Twitter Thread by Trevor Robb



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New from me.

Alberta is exploring the idea of establishing a provincial police force. What are the motivations behind this move, how much is it going to cost, and do Albertans even want it?

#yeg #ableg

Alberta currently pays $262.4 million for its RCMP service, with the feds paying $112.4 million annually in a 70-30 split. This is the prime concern for Alberta's small towns and cities.

"We could be saddled with some immense costs going forward without federal contributions."

Dr. Laura Huey, a criminologist at the University of Western Ontario, estimates the cost is likely to be in the billions.

"I'm not convinced necessarily that people understand and appreciate how enormous those costs are, and that those costs are ongoing and forever."

In the end, it all comes down to cost versus control, Dr. Huey argues. But with increased control comes the risk of politicization, an issue that concerns NDP Justice critic Irfan Sabir.

"I think the province shouldn't be controlling directly how these police forces operate."

So why is Alberta pursuing this? Autonomy from Ottawa seems to be the largest driving factor.

Derek Fildebrandt, former MLA for Strathmore-Brooks and publisher of the Western Standard, suggests the UCP are in search of a "legacy project" to hang its hat on. #ableg

“This government was promised as a new era, that it was going to be a significant break from the past and be a historic premiership like that of (Ralph) Klein or (Peter) Lougheed — we haven’t seen very much of that yet,” says Fildebrandt.

“There’s not very much right now that the government can be able to point to in 2023 and say ‘that is a legacy of this government, this is something big that we’ve achieved.’ So I think perhaps they’re mindful of the need to leave some positive mark, and this would be it.”

In October polling conducted on behalf of the National Police Federation (NPF), 81% saying they were satisfied with RCMP policing.

“The majority of respondents thought it wasn’t important at all and shouldn’t be a priority — it’s actually quite overwhelming."

In October, online polling was conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights on behalf of the National Police Federation (NPF) — the largest police labour relations organization in Canada representing 20,000 RCMP members across the country, including 4,500 members in Alberta. The NPF is one of the groups being consulted in the Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) Canada audit.

More than 1,300 Albertans over the age of 18 responded with 81 per cent saying they were satisfied with RCMP policing in RCMP-served communities.

Seventy per cent of Albertans polled said they have a favourable impression of RCMP officers, with the highest favourability found in the Edmonton suburbs (81 per cent) and the Calgary suburbs (83 per cent), and moderately high favourability in the rural north (78), rural central (77), and rural south (70) area.

Fifty per cent of respondents said Alberta should stay the course when it comes to RCMP policing, 36 per cent supported retaining the RCMP with significant improvements and six per cent supported outright replacing the RCMP with an Alberta police service. However, 44 per cent of respondents said they had a favourable view of RCMP management. The poll has a relative margin of error of +/- 2.7 per cent.

50% of respondents said Alberta should stay the course when it comes to RCMP policing, 36% supported retaining the RCMP with significant improvements and 6% supported outright replacing the RCMP with an Alberta police service.

SUPPORT FOR THE RED SERGE
RCMP vs. APP POLICING PERSPECTIVES

Fair Deal panel report online survey, more than 46,000 submissions from December 2019 to March 2020.



Establishing a provincial police force ranked 14th in a list of 15 priorities, with

35% support.

Only separation from Canada, either alone or with other western provinces, polled lower at

34%

October online polling conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights on behalf of the National Police Federation (NPF), 1,300 Albertans over the age of 18 responded:

81% saying they were satisfied with RCMP policing.

70% said they have a favourable impression of RCMP officers.

44% of respondents said they had a favourable view of RCMP management.

When asked which they prefer:

50% said Alberta should stay the course when it comes to RCMP policing.

36% supported retaining the RCMP with significant improvements.

6% supported outright replacing the RCMP with an Alberta police service.

8% said neither, or didn't know.



GETTY IMAGES

SOURCE: FAIR DEAL PANEL, NATIONAL POLICE FEDERATION

LORI WAUGHTAL/POSTMEDIA NEWS

Paul McLauchlin, a county councillor and reeve for the central Alberta town of Ponoka, says at any given time he's 30 minutes from a police officer and the issue of rural crime is still very real, and ongoing.

https://t.co/e2hX4L2Jkj

However, he remains unconvinced that an APP — with all its added costs — is the right step.

"...all I’m hearing about is “screw Ottawa” and that makes no sense. This isn’t us versus them, or us versus Ottawa … We’re not solving anything by throwing mud at each other."

I could keep going with this thread, but I won't. It's a 2,500-word story and I can't highlight everything. Give it a read if you have time today.

https://t.co/wwQohkl739