



Claire Kraatz · 5d · 🌐

This is a powerful piece. I hope fellow Albertans will read it. Regardless of your concerns (Indigenous Rights, healthcare, education, environmental justice, etc), we must recognize that we are the canary in the coal mine.

## The Slow Undoing of Alberta: A Warning to the Rest of Canada. Editorial for the Globe and Mail.



Michael Clark

August 4 at 6:41 PM · 🌐

\*Editorial by disability advocate Don Slater, publish in the Globe and Mail.

“I was born and raised in [#Alberta](#), in the shadow of the Legislature, where the great debates of our province echoed through the halls of power and out onto the streets. My family was deeply rooted in this place. They were community builders, people who believed in the quiet dignity of doing the right thing even when no one was watching. Ethics were not an accessory, they were the foundation of our lives. I absorbed that code early, and I carry it with me still. Morality is my compass. I do not often hesitate when asked what is right and what is wrong, but I do dwell on my decisions. Doubt is not my enemy. It is a companion, one that makes sure I do not become self-righteous or careless in my convictions. My friends are thoughtful people, challenging my views and forcing me to see the world from perspectives I may not instinctively understand. It is through those conversations that I refine my beliefs, not to win arguments, but to avoid doing harm.

I am an Albertan. I love the prairies, the Rockies, the crisp sting of a January morning, and the brilliance of our unbroken summer skies. I love Banff and Jasper and Lake Louise. I even love Calgary, if I am allowed to say so in Edmonton. This is a land of great beauty and great potential. But something is changing here, and not for the better.

Over the past two decades, American political influence has crept in like a shadow cast by a dying, once shining, beacon on a hill. What was once a proud

province is now infected by a divisive ideology imported from the south. It is not just political influence. It is psychological warfare. It is the legacy of Lee Atwater, the dark wizard of American conservatism, who on his deathbed admitted his regret for the poisoned tactics he introduced. His spiritual successors have not repented. They have industrialized manipulation, funding it through think tanks and Super PACs born of Citizens United. The infection spreads through social media, talk radio, and cable news. The goal is always the same: divide the people so they never unite against the powerful.

The story of Alberta is becoming a cautionary tale. It is not a story of left versus right, but of top versus bottom. The ultra-wealthy, those with more wealth than conscience, have found their clearest path to domination is to keep the middle and working classes locked in combat. They whisper lies to both sides, tell one group they are victims of lazy welfare cheats, and tell the other they are oppressed by privileged elites. While we fight over crumbs, the banquet disappears behind closed doors.

And now, Alberta is becoming cruel. Not because Albertans are cruel, but because their empathy is being replaced by suspicion. The fastest way to turn compassion into contempt is to convince good people that their kindness is being exploited. If you want to rob someone of their humanity, all you have to do is make them believe they are being conned.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the treatment of [#disabled](#) Albertans. I have heard the phrases repeated too many times: "They don't look disabled to me." "They should be working." "They are lucky, we give them the most generous benefit." These are not statements of fact. They are political theatre. They are used to justify clawbacks, cuts, and cruelty. To boast about being the "most generous" while our disabled citizens are forced to choose between food and rent is a grotesque sleight of hand. Alberta is the wealthiest province in [#Canada](#), and yet it steals back federal support from its most vulnerable, like a churchgoer plucking bills from the collection plate because they feel the donation was too generous.

This is not generosity. It is grievance masked as governance.

My fellow Albertans are not bad people. They are pragmatic, and they have been made afraid. Afraid of economic ruin, of social change, of losing control. And like anyone trapped in a burning house, they may rush toward the door they are told leads to safety. If someone tells you the fire was lit by the poor, the disabled, the immigrant, or the outsider, you may start to believe that cruelty is justice. And if someone tells you your own government has betrayed

you, you may stop seeing your country as a home, and begin to see it as a prison.

This editorial is a warning. Alberta is not immune to the sickness that is devouring our neighbours to the south. It is the sickness of authoritarian capitalism, cloaked in patriotism, funded by billionaires, and sold as common sense. It tells us that the rich are “job creators” instead of modern-day feudal lords. It convinces us that we should slash the social safety net so that those who need it most are punished for being born poor, disabled, or unlucky. And it whispers in our ears that we are too small, too weak, and too divided to demand anything better.

But we are not.

Canada is not Amerika. Not yet. But if we do not defend our values, compassion, fairness, equality, and truth, we will lose them. We must remember who we are. We are the country that gave the world Medicare. We are the country that said no to Iraq. We are the country that once believed in peacekeeping, in welcoming refugees, in helping those who could not help themselves.

To the rest of Canada, do not look away from Alberta. Look hard. We are the canary in the coal mine. And the air is growing thin.”

Don Slater

Disability Advocate, Community Organizer, Albertan

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/436248180001/posts/10172311701445002/>

A very good Opinion piece, but unfortunately, not published in *The Globe and Mail*, at least that I can find. (Maybe Mr. Slater has submitted it to the G&M, and they have either rejected it—not unlikely—or have yet to post it.) As someone who eschews social media, I can only assume such mistaken attribution pervades the Net. It is so easy for misinformation to get spread far and wide, never to be corrected. Which in the end discredits the author when someone checks it out critically. TJB