**Report on a Meeting with cabinet minister Karina Gould**

**Introduction**

Recently, I attended a “town hall meeting” with Karina Gould, Minister for Democratic Institutions. I thought that it would be relevant to report the essence of her address as our meeting so closely followed. I remain quite impressed with her as a person and I believe really cares.

**General Points Minister Gould Made**

1. The poverty rate has 850,000 fewer people than in 2015
2. Climate change is a big priority. A price on pollution has been established. There are premiers who are opposed to this initiative.
3. There is a significant concern in government for the jobless rate in Alberta. This concern was also mentioned by the audience. It was felt that too many were suffering.
4. Governing is very difficult as witnessed in the present situation with Lavalin.
5. There is always a struggle as to where to spend your political capital. When first elected, the government was absorbed with President Trump and NAFTA negotiations.
6. On line voting for future elections has been ruled out as the technology cannot be trusted and there is concern that coercion could take place, (with someone standing over your shoulder at home). Moreover, compulsory voting has also been considered and rejected.
7. The audience mentioned concern over general negative attitudes and it was felt that some “Americanism was creeping in”.

**Pharmacare**

This topic was mentioned several times and I did ask Gould about the Liberal promise to introduce universal Phamacare and the present worry that it may get changed to a “Patch work”. Gould acknowledged that we were the only country with Medicare that did not have a free drug program and that the government wanted to get this thing right. However, if she knew what direction they were leaning towards, she did not say, but hinted that there would be no decision before the next election. It did not make me feel optimistic.

Respectfully submitted

Brian Kenny