



NEWS RELEASE

ABmunis: New regulations are unfair & costly

October 18, 2024

EDMONTON – *The following statement is issued on behalf of Alberta Municipalities' Board of Directors:*

Regulations introduced earlier today by the Government of Alberta concerning the introduction of political parties at the municipal level and the ways in which municipal elections must be conducted create an uneven playing field for candidates and a more costly electoral process.

Alberta Municipalities' Board of Directors and its 265 member communities fervently hoped the input, feedback and advice we provided to the provincial government in good faith over the last four months would be reflected in these regulations.

Albertans have repeatedly said they want less money, not more, in local politics. They have also said they do not want political parties in local elections. These regulations give more money to political parties and their candidates.

While we acknowledge the regulation on political parties in municipal elections currently applies to only two municipalities, Calgary and Edmonton, we are concerned that they will be extended to other municipalities in Alberta in the years ahead.

We note that candidates who run under a political party will benefit from greater funding. This creates an environment in which independent candidates are at a significant disadvantage, a concern we raised during our consultations with the provincial government.

The new provincially mandated rules that will apply to the 2025 municipal elections will add considerable work and cost to municipal government. In addition to the returning officers' usual duties and responsibilities, they must now keep a watchful eye on political parties' conduct to ensure compliance. The amount of extra effort and expense this will require is unknown but should not be underestimated.

The new rules will compound unwelcome expenses, complexity and potential delays to election results due to the requirement to count ballots by hand. In this respect, the regulation and legislation are completely at odds with the Government of Alberta's commitment to reduce red tape.

Alberta Municipalities hopes the provincial government will reconsider legislation as it pertains to the machines which count paper ballots.
