

February 10, 2009

## Alberta Chambers welcomes job protection for reservists

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce (ACC) is pleased the Alberta government has recognized reservists in the Canadian Armed Forces deserve job protection while they're serving their country.

Tuesday's throne speech indicating Bill 1 of the spring session will provide reservists with return-to-work guarantees is supported by our federation of 124 chambers of commerce, representing 22,000 Alberta businesses.

In May 2008, ACC adopted an Edmonton Chamber-developed policy asking Alberta to provide reservists with job, benefits and seniority protection when they take leaves of absence to serve in the Armed Forces. The policy acknowledges the estimated 40 per cent of reservists who have full-time civilian employment can face challenges balancing their civilian careers and their Reserve Force activities.

"Canada has come to rely on reservists more and more and, while many employers embrace and value the training and experience gained from their part-time service, other employers may not," said ACC Chair Jack Grant. "This situation creates an uneven playing field, which can place reservists at unacceptable personal and family risk for having volunteered to perform an essential service to their country, abroad and locally."

While it's important to view details of the Employment Standards (Reservist Leave) Amendment Act before passing judgment on it, ACC supports the government's direction, and its plan to join the six other provinces that offer reservists employment security.

"In our view, business interests are served when Canada provides a safe, stable environment in all aspects of our society," said ACC Chair Jack Grant. "Reservists provide valuable service, while gaining experience that can be employed by business when they return. Legislation appropriately balancing the interests of business and reservists is not only good policy – it is the right thing to do."

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