



WHY ALBERTA SHOULD REMAIN IN CANADA

United Nurses of Alberta believes that separation from Canada in any form would gravely weaken the health-care system Alberta's nurses work in every day, reduce or eliminate the right of all working people to free collective bargaining, and result in years of disruption to our ability to move between jurisdictions for work.

UNA further believes the economic disruption merely caused by the Alberta government's decision to proceed with a separation referendum no one asked for and no party campaigned on has already harmed the province, and would grow worse with a pro-separation vote in the referendum or actual separation. Separatist groups' claims that leaving Canada would turn Alberta in to an economic paradise are a dangerous fantasy, driven by ideology. Given the makeup of the separation movement, nurses would certainly lose bargaining and human rights in a separate Alberta.

UNA's support for remaining in Canada aligns with the objectives of our union's constitution: the advancement of the social, economic and general welfare of nurses and other allied personnel and the promotion of the highest standards of health care.

It is also in alignment with the strong statement of passed unanimously by delegates at the Alberta Federation of Labour convention in April 2025.

By opposing separation, UNA defends not only its members but also the principles of solidarity and fairness that define Canada's labour movement.

Loss of health care funding and the Canada Health Act

Leaving Canada can be expected to cause serious economic and financial turmoil for our families and communities that would send a shock wave through our health-care system. Health care in Alberta benefits directly from billions of dollars from the federal government and is protected by the principles of the *Canada Health Act*. Leaving Canada would mean federal funding would disappear along with the federal law that protects Alberta's publicly funded and publicly operated health care system from succumbing to widespread privatization. More economic uncertainty like that already caused by the province's decision to proceed with the October 19 referendum has the potential to put the future of public health care in jeopardy.

Threats to pensions and retirement security

Alberta's potential withdrawal from the Canada Pension Plan and economic turmoil that would damage the Local Authorities Pension Plan threatens the retirement security of UNA members. The CPP is a nationally managed, stable, and proven system that provides reliable benefits. Pulling workers out of the CPP and moving them into a new Alberta Pension Plan would be extremely risky, with flawed projections and uncertain long-term sustainability. UNA members could face benefit reductions, higher administrative costs, and the inability to port the pension to other Canadian provinces.

Economic instability and job insecurity

Alberta's economy benefits from being part of a larger national economy. Separation would disrupt trade, investment, and federal health funding, potentially leading to job losses and economic instability. For UNA members and their families, this could mean reduced job security, hiring freezes, and layoffs, especially if provincial revenues decline due to transition costs and economic uncertainty.

Losing federal labour protections

Alberta's labour laws operate within the framework of federal standards and protections. Separation could lead to the erosion of workers' rights, including employment insurance, workplace health and safety regulations, and fair wage policies. UNA members could lose crucial protections that are enforced nationally, leaving them vulnerable to weaker provincial laws.

Skyrocketing cost of living and inflation

Separation would introduce new costs, such as establishing a provincial currency, tax system, and regulatory bodies. The cost of separation has been estimated by the provincial government as \$400 billion in start-up costs and \$25 billion a year after that. Separatist groups have disputed those numbers, although in fact costs could be ever greater without even considering the economic damage likely to Alberta. Transition expenses would lead to higher taxes and inflation and erode the wages and purchasing power of UNA members. Recent bargaining gains, such as wage increases, could be erased by rising living costs.

Slamming the door shut on job mobility

Canadian citizenship provides mobility rights, guaranteed in our national Constitution, allowing nurses to work and retire anywhere in Canada. Separation would close the door on that movement, restrict job opportunities, and complicate nursing registration processes. This would particularly impact members with families in other provinces or those seeking job opportunities outside of Alberta.

Weakening collective bargaining and worker rights

Alberta's labour relations are governed by the *Alberta Labour Relations Code*, a provincial law that aligns with federal principles. Since separatist groups in Alberta are associated with extreme right-wing ideology, separation would likely result in legislative changes that undermine collective bargaining, union certification, and the rights of workers to take job action. UNA's ability to negotiate fair agreements, like the recent ratified contract with wage increases and benefits, would be compromised.

Severing connections to the national labour movement

Unions are stronger when they stand together across provincial lines. Separation or absorption by the United States would isolate Alberta nurses from the Canadian labour movement. UNA plays an important role in national organizations like the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, and provincial organizations like the Alberta Federation of Labour, to advocate for workers' rights. Leaving Canada would fracture these alliances and weaken the voice of nurses in the labour movement.

Risking Indigenous & Treaty Rights

Unilateral separation would create legal chaos over treaty obligations and Indigenous land rights. Many First Nations may choose to remain part of Canada, leading to jurisdictional conflicts with serious social and legal consequences.

