



An historic opportunity

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It wasn't easy to figure out what was going on during election night, but it was apparent right away that BC had voted for change.

The unprecedented results left the province in a sort of limbo for several weeks and even now, as this issue goes to print, a lot of questions remain unanswered. But we do know that a solid majority of British Columbians voted against the incumbent BC Liberals, a message bolstered by voter turnout that was higher than in previous years. It's a message that has been answered by the unprecedented governing agreement between the NDP and the Green Party.

With just a single vote's advantage over the BC Liberals, this NDP-Green arrangement is potentially very fragile. An illness, a policy disagreement or even a missed flight could bring it all down, triggering new elections long before the customary four-year term is done.

Nevertheless it's an historic opportunity to deliver the change so many people voted for.

The NDP-Green agreement could deliver significant changes to the way politics is done in this province, changing the way we vote and finally modernizing the political fundraising rules to end abuses by big money players.

After 16 years of falling behind, the NDP-Green agreement could bring long-overdue increases to BC's minimum wage, income supports for the most vulnerable citizens, funding for public schools and finally address housing affordability.

After 16 years, there's a long list of problems to fix, and between the delicate balance of this arrangement and the many demands on a limited budget, the NDP and their Green Party partners face daunting pressures.

So it's heartening to note that both parties have placed a lot of emphasis on improving public health care in BC. With their shared commitment to establishing a ministry for mental health care, implementing a mental health strategy for youth, expanding community care, reducing the cost of prescription drugs and shortening wait times, I'm confident they are mindful of the need to make health care a priority.

And if they don't, we'll be sure to remind them. Because while governments may change, HSA's commitment to holding them accountable does not.

And after a decade of wage austerity that's made shortages and wait lists worse, it's time for change. That means a return to reasonable, liveable wage increases for the public servants that keep our hospitals and community social services running.

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