

Summer 2017



# Linda Duncan

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT // EDMONTON STRATHCONA  
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## Greetings!

It was a hectic but disappointing Spring Session of Parliament. Many are expressing unhappiness with the growing list of broken promises by the Liberal government, including on undertakings made in their Throne speech. They committed to never use omnibus bills that can prevent Parliament from properly reviewing and debating proposals and to change the House of Commons Standing Orders to bring an end to this undemocratic practice. Instead they tabled lengthy omnibus budget bills.

They promised that 2015 would be the last election based on first-past-the-post, then refused to implement reforms supported by the majority of Canadians and experts for a proportional voting system that would make every vote count.

The Liberals committed to set a higher bar for openness and transparency in government, that information should be open by default and to disclose information held by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, yet tabled a law lacking these measures. The Prime Minister and his Ministers continue to participate in cash-for-access fundraising events, despite growing concerns with conflict of interest. Concerns mount over delays and failed processes in appointing judges and Parliamentary officers.

Finally, while the Prime Minister has declared that no relationship is more impor-



**Serving up pancakes on Canada Day at the Alberta Legislature grounds at the breakfast hosted by Edmonton's Ismaili Muslim Community.**

tant than the one with Indigenous peoples, the government continues to refuse to deliver the funds determined by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to be necessary to ensure comparable access to services. Despite promises to compensate Indigenous peoples for the “Sixties Scoop”, where children were removed from their families and communities losing connection to their indigenous heritage, the government is again forcing them into the

courts. I have raised concerns with the government’s failure to comply with UNESCO directives to consult Indigenous communities on impacts to the Peace Athabasca Delta.

I continue to appreciate your feedback on law and policy measures and welcome your views so that I can share them in debates in the House and Committee.

It is a delight to be home to enjoy a beautiful Edmonton summer. I hope to see you at the many fabulous festivals in Edmonton Strathcona — the Edmonton Folk Music Festival, the Jazz festival, the Art Walk, Freewill Shakespeare Festival, Heritage Days, the Strathearn Art Fair and this year’s Midsummer’s Night Fringe.

*Linda*

## Summer Events

### DESSERT & COFFEE SOCIAL

Tuesday, August 8, 6:30–8 pm

Belgravia Community Hall, 11540 73 Ave

Plus join our garden share — bring your extra fruit, vegetables, herbs.

### ANNUAL SUMMER BBQ

Monday, August 28, 6–7:30 pm

Ritchie Community Hall, 7727 98 Street

Enjoy burgers, hotdogs & salads. Balloon animals & facepainting for the kids.

Plus join our garden share — bring your extra fruit, vegetables, herbs.

**HOW I CAN HELP**

My staff and I are available to support constituents on federal matters. Below is a guide to the range of services we offer.

Contactez Hélène à mon bureau de circonscription (780-495-8404) pour de l'assistance en français.

**My Edmonton constituency office can assist with:**

- Employment Insurance
- Citizenship and Immigration
- Canada Pension, Old Age Security (OAS) & Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)
- Canada Revenue Agency
- Student Loans
- Meeting with the MP
- Invitations to events
- Veterans Affairs

**My Ottawa office can assist with:**

- Information on legislation
- Submitting a petition for presentation in the House of Commons
- Accessing information on bills, laws, policies and statements in the House
- Contacting government departments
- Visiting the House of Commons and attending Question Period

**GREETINGS & CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES**

Celebrating a special birthday? An anniversary? A graduation? I would be pleased to send or facilitate special greetings.

**Her Majesty, The Queen**

**Anniversaries:** 60 years or more, at five year intervals.

**Birthdays:** 100 years or more. (Six to eight weeks notice required. Requests must include a photocopy of the birth or wedding certificate.)

**Linda Duncan, MP**

Any anniversary, graduation, birthday, new citizenship or other occasion.

**Governor General**

**Anniversaries:** 50 years or more.

**Birthdays:** 90 years or more. (Both at five year intervals. Six to eight weeks notice required.)

**Prime Minister**

**Anniversaries:** 25 years or more, at five year intervals.

**Birthdays:** 65 years or more, at five year intervals. (Six weeks notice required.)

**GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS & SERVICES**

Information on Government of Canada programs and services can be obtained by dialing toll free 1-800-0-Canada (1-800-622-6232) TTY: 1-800-926-9105, going online to [www.servicecanada.gc.ca](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca) or visiting a Service Canada Centre.

**Filing your Taxes**

Revenue Canada no longer mails out tax forms. To order a form call 1-800-959-8281. You can also print forms from CRA's website: [www.cra.gc.ca](http://www.cra.gc.ca). The website has a link to a free software package for online filing.

**Student Loans**

For information about obtaining student loans: [www.canlearn.ca/](http://www.canlearn.ca/) For the Repayment Assistance Plan: [www.canlearn.ca/eng/loans\\_grants/repayment/help/index.shtml](http://www.canlearn.ca/eng/loans_grants/repayment/help/index.shtml)

**Finding a Job**

For information on the Job Bank, resume writing tips, opportunities for youth and students and job openings with the Federal Government: [www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca)

**Canada Pension Plan**

For CPP, Survivors Benefit and CPP Disability benefit: [www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cpp](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/cpp)

**For Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)**

[www.servicecanada.gc.ca/oas](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/oas)

July is the month where some **federal benefits are recalculated or renewed** based on your income tax return. This includes Child Tax Benefit, GIS and GST credit. Contact my office if you have inquiries or issues with the recalculation or renewal.



In June I cohosted a panel on Parliament Hill on nuclear disarmament with Hiroshima survivor Setsuko Thurlow and Project Ploughshares' Cesar Jaramillo. It's time for Canada to join with other nations seeking disarmament.

**Tax Fairness and Tax Evasion**

The NDP tabled a number of measures seeking greater tax fairness and an end to tax evasion. Our motion, opposed by the Liberals, called on the government to end tax measures benefiting only the wealthy including the Liberal promise to cap the stock option deduction, and to intensify action against off-shore tax havens and investigations and proceedings against those who have committed tax evasion.

NDP House Leader Murray Rankin also introduced Bill C-362 to deny tax breaks on bank transactions commonly used by the wealthy to avoid paying taxes. Currently, Canada does not require a transaction to have economic substance to qualify for tax benefits. Canadians for

Tax Fairness have estimated that the NDP's proposed reforms could help recover up to \$400 million a year.

**Whistleblower Protections**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations tabled a unanimous report, recommending strengthening the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act to better enable disclosure of wrongdoings and to protect employees who disclose wrong doings, to provide legal and procedural advice and to extend confidentiality for disclosures. The intent is to prevent problems such as occurred under the Phoenix Pay system and decisions that in the past potentially impacted health or environment. It is now in the hands of the government to enact these legal measures.

**How to Contact Linda Duncan**

 <p><b>In Edmonton</b> 10049-81 Ave (Entrance on 101 St) Edmonton, Alberta T6E 1W7 Phone: 780-495-8404 Fax: 780-495-8403</p>	<p><b>In Ottawa</b> House of Commons Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6 Phone: 613-995-7325 Fax: 613-995-5342</p>
<p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:linda.duncan@parl.gc.ca">linda.duncan@parl.gc.ca</a> <b>Web:</b> <a href="http://www.LindaDuncanMP.ca">www.LindaDuncanMP.ca</a></p>	

*Veillez trouver la version française de ce bulletin sur mon site web.*

**Regulating Toxins**

As Vice Chair of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, I participated in a year-long review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the federal law that regulates toxic substances contained in products such as cosmetics or that may be emitted by Industrial operations. After hearing testimony from federal officials, industry, lawyers, scientists, indigenous peoples and NGOs, our Committee issued recommendations for improved measures to prevent harm to human health and the environment. These include expanding transparency, accountability and rights to the public to participate in decisions on control of toxins; recognizing the right to a healthy environment; adding specific measures to protect vulnerable persons; expanding powers to compel information on substances; mandatory hazard labelling; identifying pollution hot spots; expanding measures to address interprovincial air and water pollution; and imposing legally binding national standards for air and water quality. The full report, including my Supplementary Report calling for enactment of a Canadian Environmental Bill of rights to apply to all federal environmental laws, can be found on my website.

**Omnibus Budget Bill**

Despite promises, the Liberal government has continued the practice of tabling massive omnibus budget bills. Widespread concerns have been voiced with this budget bill, in particular with the decision to create the Infrastructure Bank and limitations on the work by the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO). While we were successful in obtaining changes to the powers of the



In May I participated in a panel called *Energy Democracy: How citizens can shape Canada's Renewable Future*, sponsored by The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in partnership with the National Observer and Senvion Canada Inc. The panel discussion was streamed lived — visit my website for a link to watch online.

PBO, the government refused our requests to split the bill to enable a separate detailed review of the Infrastructure Bank. As a result, minimal opportunity was allowed for careful consideration of how the bank is to be established and operated. Concerns included the removal of major funds needed to meet priority needs such as affordable housing or childcare; a lack of accountability and control of the intended \$35 billion public investment in the bank; and the potential for political interference. While in theory private investment could enable construction of infrastructure such as LRT, highways or bridges, there is concern that despite input of taxpayer funds, investors will demand profit on their investments through user fees or tolls.

**Access to Information**

Amendments to the Access to Information Act have been tabled but fall short of more substantial changes recommended in 2016 by the Standing Committee, promised by the Liberals during the

election and recommend by the Information Commissioner. Those included more timely responses, a duty to document decisions and greater oversight over responses. The majority of information held by the PMO and Ministers will still not be released and information may now be denied based on a list of reasons including bad faith or vexatious requests.

**National Security Bill**

Bill C-59, the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act, (formerly Bill C-51) was tabled just as the House adjourned. Many of the concerns voiced by Canadians remain unchanged including impacts to Canadians' privacy rights. The bill would authorize Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) to collect and store bulk metadata on Canadians' private communications, actions the Federal Court had ruled illegal. The bill maintains powers in CSIS to intervene to disrupt perceived threats to national security, a mandate currently held by the RCMP. We will be reviewing the bill to try to

ensure that its effect is to enable preventative action on security threats while minimizing invasions of privacy for Canadians.

**Private Member Bills**

Intending to trigger more progressive measures by the government, my NDP caucus colleagues have tabled numerous private member bills for example: calling for development and implementation of a national strategy for increasing the proportion of electricity generated from renewable energy sources in Canada; prohibiting the practice of shark finning and importation in Canada of shark fins; promoting the importance of an urban forest strategy; collaboration with the provinces and territories on a Pan-Canadian Palliative and End-of-life Care Strategy tied to dedicated funding and attention to federal responsibilities for Indigenous peoples veterans and the Canadian Forces and improved supports for caregivers; extending the right to know when products contain toxic substances; and development and implementation of a national housing strategy.

## IN THE COMMUNITY



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**1:** Participating in the ribbon cutting ceremony for phase two of the Capilano Community Park redevelopment.

**2:** Visiting “Where the Rivers Meet” project at the National Aboriginal Day celebration in Edmonton’s Victoria Park.

**3:** With former Ukraine Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk and MP Wayne Stetski celebrating Vyshyvanka Day in May.

**4:** Congratulating Ali Rachid and Fernande Bergeron on the 2nd anniversary of Centre Albertain d’information juridique.

**5:** Honouring Canada Day at a fantastic event at the South East Edmonton Seniors Activity Centre.

**6:** Celebrating at the Edmonton Pride Festival and Parade with members from the Two-Spirit Community.

**7:** Meeting with students from The King’s University and other university students representing World Renew, on climate impacts to agricultural in the developing world.

**8:** Panel discussion and film presentation on transition to renewable energy, held on May 25 at Metro Cinema.

**Front cover:** It was a treat to have wonderful young companions join me for the Edmonton Pride Parade in June.



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