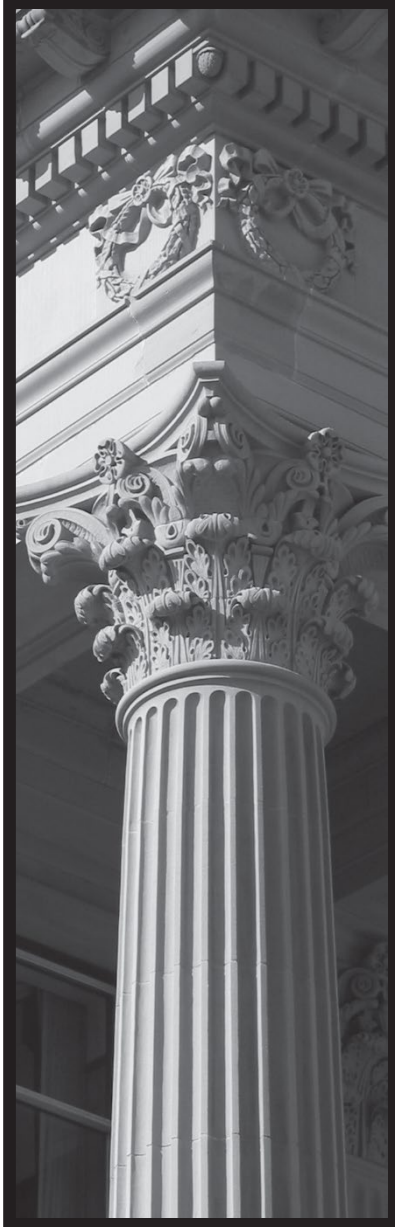
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA



Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries

Final Report of the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries on the Report of the Independent Advisory Panel

Thirty-First
Legislature Second
Session

November 2026

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SELECT SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

November 2026

To the Honourable Ric McIver
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
of the Province of Alberta

I have the honour of submitting, on behalf of the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries, the *Final Report of the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries on the Report of the Independent Advisory Panel,* to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

Sincerely,

[original signed]

Brandon Lunty, MLA
Chair, Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries

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MEMBERS OF THE SELECT SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES
31st Legislature

Brandon G. Lunty, MLA
Chair
Leduc-Beaumont (UC)

Chantelle de Jonge, MLA
Chestermere-Strathmore (UC)

Hon. Christina Gray, MLA
Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)

Ron Wiebe, MLA
Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UC)

Hon. Kathleen T. Ganley, MLA
Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)

Hon. Tara Sawyer, MLA
Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UC)

Substitutions Pursuant to Standing Order 56 (2.1-2.4):

Garth Rowswell, MLA*
Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UC)

Also in Attendance:

Naheed K. Nenshi, MLA†
Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP)

* Substitute for Hon. Tara Sawyer on June 2, 2026, June 9, 2026, June 30, 2026, and October 28, 2026.
† Attended the Committee's meeting on October 28, 2026.

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During its meeting on October 28, 2026, the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries (the "Committee") made the following recommendation pertaining to its review of the *Report of the Independent Advisory Panel*[*]*:*

that the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries:

(a) acknowledge that the independent advisory panel has submitted its report in accordance with Government Motion 37, thereby concluding its mandate, and

(b) conclude its review of the report of the independent advisory panel.

[*] The original title of the report was *Independent Advisory Panel on Electoral Boundaries Report to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.* In accordance with Part C. clause (e)(iv) of Government Motion 37, the Independent Advisory Panel was required to submit a report to the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries based on its review. Accordingly, the report will be referred to as the *Report of the Independent Advisory Panel to the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries*.

2.0 COMMITTEE MANDATE

Pursuant to Government Motion 37, agreed to on April 21, 2026, the Assembly established the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries.

A. Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly recognize that

(a) the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission's Final Report, which was tabled by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly on March 26, 2026 (Sessional Paper 436/2025-26), makes recommendations to the Legislative Assembly as to the area, boundaries, and names of the electoral divisions of Alberta, referred to as the Final Report,

(b) on the tabling of the Final Report, the Commission appointed under section 2 of the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* is concluded,

(c) the Final Report includes input from Albertans provided through written proposals and public hearings held across Alberta,

(d) the Final Report includes a Majority Report, an Addendum to the Majority Report and a Minority Report,

(e) the Majority Report notes that since the last Electoral Boundaries Commission report in 2017, the population of Alberta has increased by over 800,000 people and that in responding to these changes, the Legislature expanded the number of available seats by two, from 87 to 89,

(f) the Majority Report notes that the size of the Legislative Assembly was only increased by 2 percent despite the population increasing by 20 percent,

(g) the Majority Report expresses regret that the Commission had to remove two ridings from central and north central Alberta in order to address this population increase,

(h) the Majority Report states that the majority of the Commission believes that it would have been able to provide Albertans with more effective representation had the Legislature provided an additional two seats and indicates that, had the Commission been given the power to do so, it may have proposed a map of at least 91 electoral divisions,

(i) the Addendum to the Majority Report

(i) proposes that if the Legislative Assembly cannot concur in the Majority Report's recommendation to remove two electoral divisions from areas outside of the Cities of Edmonton and Calgary, the Legislative Assembly consider amending the *Electoral Divisions Act* for the purpose of increasing the number of electoral divisions for the next general election from 89 to 91,

(ii) proposes that the matter be referred to an all-party Select Special Committee or other legislative committee, and

(iii) in its four additional recommendations cited as Recommendation 5(a) to (d), provides recommendations to protect certain proposed electoral divisions described in the Majority Report from substantive alteration stemming from the addition of two additional electoral divisions, and

(j) section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees that every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein, which includes a right to effective representation;

B. And be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the Government to introduce a Bill to amend section 13 of the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* to provide for 91 proposed electoral divisions;

C. And be it furthered resolved that

(a) a Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries be established to oversee an independent review of electoral boundaries of Alberta

(i) on an expedited basis, and

(ii) without a requirement to direct the holding of public hearings,

(b) the Committee consists of the following:

(i) Mr. Lunty as the Chair of the Committee;

(ii) 3 Members of the Government caucus nominated by the Government House Leader, the nominations of which are to be submitted to the Chair;

(iii) 2 Members of the Opposition caucus nominated by the Opposition House Leader, the nominations of which are to be submitted to the Chair,

(c) the Committee is constituted on the nomination of a majority of its Members and continues despite any vacancies in its membership,

(d) the Committee be directed to engage independent advisors

(i) to serve on an independent advisory panel to carry out the mandate referred to in clause (e), and

(ii) who are to be appointed by the Committee as follows:

(A) a chair of the independent advisory panel who must be one of the following.

(I) the president of a post-secondary educational institution in Alberta;

(II) a judge or retired judge of any court of Alberta;

(III) a person whose stature and qualifications are similar to those of the persons referred to in subparagraphs (I) and (II);

(B) on nomination of the Leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition in consultation with the leaders of other opposition parties represented in the Legislative Assembly, 2 persons who are not Members of the Legislative Assembly;

(C) on nomination of the President of the Executive Council, 2 persons who are not Members of the Legislative Assembly;

(D) with respect to the persons appointed under paragraph (B), one must be a resident in a city and the other resident outside a city at the time of their appointment;

(E) with respect to the persons appointed under paragraph (C), one must be a resident in a city and the other resident outside a city at the time of their appointment;

(F) all persons appointed under paragraphs (A), (B) and (C) must be Canadian citizens, residents of Alberta and at least 18 years of age.

(e) the independent advisory panel's mandate is to

(i) conduct a review of the electoral boundaries of Alberta and make proposals as to the area, boundaries and names of the electoral divisions of Alberta.

(ii) in conducting its review,

(A) divide the electoral boundaries of Alberta into 91 proposed electoral divisions

(B) incorporate the recommendations provided in Recommendation 5 in the Addendum to the Majority Report subject to any modifications the independent advisory panel considers necessary, taking into consideration the requirement for effective representation as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and

(I) sparsity, density and rate of growth of the population

(II) communities of interest, including municipalities, regional and rural communities, Indian reserves and Metis settlements,

(III) geographical features,

(IV) the availability and means of communication and transportation between various parts of Alberta,

(V) the desirability of understandable and clear boundaries, and

(VI) any other factors the independent advisory panel considers appropriate, and

(C) ensure that its proposals comply with the following requirements:

(I) the population of a proposed electoral division must not be more than 25 percent above nor more than 25 percent below the average population of all the proposed electoral divisions;

(II) despite subparagraph (I), in the case of no more than 4 of the proposed electoral divisions, if the independent advisory panel is of the opinion that at least 3 of the following criteria exist in a proposed electoral division, the proposed electoral division may have a population that is as much as 50 percent below the average population of all the proposed electoral divisions:

1. the area of the proposed electoral division exceeds 20,000 square kilometres or the total surveyed area of the proposed electoral division exceeds 15,000 square kilometres;

2. the distance from the Legislature Building in Edmonton to the nearest boundary of the proposed electoral division by the most direct highway route is more than 150 kilometres;

3. there is no town in the proposed electoral division that has a population exceeding 8,000 people;

4. the area of the proposed electoral division contains an Indian reserve or a Metis settlement;

5. the proposed electoral division has a portion of its boundary coterminous with a boundary of the Province of Alberta;

(III) for the purpose of the 3rd criterion set out in subparagraph (II), the municipality of Crowsnest Pass is not a town,

(iii) conduct its review despite any vacancies in its membership,

(iv) on or before October 22, 2026, submit to the Committee a report based on its review, and

(v) on the independent advisory panel submitting its report to the Committee, the independent advisory panel's mandate is concluded,

(f) for the purposes of the independent advisory panel carrying out its mandate, the Committee may, at the request of and on behalf of the independent advisory panel, do any of the following:

(i) request access to and the use of any information and statistics that the independent advisory panel considers relevant to its mandate, including any information and statistics gathered and input received by the Electoral Boundaries Commission most recently appointed under the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act*, and any records held by the Legislative Assembly Office;

(ii) request advice, information and assistance from the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer;

(iii) request any person to provide the independent advisory panel with advice that the independent advisory panel considers advisable or necessary;

(iv) direct the Legislative Assembly Office to provide administrative support to the independent advisory panel as required,

(g) the Committee be authorized to pay the following:

(i) remuneration, and travelling and living expenses, of the independent advisors as it relates to carrying out the independent advisory panel's mandate;

(ii) reasonable disbursements incurred by the independent advisory panel for the effective conduct of its responsibilities,

(h) if the independent advisory panel submits more than one report to the Committee, the report of a majority of the members of the independent advisory panel is the report of the independent advisory panel, but if there is no majority, the report of the chair is the report of the independent advisory panel,

(i) as soon as practicable after receiving the independent advisory panel's report the Committee

(i) may convene to review the report, including making observations in respect of the report, and

(ii) on conclusion of its review, if any, must submit the report to the Legislative Assembly no later than November 2, 2026,

(j) the Committee continues despite a prorogation of a session and may, without leave of the Legislative Assembly, meet during a period when the Legislative Assembly is adjourned or prorogued, and

(k) on the Committee submitting the report to the Legislative Assembly, the Committee's mandate is concluded.

3.0 BACKGROUND

The Legislative Assembly passed Government Motion 37 on April 21, 2026. Part C. clause (a) of the motion created the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries and mandated the Committee to oversee an independent review of the electoral boundaries of Alberta.

The Committee met on May 4 and 12, 2026, June 2, 9, and 30, 2026, and October 28, 2026.

The Committee was directed to engage independent advisors in accordance with Part C. clause (d) of Government Motion 37. On June 2, 2026, the Committee appointed Hon. Brian O'Ferrall, KC, Retired Justice of the Court of Appeal of Alberta, as Chair of the Independent Advisory Panel, on nomination of the Premier and President of Executive Council. The Committee also appointed the following individuals to the Independent Advisory Panel on June 9, 2026: Mr. Darwin Durnie and Hon. Monte Solberg, PC, on nomination of the Premier and President of Executive Council; and Dr. Gerard Kennedy and Mr. Brent Robinson, on nomination of the Leader of the Official Opposition.

The Independent Advisory Panel provided its report to the Committee on October 22, 2026, in accordance with Part C. clause (e)(iv) of Government Motion 37. Having done so, the Independent Advisory Panel's mandate was concluded.

The Committee met on October 28, 2026, to review the *Report of the Independent Advisory Panel.*

For a complete record of the Committee's deliberations please consult the transcripts of the Committee's meetings, which are posted online at www.assembly.ab.ca.

4.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee wishes to acknowledge the valuable assistance of technical support staff and Legislative Assembly Office support staff.

Technical Support Staff
Elections Alberta

Legislative Assembly Office Support Staff
Ms Shannon Dean, KC, Clerk
Mr. Trafton Koenig, Law Clerk
Ms Vani Govindarajan, Parliamentary Counsel
Dr. Philip Massolin, Clerk Assistant and Executive Director of Parliamentary Services
Ms Nancy Robert, Clerk of *Journals* and Committees
Mr. Abdul Aziz Bhurgri, Research Officer
Dr. Rachel McGraw, Research Officer
Mr. Warren Huffman, Committee Clerk
Ms Jody Rempel, Committee Clerk
Mr. Aaron Roth, Committee Clerk
Ms Rhonda Sorensen, Manager of Corporate Communications
Ms Christina Steenbergen, Supervisor of Communications Services
Ms Amanda LeBlanc, Managing Editor of *Hansard* and Manager of Venue Services
Hansard staff
Security staff

5.0 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

On October 28, 2026, the Committee met to review the *Report of the Independent Advisory Panel.* The Committee acknowledged receipt of the report and noted the Panel's role in reviewing the electoral boundaries of Alberta in accordance with Government Motion 37, Part C. clause (e). As the report remains confidential until it is tabled in the Assembly on or before November 2, 2026, in accordance with Part C. clause (i)(ii) of Government Motion 37, the Committee observed that the appropriate forum to offer any comments or observations on the Report is the Legislative Assembly. Accordingly, the Committee agreed that having received the Panel's report, its review of the report was complete. Therefore, the Committee resolved:

that the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries:

- **(a) acknowledge that the independent advisory panel has submitted its report in accordance with Government Motion 37, thereby concluding its mandate, and**
- **(b) conclude its review of the report of the independent advisory panel.**

APPENDIX A: MINORITY OBSERVATIONS

Minority Report
Submitted by the Hon. Christina Gray, MLA for Edmonton-Mill Woods, and the Hon. Kathleen Ganley, MLA for Calgary-Mountainview

1.0 Introduction

After months of watching an illegitimate process unfold through the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries, Albertans finally have access to the *Independent Advisory Panel on Electoral Boundaries' Report to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta*. What they will see will shock them and is a direct result of the illegitimate process that we, as Alberta NDP MLAs, have fought so hard to bring transparency and accountability to.

The right to vote, enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, is sacred. It is one of a number of rights which the notwithstanding clause cannot limit, and for good reason: **no political party should ever be able to infringe upon the very right which holds them accountable.** In the context of electoral maps, that means that voters should pick politicians, not the other way around. To protect this principle, for decades Alberta has had an independent commission drawing maps for provincial elections. But in the worst instance of gerrymandering in Canadian history, the current UCP Government abandoned this process and instead chose to put its partisan ambitions over the democratic rights of Albertans.

The erosion of Albertans' democratic rights has occurred in a series of steps over the course of the last two years. While each one alone is suggestive, taken together they paint a clear picture of an intentional erosion of the rights of Albertans to further UCP partisan aims. First, the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Ac*t was amended to remove the legal requirement to respect municipal boundaries. Next, during public consultations after the release of an interim report that had unanimous support from the Commission, the Commission began receiving submissions about hybrid ridings from cabinet ministers, as well as specific hybridized maps that appeared to have originated from the Government of Alberta due to being marked with protected codes. The maps covered the entire province, and one even appeared to project the expected result of the election. When the Commission delivered its final report, two UCP-appointed Commissioners abandoned the unanimous report they had agreed to a few months earlier and broke with the non-partisan majority of the Commission and published a minority report that proposed maps which closely resembled those submitted by UCP ministers and MLAs, and which do not reflect the previously-stated opinions of the minority Commissioners or the public record.

Every time such independent commissions were established since the Court of Appeal's landmark decision in 1994, the Legislature enacted their recommended maps without interference. That was the case under Alberta NDP and Progressive Conservative Governments – under Premiers Ralph Klein, Ed Stelmach and Rachel Notley.

This time, however, the UCP Government interfered in the independent process. The UCP Government rejected the commission's decision out of hand and instead proposed Government Motion 37 based not on the majority report of the Commission, but on Recommendation 5 made by the Chair alone. The Premier and ministers stated repeatedly inside and outside of the Legislature that the Panel would only add back two rural seats and stay within the narrow constraints set out in Recommendation 5, which made very clear that the Panel could and would only affect a small number of electoral maps, and would have no impact on any riding in Airdrie or containing territory south of Airdrie, except for Drumheller-Stettler. When asked, the Chair of this Committee was unwilling or unable to confirm this. And now, the results are in: Albertans have received a Panel majority report that wildly exceeds that mandate, adds in three rural seats instead of two, treats people in Lethbridge as "spare population" to preserve the seats of three cabinet ministers, and dilutes the voice of Calgarians in three northwest seats held by three UCP cabinet ministers, based on flimsy arguments about golf courses.

The Commission's maps - the ones that ought to have been adopted - already proposed historic use of hybrid ridings. Yet, the majority of the Panel has gone further still, and has proposed hybrid ridings that go directly against the overwhelming majority or public submissions, while fulfilling the wish lists of UCP ministers. The ultimate outcome is a dilution of votes and voices in urban ridings, such as in Calgary and Lethbridge, which would be on average 14% more overpopulated than rural ridings.

This entire process has been illegitimate, driving towards an illegitimate outcome. In this minority report, we lay out how we got here, why we got here and why the proposal of the majority panel report is an affront to all Albertans.

1.1 Background

The Government's intentions were first revealed in late 2024, when the Minister of Justice amended the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* to stipulate that the next Commission did not need to consider: (a) existing community boundaries within the cities of Calgary and Edmonton, and (b) wherever possible, existing municipal boundaries. We saw this for what it was: an attempt to open up the map to American-style gerrymandering which draws electoral boundaries in order to benefit the governing party and not natural communities of interest.

On March 28, 2025, the Electoral Boundaries Commission was announced. The Leader of the Opposition appointed two Commissioners to participate in the standard legal process set out in the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* to develop a new electoral map in time for Alberta's next provincial election. Throughout 2025, the Commission worked diligently to conduct a series of meetings across the province to hear directly from Albertans about how Alberta's electoral boundaries would best meet the needs of their communities and provide effective representation. This process saw a historic number of Albertans participate by attending meetings in-person or online, or through submitting written feedback to the Commission.

In November 2025, the Commission delivered to the Legislature a rare unanimous interim report, supported by the Commissioners appointed by both the UCP and the NDP. The report reflected the vast number of public submissions and took into account areas of population growth in the province. The Commissioners also solicited feedback on their more innovative and controversial proposals, demonstrating their desire to take into account public submissions. In fact, they write of one such proposal "We are presenting it to the public with humility and a desire for thoughtful feedback," and then go on to say that if the public indicated a preference they would take that seriously[*].

Then, after further public consultation on these proposed boundaries, the Final Report of the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission chaired by Justice Miller was delivered to the Legislature in March 2026, providing an 89-seat map that reflected the extensive public consultations that the Commission had conducted over the previous year.

However, two of the three Commissioners appointed by the UCP Government broke with the rest of the Commission and opposed the Commission's final map, a fact which seemed to surprise the other three commissioners. Writing in the final report, the majority noted "The Commission submitted a unanimous [interim] report to the Speaker of the Legislature. From then until late January 2026, when all public hearings and written submissions had been received, the Commission focused on fine tuning and amending our interim report. [...] In late January, the minority departed substantially from that goal"[†].

Not only did the minority depart significantly from its interim position, it did so in an unprecedented way, providing an alternative version of Alberta with extensive hybridization, as well as their own set of maps.

[*] Interim Report of the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission, p. 32
[†] Final Report of the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission, p. 63

Never before in Alberta history had that occurred. What possible reason could there be for such a change of heart? The majority surmises that "Our friends south of the border may have a term for this type of redistricting" [*]. The majority goes on to say:

> "The minority made a complete about-face with new electoral maps without *any* public participation. These boundaries not only do not provide effective representation, but are entirely unfair to impose on Albertans without significant submissions as to the strength of their proposed communities of interest and the impact on their ability to enable effective representation" [†]

The majority of the commission expressed deep anxiety that the government would implement the minority report due to its transparent goal of providing the UCP with such a significant partisan advantage while nakedly stripping Albertans of their democratic rights.

Writing in a supplementary addendum to the Commission's report, which he acknowledged to be separate from the majority report, Justice Miller voiced "deep concerns" regarding the unconstitutionality and administrative law problems posed by the minority report and urged the Legislature against adopting this.

In this addendum, Justice Miller also proposed a fifth recommendation external to the Commission's report as a compromise with the express intention of preventing the Legislature from adopting the minority. He explicitly says that his writing of this recommendation in no way detracts from the majority opinion. In his recommendation, Justice Miller proposed that a committee of the Legislature could increase the number of seats to 91 by restoring two rural seats and revising the Commission's proposed boundaries subject to the following specific conditions:

a) have no impact on any electoral division in Airdrie or containing territory south of Airdrie's southernmost border, with the exception of Drumheller-Stettler;

b) have no impact on any electoral division north of the North Saskatchewan River in Edmonton;

c) result in all electoral divisions south of the North Saskatchewan River in Edmonton reverting to the map outlined in the interim report, with the possible exception of including Nisku in Edmonton-South East if the all-party committee wishes to restore Leduc and Beaumont being in the same electoral division; and

d) consider restoring an electoral division mostly consisting of Clearwater County and western Mountain View County as an electoral division with s. 15(2) status under the Act

According to Section 9 of the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act,* the majority's map and the report by Justice Miller and Commissioners Greg Clark and Susan Samson is the report of the Commission. However, in a drastic departure from historical practice in Alberta*,* the Government never even allowed the Legislature to vote on whether it would implement the majority map. This unprecedented action was a slap in the face of Albertans and flew in the face of democratic conventions in this country.

There was a fiery public outcry – Albertans made their voices known. They feared that the UCP would use the pretext of implementing the very narrow changes required to implement Justice Miller's Recommendation 5 as an open door that would allow them to gerrymander the maps across the province under the noses of Albertans. Time after time, the Premier was asked to do the right thing, whether in the Legislature, by the media, or by Albertans. Albertans were shocked as more facts were revealed: a senior staffer in the Premier's employment had been seeking nomination signatures under a riding map that

[*] Ibid, p. 64
[†] Ibid, p. 64

resembled one in the minority; maps submitted by various members of the public had government-identified markers on them; and ministers' public submissions were reflected in the minority report's map drawings. The Premier's protestations defied credulity.

But rather than doing the right thing and adopting the majority report, the UCP Government introduced Government Motion 37, which created a Government-dominated Select Special Committee to appoint an external Panel which was in turn tasked with implementing the recommendations made in Justice Miller's addendum in the form of a 91-seat map.

Government Motion 37 delegated specific authority from the Legislature to the Select Special Committee, and through it to the Panel, to incorporate the above recommendations provided by Justice Miller's addendum into the Panel's proposed electoral boundaries, subject only to the modifications necessary to achieve them.

While the Official Opposition strenuously opposed the Government's rejection of the legal process contained in the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* by voting against Government Motion 37 and associated legislation to create 91 seats, we (MLA Christina Gray, Edmonton-Mill Woods and MLA Kathleen Ganley, Calgary-Mountainview) were appointed to participate on the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries and guard the democratic rights of Albertans.

2.0 Our Actions on the Committee

The purpose of our participation on the Committee was to shine a light on the Government's illegitimate process, uphold the public's interest in fair electoral boundaries by defending their *Charter*-enshrined democratic rights, seek clarity and transparency from the Government, and raise awareness of the UCP's refusal to in any way mitigate concerns around their unprecedented actions.

While we believe that this process was fundamentally illegitimate and procedurally irregular, we had a duty as the Official Opposition to participate in this process, serve the public interest, and hold the Government to account.

At each meeting of the Select Special Committee, we moved substantive motions aimed at addressing these concerns of procedural irregularity while removing potential avenues for undue partisan influence to shape the work of the Panel in fulfilling its purpose of implementing Justice Miller's specific recommendations, as per the narrow mandate delegated to it in Government Motion 37. At each instance, our efforts were voted down by the UCP MLAs on the Committee, typically without rationale or substantive debate.

We moved detailed motions aimed at ensuring public reporting and scrutiny of the work of both the Committee and the Panel. These included motions to hold all Committee and Panel meetings and deliberations publicly, provide the Committee with monthly summaries of the Panel's activities, and publicize the Panel's final report at the earliest possible opportunity. We also requested more transparency regarding communications between the Chairs of the Committee and the Panel.

We asked to release important documents to the public, such as a letter to the Chair from the Acting Chief Justice of Alberta that raised serious concerns about the irregularity of the process. In this letter, dated May 6, 2026 and addressed to Chair of the Committee, MLA Brandon Lunty, the Honourable Justice Dawn Pentelechuk wrote:

> Dear Mr. Lunty,
>
> Thank you for your letter of May 4, 2026, addressed to Chief Justice Khullar and Chief Justice Davidson regarding the requests for self-nominations by retired or current judges of the Court of

> King's Bench or the Court of Appeal of Alberta for appointment as Chair to the Independent Advisory Panel.
>
> We have been advised that the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries is actively seeking retired judges from both the Court of King's Bench and the Court of Appeal to fill this role. Given this advice and the irregularity of this process, the Courts will refrain from disseminating your May 4, 2026 letter or providing any input on the selection of Chair.
>
> In taking this position, we make no judgement at this time as to the propriety of the legislation, which was enacted after the Electoral Boundaries Commission completed its work. Pursuant to the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act*, when properly constituted commissions are established, the protocol has always been that the Chief Justice of Alberta be consulted for advice in respect of presently sitting or retired judges who may wish to offer themselves to accept the role. This convention should be respected with regard to any commissions appointed under the act.

This letter from Acting Chief Justice Pentelechuk was alarming. It spoke to the irregularity of the process and to the Government's improper conduct in not consulting with her in this process, as had historically been the case in the appointment of previous Commission Chairs. The reason this is so important is obvious: the Chief Justice's involvement in the selection of the Chair adds impartiality and independence to the Commission, and prevents the appointment of individuals who might put partisan advantage over principles of independence.

Acting Chief Justice Pentelechuk's letter was reinforced by the letter to the Chair, MLA Lunty, from Mr. Christopher N. Samuel, President of the Canadian Bar Association - Alberta Chapter. In his letter, dated May 14, 2026, Mr. Samuel wrote:

> Thank you for your letter of May 12, 2026, regarding the appointment of a chair to the independent advisory panel. The Canadian Bar Association – Alberta Branch (CBA) is the largest association of legal professionals in the province, representing over 5,600 lawyers, law students, legal academics, and judges.
>
> Given that Acting Chief Justice of Alberta Pentelechuk has expressed reservations about this selection process and refrained from circulating the letter, the CBA must also respectfully decline the committee's request. The Chief Justices are the proper entities to circulate this notice, and it would be inappropriate for the CBA to circumvent their decision.

At this stage, like at so many stages in the process, we urged the UCP members of the Committee to dissolve the Committee and do the right thing by urging the Government to adopt the majority report of the legitimate Commission.

We asked that all of the Panel's deliberations, external discussions, consultations, and submissions be included in the final report so that Albertans could better trust in the process that had unfolded. The UCP majority on the Committee voted down all of these measures.

From the start, we had concerns about the potential for outside influence on the Panel, particularly political influence. We moved motions that would prevent the appointment of a partisan Chair, such as by disallowing those who had made a political contribution. We also pushed for the Committee to not recruit a retired judge as Chair of the Panel and to require the Chair selection to be a unanimous decision. Even requests to interview candidates for Chair and require that they disclose political donations were voted down by the UCP.

We also moved a series of motions that would have prevented secret or partisan influence on the other Panel members. We tried prohibiting the Panel from discussing matters and receiving maps or proposals outside of public meetings. Panel members would have been required to disclose all information they

received, as well as all contact and attempted contact from the Premier, ministers, MLAs, and certain government officials. We find it rather telling that the UCP voted against this.

The UCP moved a motion allowing for the Panel to use the services of a pollster. The information provided by a pollster is well outside the scope of what the law allows one to consider when creating electoral boundaries. Drawing electoral boundaries based on the way voters are expected to vote is the basis of gerrymandering. We made this point clear and moved an amendment that would have put a stop to this, but once again the UCP insisted on pushing forward with its plan.

The Premier and the Minister of Justice had publicly stated on multiple occasions that the Panel's scope would be limited to implementing Justice Miller's Recommendation 5. But when we tried moving a motion to have the Panel's maps comply with Recommendation 5, the UCP voted it down. They refused to even pass a motion that would have taken note of Justice Miller's addendum in the Panel's terms of reference. At the time, this was surprising. But now, having seen the Panel's final report and with the benefit of hindsight, we see this foreshadowing for what it was.

Finally, we gave the Committee multiple opportunities to abandon this illegitimate process, rescind Government Motion 37, and adopt the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission Final Report. At any point, the UCP could have ended this illegitimate process. They wilfully continued down their path to cheat.

3.0 Observations

In a further anti-democratic act, the UCP members refused to allow us to move motions in Committee to make observations on the Panel's report and proposed electoral boundaries. We believe Albertans had the right to hear those observations at the time of the committee meeting. In the absence of that opportunity, we make the following observations here.

3.1 The Majority Panel Report

It is with regret – but not surprise – that we, the Alberta NDP MLA appointees to this Committee, hold that the Panel's majority report proposes changes to the electoral map in order to benefit the UCP Government. Only through that lens can the report make any sense. Often, the document is at war with itself, making contradictory claims and arguments in order to justify a particular instance of gerrymandering. It is clear that the UCP-appointed majority decided on certain partisan outcomes and then looked at how to achieve them, providing the flimsiest of justifications. Only with that understanding are some of the decisions comprehensible – the radical surgery of Lethbridge, the shoring up of unpopular UCP cabinet ministers in west Calgary by lumping them in with communities where people expressly choose not to live in Calgary, and the flagrant disregard of Justice Miller's Recommendation 5.

Stunningly, the UCP-appointed majority *attacks* the minority for trying to implement Recommendation 5, and for considering the right to vote under the *Charter*, and claim that the Panel's "mandate did not include passing judgment on […] the constitutionality of its proposals." Government Motion 37 explicitly required the Panel to consider the *Charter*. The UCP-appointed majority refused to do what it was asked.

The UCP-appointed majority report will hold an infamous place in the history of this province – it will serve as a written record of the lengths the UCP government will go to hold power, violating even the most sacred of *Charter* rights. It will serve as a warning to citizens across this country – MAGA practices are crossing the border and poisoning our politics.

3.2 The Majority of the Panel Exceeded its Mandate

The Government attempted to shield itself against the fierce public outrage triggered by its attempts to cheat to win the election by pointing to Justice Miller's Recommendation 5. The Premier herself said in Question Period on April 22, **"**There will be knock-on effects by adding in two additional rural ridings, but the intention and what the judge gave his advice on was how to do that with the minimal impact on the rest of the majority report".[*]

What is Recommendation 5?
In his addendum to the majority report, Justice Miller put forward Recommendation 5 as a last attempt to prevent the Government from adopting the minority report. To be clear, we have never agreed with this recommendation as in our view, and in the Justice's view, the majority report should have been adopted as is convention in our province and country. Nevertheless, Recommendation 5 was Justice Miller's compromise position. In it, he suggested that the Legislative Assembly increase the number of electoral divisions from 89 to 91 in order to restore the two rural ridings the commission had removed. Justice Miller placed strict limitations on how this was to be implemented to prevent partisan advantage or – in plain language – cheating. Chief among these was that the restoration of these seats should have no impact on any riding in Airdrie or containing territory south of Airdrie, except for Drumheller-Stettler.

Government Motion 37
The mandates of both the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries and the Panel were laid out in Government Motion 37. Government Motion 37 recognized that the addendum to the majority report, in its four recommendations cited as Recommendation 5(a) to (d), "provides recommendations to protect certain proposed electoral divisions described in the Majority Report from substantive alteration stemming from the addition of two additional electoral divisions".

Government Motion 37 provided a mandate for the Panel, which includes "[incorporating] the recommendations provided in Recommendation 5 in the Addendum to the Majority Report subject to any modifications the independent advisory panel considers necessary, taking into consideration the requirement for effective representation as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms".

What was the purpose of this motion? For the panelists to closely adhere to Recommendation 5 and deviate only if necessary to fulfill its objectives. And yet, we knew that this was the Government's opportunity to cheat. In Committee, we asked UCP MLAs to support motions we had moved to include Recommendation 5 in the Panel's terms of reference, and to ensure that the Panel would be limited to proposing maps that adhere to the conditions that Justice Miller included in Recommendation 5, including that no changes be made to the maps proposed by the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission for constituencies south of Airdrie. These motions were voted down by the UCP majority on the Committee.

How the UCP-appointed majority exceeded its mandate
Justice Miller was very clear in his conditions on the restoration of two rural ridings – there should be no partisan advantage gained outside of the restoration of these two historically conservative-leaning ridings. To prevent further advantage, he made his condition that there be no alterations in Airdrie or south of it (besides Drumheller-Stettler) the priority. Why would that be? Because south of Airdrie contains most of the battleground ridings in Alberta. Calgary has decided the outcome of the last three Provincial elections. Lethbridge is another battleground. Airdrie, as it grows in population, is likely to become more competitive. It is easy then to see why Justice Miller wanted to avoid this illegitimate process from going anywhere near this part of the province, especially after what he saw on the Commission when the UCP appointees abandoned the unanimous interim report. And yet, this is exactly what this UCP-appointed majority did.

[*] *Hansard,* April 22, 2026

They pack and crack Lethbridge like the UCP's Republican heroes are wont to do in the US. They gerrymander ridings on the west side of Calgary held by government ministers. Two members of the majority, though notably not the entire majority, include a bizarre 'sub-report' on Page 55 of the Panel's report that calls for a 'secretariat' to review the boundaries of Northeast Calgary in between Commissions in a way that's not contemplated by the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act.* If Government Motion 37 drove us into novel territory, this would take us even further into the wilderness of unconstitutional boundary-making. The 'map' proposed on page 55 is completely at odds with the maps proposed elsewhere in this report.*

The minority of the Panel argues for a much more common-sense reading of Government Motion 37. The majority of the Panel *criticizes* the minority for considering the limits of the Panel's mandate, describing it as a waste of time - writing an entire section calling it an "unnecessary and counterproductive controversy"†. Like so many things in the Panel's majority decision it leaves us to wonder - if interpreting and fulfilling the mandate of Government Motion 37 is not the point or the Panel, what is?

Essentially the debate is about whether the Panel can just redraw any maps that it wants, or whether it had to simply insert the two rural seats suggested by Justice Miller in Recommendation 5 and make only necessary collateral alterations required to achieve that. We agree with the minority that the Panel's mandate is clearly the latter. Everything around the setting up of the Panel suggests the minority's reading, from the abbreviated time frame to the inability to seek public input. The perils of the majority's view that the Panel's mandate was just to recommend any changes that crossed their minds is highlighted by the majority report itself which:

1) ultimately argues for communities of interest based on golf courses rather than the input of the actual people living in the area,
2) purports to "solve" the problem it created by taking Springbank out of Cochrane based on the mere assertion that they have nothing in common, by diluting it into two Calgary ridings instead of one,
3) argues that the three rural divisions that add in parts of Lethbridge have nothing in common with each other and can't possibly be together, but also all have enough in common with Lethbridge to be added in - leaving one to wonder what exactly the Venne diagram being envisioned is, contrary to the vast majority of submissions,
4) despite the purpose of representative democracy being that different interests are to be debated in the Legislature, decides that rural and urban areas should be combined and MLAs should decide what interests to bring forward because one Panelist once represented both types of concerns to Ottawa, and
5) simultaneously suggests that the outcome of the commission should not be treated as binding because it is somehow "impure" owing to Justice Miller's addendum that "negotiates with the Legislature"" or "puts water in the wine," but also that Justice Miller did it, so the Panel can too‡.

There are numerous other examples, but taken together they highlight the perils of a Panel operating with no public input, and disregarding the record generated by the Commission's extensive public consultation. Ultimately, the UCP-appointed majority's interpretation results in it inserting three rural ridings in order to "follow the direction" to insert two. The basic math makes it clear this is not the correct interpretation.

It also leaves a huge concern about a perceived conflict of interest, particularly when taken together with the entire process. Incredibly strained arguments are used again and again to support results that protect UCP cabinet ministers. Why this random collection of arguments rather than another? More troubling still,

* IAP Report, p. 55
† Ibid, p. 97
‡ Ibid, p. 95

the UCP-appointed majority discusses arguments "reaching them"[*]. In light of the lack of public input, where did these arguments reach them from? Unfortunately, we might never know because the UCP majority of the Committee shut down motions that would have forced them to disclose any external contact. The entire process leaves a strong perception of bias. One would certainly hope that was not the Legislature's intention in putting forward Government Motion 37.

And, as the Panel's minority notes, the majority forgets one very important thing. It contends that the language of Government Motion 37 is flexible enough to allow it to make changes even in areas that Recommendation 5 expressly prohibits. But the majority members ignore the qualifying word in Government Motion 37: "necessary". There is nothing necessary about packing and cracking Lethbridge. There is nothing necessary about gerrymandering northwest Calgary. There is nothing necessary about the trial balloon of future changes floated for northeast Calgary. Their changes are driven not by necessity but by the need to ensure the UCP can cheat to win the *next election*.

The UCP-appointed majority's expansive and permissive reading of Government Motion 37 and Recommendation 5 cause it to go in directions which it should not have touched under any reasonable circumstance. As the Panel's minority states, "There is no precedent for the redrawing of the entirety of a province after an independent commission has completed the task in at least the past three decades of Canadian history. As the Nova Scotia reference in particular notes, interference in an independent redistricting process is constitutionally perilous"[†].

3.3 Voter Parity

The electoral boundaries proposed by the UCP-appointed majority would violate the right to vote guaranteed by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* by significantly and unjustifiably underrepresenting urban electors.

The map proposed by the UCP-appointed majority, like the minority map of the 2025-2026 Commission, robs urban voters of their voice. If implemented as proposed by the majority, the constituencies in Edmonton and Calgary would have about 7,000 more people on average than the districts outside those cities. This is a 14% difference in size, representing a significant weakening of the value of a vote cast in Edmonton or Calgary compared to votes cast elsewhere in the province. As is clearly noted by the minority of the Panel, "The proposed IAP Majority recommendations exacerbate the underrepresentation of the four largest cities in Alberta"[‡].

The most populated riding proposed by the UCP-appointed majority would have more than double the population of the lowest populated riding, with a vote cast in Central Peace-Notley having roughly 2.2 times the weight of a vote cast in Leduc-Beaumont. In our view, it is fundamentally unfair and **potentially unconstitutional** that the vote of one Albertan in one part of the Province could be worth more than the votes cast by *two* Albertans in a different part of the Province. We are also certain that this view - that votes should have relative parity - is one shared by most Albertans.

While many successive Electoral Boundaries Commissions have noted concerns about future voter parity given faster population growth in Edmonton and Calgary, they have historically taken steps to address that issue by adding additional seats in each city with the goal of preventing the difference in size and vote-weighting between rural and urban constituencies from becoming too severe. The boundaries proposed by the Panel have departed from this precedent by instead opting to further dilute the weight of urban voters through the creation of large and unwieldy hybrid districts in Lethbridge and Calgary that fail to provide effective representation.

[*] Ibid, p. 57
[†] IAP Report (Minority), p. 6, para. 18
[‡] Ibid, p. 37

Recent Differences in Urban and Rural Vote

The overstuffing of Edmonton and Calgary in particular is of concern to us. Firstly, these are the largest population centres of this province. The people who live there deserve to feel that their voice and vote matter. Secondly, their populations are distinct and have interests that are not effectively served by hybridizing them into surrounding areas that have different needs and interests. The results of the recent referendum demonstrate this. Putting aside the separatism question, Edmonton voted no to the nine other referendum questions and Calgary voted no to eight of them. And yet, five of the questions still passed because of the high support in rural parts of this province.

This difference can be demonstrated in the proposed riding of Calgary-Bow-Springbank; while its Calgary-Bow portions largely voted against eight of the nine referendum questions, its Springbank portions largely voted the opposite direction. Placing these two distinct communities in the same riding places its would-be MLA in the position of having to serve two communities that have directly competing priorities and interests.

3.4 Lethbridge

The boundaries proposed by the UCP-appointed majority for the City of Lethbridge and Southern Alberta are extremely concerning and, if implemented, would severely curtail effective representation and *Charter*-protected voting rights of Lethbridge voters. The division of Lethbridge into one significantly over-populated urban riding and three rural-urban hybrid ridings that stretch hundreds of kilometers away from Lethbridge itself does not reflect shared communities of interest and would provide significant partisan electoral advantage to incumbent UCP cabinet ministers.

Since 1971, Lethbridge has been represented in the Legislature by two MLAs elected from two urban constituencies on a relative east-west divide. While the boundary between Lethbridge-West and Lethbridge-East has shifted in response to population growth, every Electoral Boundaries Commission since the 1971 provincial election has maintained this model, which has provided effective representation for Lethbridge for more than fifty years. Lethbridge-West and Lethbridge-East have historically been competitive ridings, electing MLAs of many different political parties on both Government and Opposition benches, occasionally at the same time.

The dramatic changes proposed by the UCP-appointed majority would reverse fifty-five years of boundary-making precedent while removing at least one competitive seat, by slicing off competitive portions of Lethbridge and grafting the voters who live in those areas on to historically less-competitive and primarily rural constituencies. As the UCP-appointed majority coldly states, these Lethbridge voters are “population to spare”’ who can be lent to underpopulated rural constituencies - to say nothing of their own *Charter* rights to effective representation.

As observed by the minority of the Panel, this redrawing of Lethbridge evokes the well-documented American gerrymandering practice of ‘packing and cracking’, in which boundaries are strategically drawn to reduce competitiveness in a given region by ‘packing’ voters more inclined to support a specific party into one dense riding, while those that cannot be ‘packed’ into the core riding are drawn into geographically-larger constituencies that incorporate enough voters of a different political persuasion to render their votes diluted[*].

In the proposed boundaries for Lethbridge, voters who have been more inclined to vote for the NDP or other non-conservative parties across both Lethbridge-West and Lethbridge-East have been packed into an overpopulated central urban riding confusingly called “Lethbridge”, while those voters who the Panel was not able to fit into this urban Lethbridge riding are treated as “spare population” and are folded into the ridings of three UCP cabinet ministers to create three non-competitive rural-urban hybrid ridings that

[*] A recent example of this practice can be seen in the 2026 Texas Redistricting or the 2026 Missouri Redistricting, particularly in Missouri’s 2nd District.

stretch hundreds of kilometres to communities like Cardston, Little Bow, and Milk River. While voters previously had a reasonable possibility of electing an MLA from either major party in Lethbridge-West and Lethbridge-East, the outcome in each of the four proposed ridings is now largely predetermined before a single vote has been cast.

The evidence available to us and to the public suggests that Lethbridge–the city–has been deliberately gerrymandered to produce this specific electoral outcome through this unconstitutional, irregular, and inappropriate process.

Firstly, as noted by the minority of the Panel, Lethbridge is being treated **wholly arbitrarily** - the only other city in Alberta with a population comparable to Lethbridge - Red Deer - is allowed to retain the two urban ridings it has had since the 1986 election. No explanation is provided for the Panel as to the sudden differential in treatment between two cities that have a nearly-identical population range and have followed the same model of representation in the Legislature for forty years. Lethbridge's greater competitiveness and tendency to elect MLAs from non-conservative parties is perhaps the only explanation for its arbitrary dissection by the Panel. While the UCP-appointed majority generally spared Red Deer from Lethbridge's rough treatment, we note it could not leave it entirely alone - the southernmost tip of Red Deer-South has been snipped and grafted onto Blackfalds-Innisfail, perhaps as a prelude to future packing and cracking.

The majority's carving up of Lethbridge is directly at odds with its own warning about the dangers of unnecessarily redrawing boundaries when it explained why it wasn't changing the UCP held riding of Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock:

> The status quo is maintained and in the absence of a pressing need to make changes, maintaining the status quo is considered good practice in electoral boundary mapping. Studies have found that maintaining the status quo in clear and understandable electoral divisions promotes collective recognition of community concerns over time. It has also been found to promote recognition of elected representatives by constituents who all too often do not know who their elected representative is.

Despite the fact that Lethbridge has the ideal population to justify the two ridings it has had for fifty-five years, the UCP-appointed majority set aside the status quo.

Secondly, the decision to create three new rural-urban hybrid ridings using Lethbridge voters is at odds with the expressed preferences of the vast majority of Lethbridge residents who attended or participated in the public consultations held by the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission. These residents expressed strong support for the fifty-five-year status quo of two urban ridings. The boundaries proposed by the Panel for Lethbridge most closely resemble those requested by a small minority of participants, consisting mainly of voters who do not reside in Lethbridge proper as well as - perhaps not surprisingly - the UCP cabinet ministers who would run in the newly-hybridized Lethbridge ridings, and who would have direct electoral benefit from their hybridization.

Ministers Hunter, Schow, and Neudorf each provided written or oral arguments to the 2025-2026 Commission in favour of an extensive hybridization plan for Lethbridge, with Minister Neudorf writing to "encourage the Commission to consider a configuration of **three or four complementary ridings**" and **"**draw together Lethbridge-West, Lethbridge-East, and logical portions of adjacent rural divisions"[*], and Minister Schow telling the Commissioners that "you'd probably want to [...] make Taber-Warner, with some other iterations, part of a hybrid Lethbridge riding of its own" and writing in support of "an electoral district that brings together portions of Lethbridge with the Crowsnest Pass, Waterton Lakes National Park, and the communities of Cardston, Magrath, Raymond and Stirling."[†]

[*] Written submissions to the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission
[†] Oral submissions to the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission

These Ministers justified the plan to tear off chunks of Lethbridge and combine them with communities hundreds of kilometers away like Crowsnest Pass or Milk River by citing vague reasoning about "shared agricultural interests" or agro-business corridors. As noted by the minority report of the Panel, only approximately 10% of the region is employed in the agricultural industry - while this may be a marginally more persuasive argument for hybridization than the golf courses used to justify the gerrymanders of Calgary-Bow, Calgary-West and Calgary-North West, it does not remotely justify overturning the fifty-five years of precedent supporting the status quo of Lethbridge-West and Lethbridge-East and was rightfully rejected by Justice Miller and the 2025-26 Commission in both their Interim and Final Reports.

Justice Miller was critical of the UCP's push for hybridizing Lethbridge, and described the proposal as "radical surgery" without any outside support or endorsement during a public hearing:

> "I still would call this radical surgery, Minister Hunter. In that regard, I don't see any chamber of commerce, any city of Lethbridge, any town of Coaldale submissions saying: 'You know what? We have really kind of come along and we think this quad hybrid idea is great.' We don't have that, what I would call, you know, intervening organization support or endorsement of this concept"[*]

In his drafting of Recommendation 5, Justice Miller placed a barrier against any future Panel tasked with going to 91 seats from using it as justification to alter the Commission's proposed boundaries for Lethbridge-West and Lethbridge-East and reviving the hybridization plan for Lethbridge after its rejection by both the public and the Commission. The first condition that Recommendation 5 imposes on the work of this Committee and the Panel is that **no ridings south of Airdrie can be impacted by further changes with the exception of Drumheller-Stettler.** This condition, and the inclusion of Recommendation 5 in Government Motion 37, renders the proposed packed-and-cracked boundaries for Lethbridge put forward by the Panel as outside of its narrow grant of delegated authority from the Legislature, as pointed out in the Panel's minority report.

In our work on the Committee, we moved motions specifically aimed at preventing this outcome and preventing malfeasance or interference by MLAs, ministers, or other individuals who would stand to benefit from a hybridized Lethbridge contrary to the wishes of the public. We moved motions to require any maps proposed by the Panel to adhere to Recommendation 5, as well as motions that would have prohibited contact between Ministers Schow, Neudorf, and Hunter or anyone acting on their behalf from contacting the Panelists or otherwise influencing its deliberations. Specifically, we moved a motion to prevent the Panel from receiving or discussing maps or proposals from individuals outside of public meetings; a motion to require Panelists to disclose any information they receive from outside sources; a motion to require Panelists to disclose any contact or attempted contact from the Premier, ministers, MLAs, or Government officials; and a motion to require Panelists to disclose any contact or communication with lobbyists.

At each instance, our motions were voted down by the UCP majority on the Committee, which is not surprising given what the Panel has proposed for Lethbridge: a gerrymandered map that violates Justice Miller's Recommendation 5 and goes beyond the Panel's mandate, and which if implemented will provide direct electoral benefit for Ministers Schow, Neudorf, and Hunter at the expense of the *Charter*-protected rights of Lethbridge voters who would be denied effective representation. We also note that this configuration if implemented would prevent Ministers Schow and Hunter from potentially facing each other in a contested nomination; while thousands of Lethbridge voters are now denied a political voice, at least there will be one less difficult conversation in the UCP's Caucus room.

Overall, it is clear to us that the majority's map of the Lethbridge region reflects the request of local cabinet ministers.

[*] January 13, 2026, Public Hearing of the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission

Sixty thousand Lethbridgians are stuffed in one riding. Meanwhile, fifty thousand lose their voices to protect Ministers Neudorf, Hunter and Schow and are used as “spare” population to be “borrowed” by other ridings. One might ask how they would feel knowing their democratic rights are worth less than the political futures of these three Ministers of the Crown.

3.5 Calgary

For similar reasons outlined above, the boundaries proposed in the Panel’s majority report for the City of Calgary are extremely concerning, and if implemented, would severely impact effective representation and the *Charter*-protected rights of thousands of Calgarians, especially those living in the City’s northwest quadrant.

Despite the fact that Justice Miller explicitly excluded Calgary from any changes flowing from Recommendation 5, which was endorsed by Government Motion 37, and there being absolutely no reason to alter the maps in Calgary to fulfill its narrow mandate, the UCP-appointed majority of the Panel does so. Seeing as there were no public hearing opportunities during the Panel’s process, these changes were certainly not made at the request of the public or the Calgarians who will be affected.

These changes cannot reasonably be justified, and in the absence of justification must be looked at with suspicion. It is not obvious what problem these changes to northwest Calgary solve, but what is facially obvious is that three UCP ministers, two of whom narrowly won re-election in 2023 and have come through the last three years as the faces of some of the most unpopular government policies, are protected by and will directly benefit from these decisions by the UCP-appointed majority.

The riding of Cochrane appears to be singled out arbitrarily, and it was decided by the UCP-appointed majority that it simply cannot be included with Springbank or any of the surrounding rural areas to its south. Not only is the argument not applied to any of the other smaller municipalities in the Province, but the inclusion of Cochrane with the county is bizarrely used by the Panel to argue for hybridization in Lethbridge, despite the fact that Lethbridge has approximately *four times the population of Cochrane*. This decision to sever Cochrane from Springbank - which, again, is outside of the scope of Recommendation 5 or the Panel’s delegated authority under Government Motion 37 - is apparently considered so crucial to implement by the Panel, that much of its other alterations to Calgary appear aimed at least in part at fixing the cascade of problems that this decision creates. The UCP-appointed majority acknowledges that by removing Springbank from Cochrane it takes an already low population division from 6% below average to 13% below average (page 64).

No evidence is cited for Springbank having “closer ties” to Calgary; it is simply asserted. Once asserted, a strained and tenuous argument about a shared ‘golf course’ is attempted to justify its conclusion in the same community of interest, despite many election cycles of divergent voting patterns and priorities between voters in Springbank and voters in northwest Calgary. Had the UCP-appointed majority reviewed the public’s submissions, it might have been more alive to the fact that the location of a golf course does not define a community of interest for most people in Calgary, Springbank, or Cochrane.

After removing Cochrane, the UCP-appointed majority then insists that Springbank has to be split into two and added to two different Calgary ridings because the population is too large to fit in just one. This seems like an excellent reason to do nothing at all and leave Springbank with Cochrane – respect the status quo, which the majority elsewhere described as its guiding light. However, the UCP-appointed majority clearly wanted to alter these critical electoral maps. The result of this chain of unexplained decisions is two overpacked rural-urban hybrid ridings, the novel splitting of Springbank, and Cochrane being 13% below average - again without an identified problem that any of this is aimed at solving. The UCP-appointed majority embark on an unnecessary frolic because of golf courses.

While the general public overwhelmingly spoke against the creation of hybrid ridings in both rounds of public consultation conducted by the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission, there *is* at least one submission that argued for this. It was Minister Nicolaides who wrote to the Commission: “It is suggested

that the Commission incorporate the community of Springbank (Rocky View County) and remove the community of Wildwood and create Calgary-Bow-Springbank… By incorporating the relatively dense Springbank community into Calgary-Bow, the Commission avoids creating an unnecessarily large, low-density rural riding to the west. This avoids diluting the representation of genuinely sparse agricultural regions."[*] While the Minister certainly advocated for this specific outcome, he argued for it to *avoid* an underpopulated riding - whereas the UCP-appointed majority uses it to *create* one.

As in Lethbridge, the majority's main deviation from the recommendations of the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries for northwest Calgary implements the suggestions of an incumbent UCP cabinet minister and is contrary to the express submissions of Albertans.

The UCP-appointed majority explains that it moves Bearspaw into Calgary-North West because the Commission *considered* doing so at some point, though ultimately the commission decided against it. No reason is given other than the fact that the incumbent cabinet minister argued for it, and the Commission considered but rejected it. Yet another solution in want of a problem. Again, this appears to be the UCP-appointed majority off on a frolic, and we are left to wonder why.

Why this frolic? It solves no problems, and creates several. It is outside the clear mandate and delegated authority of the Panel, outside the scope and wording of Government Motion 37 and is entirely unnecessary to fulfill the recommendations made by Justice Miller. The arguments are clearly strained to support this conclusion, and like in the case of Calgary-Bow-Springbank, strain credulity by relying on golf courses to claim a shared community of interest where historically there has been none.

Again, we are left to assume that this was deemed necessary because the incumbent UCP minister wanted it, in the absence of any other evidence. During public submissions, Minister Sawhney argued "for the inclusion of the communities of Bearspaw and Watermark into the Calgary-North West electoral division… I would also advocate, for the sake of consistency, that the community of Springbank be included in Calgary Bow for the same reasons." It is interesting that both these outcomes implemented by the Panel's majority were laid out in Minister Sawhney's submission, and that neither outcome was necessary to fulfill the Panel's strict and narrow mandate under Government Motion 37.

This approach to northwest Calgary pairs in a fascinating way with the confusingly-positioned section on northeast Calgary. Only one of the constituencies discussed in this section - Calgary-Cross - is actually entirely in the northeast of the City, and three constituencies that *are* - including Calgary North East itself - are not included here. This same "attention" was not paid to these ridings because "The northeast challenge reached the Panel late,"[†]. One is left to wonder, in light of the lack of public submissions or consultations, where did it "reach" them from? The two panelists go on to propose a pre-commission secretariat to propose options instead of "discovering" growth under deadline pressure[‡], in a further deviation from the legislative scheme set out in the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act*.

This entire section is extremely odd. It is signed by only two UCP-appointed Panel members, not the Chair. It talks about presenting a "four division map as four-division options, rather than a late stage repair." It includes four *different* versions of Calgary-Klein, Calgary-East, Calgary-Confluence, and Calgary-Cross which are not reflected anywhere else in the Panel's report or in the proposed boundaries. What was being repaired? What was broken? Who was repairing it? Why? What non-four division options are they talking about?

In the absence of any explanation, the section almost reads as an apology to Minister Amery for not giving his re-election the same consideration as others like Ministers Schow and Nicolaides. Finally, in most places it argues for consideration in eight years. Northeast Calgary certainly is growing fast - but these aren't the northeast Calgary ridings - Calgary-Klein is in the northwest and northeast, Calgary-East is in the southeast and northeast, and Calgary-Confluence is centrally located. If Calgary-Klein is now too

[*] Written submissions to the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission
[†] IAP Report, p. 57
[‡] Ibid, p. 57

large, why not simply return the portion of Calgary-Mountainview it absorbed? This is only one example of a far more obvious solution.

This entire section - again signed by only two panel members for unknown reasons - suggests it must be solved before the next Commission, despite this being a clear departure from Alberta's normal redistricting process. Then in the introduction, it is suddenly expanded (without argument as to why) to suggest the Legislature do it on page 4. This suggestion that the Legislature should intervene *again* into what is intended to be a non-partisan and non-political process is another major threat to Albertans' *Charter*-protected voting rights.

3.6 Banff-Canmore-Diamond Valley

Our strong objection to the reconfiguration of this riding can be explained simply: Diamond Valley did not ask for this. The minority of the Panel correctly explains that "there was an overwhelming desire for Okotoks and Diamond Valley to be paired in the same electoral division after the interim report of the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission. Not a single submission, to our knowledge, asked for Diamond Valley to be paired with Banff"[*]. This UCP-appointed majority's change goes against what residents requested.

We agree with the minority panelists that it undermines effective representation for Albertans in the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundary Commissions' proposed ridings of Banff-Canmore and Okotoks-Diamond Valley. Frankly, the only rationale for this change away from those ridings, in the absence of a single human being requesting it, is to fix cascading problems created elsewhere by the unwarranted tinkering by the UCP-appointed panelists, and to attempt to restore partisan advantage for the UCP in this riding where its vote share has declined over two elections.

3.7 Interference

As we have shown throughout this report, the spectre of political interference has haunted this process since the beginning. The drastic change between the Commission's unanimous interim report and the minority report proposed by two UCP-appointed Commissioners late in the process, which the majority of the Commission points to with suspicion, seemed to have had a partisan motivation that came from outside proper channels. We were on guard for this during this entire Committee process, which is why we moved so many motions to prevent outside interference. These motions were voted down. The result is a secretive process that has produced what can only be described as a partisan map where arguments arrived to panelists "late", and justifications for gerrymandering are strained beyond belief.

4.0 Conclusion

The Government claimed all along that its motivation in setting out on this irregular process, in the face of public outrage and a plea from Elections Alberta, was to restore rural representation to the map proposed by the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission. The Government ignored the fact that the Commission's map would already have given more weight to votes cast in rural Alberta than those cast by urban voters in Edmonton and Calgary. It refused to put the Commission's proposal to a vote in the Legislature in line with the *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act,* and instead passed Government Motion 37 to initiate the illegitimate *Special Select Committee on Electoral Boundaries.* The result of this irregular process is the report we see today.

Taken together, the Panel's majority report is a knife in the heart of Alberta's democracy and the democratic rights of Albertans. There is no possible rationale for so many of their changes to the 2025-

[*] IAP Report (Minority), p. 35, para. 138

2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission's report. The true goal of these changes, disguised as they are by peculiar and contradictory justifications, is to push the UCP's partisan advantage and protect UCP ministers – at least six by our count.

We are left to wonder why the UCP-appointed majority's report reflects what Government Ministers requested, and not what Albertans have advocated for in the hundreds of written and oral submissions on record. We cannot help but infer that a report and a set of electoral boundaries that reflected the desires of the UCP – and not Albertans – was the whole purpose of this exercise.

The Government is counting on the fact that fighting for democratic rights is harder to do these days. As the public contends with converging crises of cost of living, healthcare and education, there simply isn't enough bandwidth to be outraged by this gross violation of *Charter* rights. But we submit that the Government has severely miscalculated. Cheating is antithetical to the Alberta ethos, where we work hard to succeed. It's a tactic that reeks of fear and desperation – after all, a Government that was addressing the priorities of Albertans and making their lives better would not be scared of facing voters at the ballot box.

We have faith that Albertans will recognize this for what it is – and despite the Government's best attempts, they will face a reckoning for this at the next provincial election.

We want to thank Dr. Gerard Kennedy and Mr. Brent Robinson for their work on the minority report. While we do not agree with everything in their report, we take heart at their attempts to safeguard the rights of Albertans, and we respect the independence with which they made their recommendations. Their report, unlike the Panel's majority report, will serve as an example of how fair-minded people do their best to fight against illiberal and undemocratic actions that are unprecedented in our country - particularly while doing this from within the challenging constraints of an illegitimate process.

Recommendation to the Legislature and Albertans

The Government should discard the report of the Panel and put forward the boundaries proposed by the independent majority of the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission for a vote in the Legislature and support their adoption. Doing so would restore Albertans trust in this process and ensure Elections Alberta could begin preparing for the next provincial general election. Given the recent letter from the Chief Electoral Officer, it is important that Elections Alberta and Albertans have the certainty and stability that the Commission's map will provide.

Any attempt to adopt the unconstitutional map proposed by the UCP-appointed majority of the Panel will move Alberta into uncharted waters and threaten the future of our democracy. The bipartisan adoption of the Commission's report is the best and only way forward.