



# NEWS RELEASE

## Alberta government per-person spending highest in 2017—exceeded COVID-induced spending in 2020

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For Immediate Release

**CALGARY**—From 1965 to 2020, the highest level of per-person provincial government spending (adjusted for inflation) in Alberta occurred in 2017—three years before the pandemic, finds a new study published today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

The study, based on new data, compares provincial government spending since 1965.

“Many Albertans might be surprised to learn that their government spent more three years before COVID than during the first full year of the pandemic,” said Tegan Hill, economist at the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Alberta Premiers and Government Spending*.

Specifically, in 2017, the provincial government spent \$13,719 per person, Alberta’s highest level of inflation-adjusted per-person spending between 1965 and 2020 (the latest year of available data).

During the first year of the pandemic in 2020, the provincial government spent \$13,649 per person, the second-highest level during this 55-year period. (In 2020, non-COVID-related spending totalled \$12,347 per person.)

In contrast, in 1996, then-premier Ralph Klein’s government spent \$7,154 per person (adjusted for inflation) after a period of austerity to better control the province’s finances, which laid the foundation for debt elimination and tax relief, ushering in a period of prosperity in Alberta.

“Holding the line on the growth of provincial spending, as the government achieved in the 1990s, is imperative to the long-term health of the province’s finances,” Hill said.

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