

# HOW WE CANCELLED CHRISTY CLARK'S BONUS

## (but then she got to keep it anyway): A BC political thriller



Bloomberg via Getty Images

**MAY 28, 2016**

Gary Mason reports for the first time on the front page of the Globe and Mail that Christy Clark is attending small dinner parties for which the BC Liberal party is charging attendees between \$5,000 and \$20,000.

Bob Rennie estimates he will organize between 10 – 20 of these events for the Premier before the next election.

The names of attendees and locations of the dinner parties are secret.

**APRIL 2016**

**APRIL 1, 2016** – I file a complaint with the BC Conflict of Interest Commissioner, arguing that the Premier could not reasonably make a decision in the public interest if the night before she attended a private dinner party with someone who paid \$20,000 to her political party to sit down with her and discuss that same decision. Democracy Watch files a complaint shortly after.

**APRIL 1, 2016** – Christy Clark hires, using public tax dollars, John Essen, QC, a senior lawyer in British Columbia, to defend her and the BC Liberal Party's right to fundraise as they wish.

**APRIL 15, 2016** – The Premier's lawyer responds to the complaint, saying the Premier gets no personal benefit from the small dinner party fundraising. He also says that since there is no evidence of who attended these dinner parties (because the guest list is secret), there is no evidence of a specific decision the Premier has made that benefitted a dinner guest, and so my complaint should be dismissed.

**APRIL 18, 2016** – In discussing the Premier's reply, a policy expert points out to me that the Premier receives a "Leader's Allowance" of unknown amount paid to her by the BC Liberal Party. I write to the Commissioner, arguing the "Leader's Allowance" is evidence that the Premier does benefit directly and personally from political donations.

**APRIL 27, 2016** – Gary Mason gets information from the BC Liberals that Christy Clark is paid "between \$30,000 and \$50,000 each year" as a second salary paid out of political donations received by the party. The story is the front page of the Globe and Mail.

**APRIL 27, 2016** – The Premier holds a press conference where she explains she deserves the extra \$50,000 per year from political donations because she has two jobs. First, as Premier, for which she is paid \$190,000 plus benefits, and second, as leader of the BC Liberal Party. She says she will continue to receive the payment, and she is defended by Rich Coleman who says the Premier needs to do "political work" and should be paid for it.

**MAY 2016**



www.rbs.ca

**MAY 2, 2016** – The Premier's lawyer provides a statement from Sharon White, QC, the President of the BC Liberal Party. Ms. White discloses that Premier collected \$276,900 from the BC Liberal Party since becoming leader, with payments of \$50,000 for each of 2015 and 2016.

**MAY 3, 2016** – I file a 42 page submission with the Conflict Commissioner, detailing how the Premier hid the significance and amount of her second salary paid from donations. In 2012, for example, she described the "Leader's Allowance" to the Tyee as "a car allowance", and when asked how much it was, said "I don't know." That year she received \$44,900.

**EARLY AFTERNOON, MAY 4, 2016** – Reporters call me to tell me that the press liaison for the BC Liberal caucus is telling them that my complaint against the Premier has been dismissed, and to ask if I have a copy of the decision, or know anything about it. I don't, and have trouble believing that a decision could be issued the day after I provided the Commissioner with a 42 page detailed legal submission.

**EVENING, MAY 4, 2016** – I receive a copy of the decision dismissing my complaint.

**MAY 5, 2016 TO JANUARY 12, 2017** – The BC Liberals continue paying Christy Clark her stipend and holding small dinner party fundraisers with ticket prices of \$5,000 to \$20,000 to sit down with the Premier.



**JANUARY 2017**



**JANUARY 13, 2017** – New York Times reporter Dan Levin publishes a story calling British Columbia "the wild west" of Canadian political cash. He specifically notes the lack of limits on political donations, and the Premier's second salary paid from political donations, as outliers in Canada.

**JANUARY 13, 2017** – Democracy Watch's appeal of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's decision is heard in BC Supreme Court. The Commissioner's lawyer argues that the Court has no legal right to review the Commissioner's decision. Democracy Watch's lawyer Jason Gratl argues the Commissioner's decision is simply wrong. The decision on whether the case can go ahead is reserved and will be released at a future date.

**JANUARY 14, 2017** – Local media outlets follow the New York Times story.

**JANUARY 20, 2017** – The Premier tells the Vancouver Sun late on Friday afternoon that although getting paid \$50,000 from political donations is "a standard part of the process in British Columbia," she's decided to "ask the party to let's get rid of it" because it had become "a real distraction."

**JANUARY 20, 2017** – The Premier does not say, or the Sun does not ask, how much money she collected for 2016 and 2017 from the BC Liberals before she asked the party to "get rid of" her second salary.

**DAVID EBY, MLA**  
VANCOUVER  
POINT GREY

David Eby, MLA for Vancouver-Point Grey  
and Opposition Housing Spokesperson  
DAVIDBYMLA.CA