

PUBLIC POLICIES: ISSUES AND STANCES

During the 1993 federal election campaign, then-Prime Minister Kim Campbell was asked about her government's plans to cut social programs. In response, Campbell famously said "this is not the time, I don't think, to get involved in a debate on very, very serious issues."

Opposition parties and the media quickly attacked Campbell for avoiding a conversation about an issue during an election campaign.

Admittedly, her statement may have been fair. Societal issues are complex, can rarely be explained with a single snappy line, and usually require thoughtful solutions. Nevertheless, many people only take an active interest in politics and governance during elections. Thus, elections are a time to debate serious issues. Whether or not we debate serious issues seriously is another question entirely.

Several issues relevant to life in Saskatchewan will emerge during this election campaign. Choose a handful of issues you find interesting and important. For each issue, answer the following questions:

1. Examining the Issue
 - a) What is the issue?
 - b) Why is it an issue to you? Is it an issue for other people as well?
 - c) Which political parties have addressed this issue?
 - d) What is the policy/stance of each party towards this issue?
 - e) If the issue has not been addressed by one or more parties, why do you think that is the case?
2. Deconstructing the Party Stances
 - a) Who will benefit the most from each party's solution to the issue?
 - b) Who will benefit the least from each party's policy?
 - c) What problems are left unresolved by the proposed solution?
 - d) What problems could the solution create?

