner, Michael. Time to Leave: Canada Cannot Be Fixed (Domino Effect Publishing, 2024)

04 Next is the federal or **constitutional argument**. Canadian federalism was designed to divide power between the federal government and provincial governments. Alberta is to have sovereignty over its natural resources, but that is not being honored in practice. Alberta has a dozen matters before the courts, fighting the federal government over bounds of jurisdiction. Alberta's voice in Ottawa is faint, since it is Ontario and Quebec that decide elections. Senate reform was proposed as one way to increase Alberta's influence in Ottawa—although these efforts were stopped by the Supreme Court in the Harper era. Alberta has six senators compared to Ontario and Quebec who have twenty-four each (those numbers being fixed in the constitution and not based on population). PEI has four senate seats for a population less than 200,000. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia each have ten seats with populations smaller than either the city of Edmonton or Calgary. For this reason, Albertans feel as if they have little say over the future of their country and decisions that affect them and their livelihoods.

05 Finally, there is the cultural or **moral argument**. Many people in Alberta feel as if the culture and values of Central Canada are out of step with the culture and values of Alberta. Alberta was formally Canada's Bible belt, and it remains a place where many hold traditional values. It is not uncommon to drive through rural Alberta and see pro-life billboards and banners. The conservatives in Alberta are not just fiscal conservatives, but many are social conservatives who desire to see traditional values preserved while our federal government promotes a new vision of society and the family. For this reason, Albertans want off the moral train that is careening off the tracks.

THE BIBLICAL COMMITMENT

These historic, economic, political, constitutional, and cultural arguments make a compelling case for Alberta's independence. What must be recognized is that biblical values are foundational to each of these arguments. That is, it can be argued that many who long for an independent Alberta are longing for a way of life that matches biblical principles. What people are longing for—and don't realize it—is the fruit of the gospel of Jesus Christ, a Christian vision of society, and the truth of his word manifest in his world.

The discussion on independence is not just a discussion about dollars and cents. It is a discussion about religious ideas that express themselves in society. The antichristian ideas of Marxism, socialism, globalism, totalitarianism, and a host of other "isms" are promoted and pushed by the intelligentsia of Central Canada. Alberta is not free from these ideas, but there is a legacy here of a biblical commitment to liberty, justice, vocation, belonging, and traditional values.

Let me be clear, independence is not *the answer*. It's not the ultimate hope. Our ultimate hope is the person and work of Jesus Christ. However, the underlying values of independence are more aligned with the values of Scripture than the current values of Canada. As many are longing for Christian principles worked out in the world, let's point them to Christ!

— Tim Stephens

"All the cultural amenities that we enjoy are ours because we live in a land that has felt the impact of Christian civilization"

— Ernest Manning, Premier of Alberta, 1943-1968.

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