

GRASS ROOTS ALBERTA

When change in government policy becomes desirable or necessary, many people respond with one of two attitudes: They claim that nothing can be done, or they look for a quick fix. Both alternatives are mistaken. There are always things that can be done, but change doesn't happen overnight. Trying to promote change before people are ready rarely succeeds. So what is the process by which long-term, stable change actually occurs?

CHANGE

How is it brought about?

2 What about protesting?

When there is **little widespread public support** for change, some suggest it can be driven by demonstrations, protests, rallies, and media stunts.

These things can draw attention to an issue, yet rarely influence what people in general actually believe. Demonstrations can even polarize issues—hardening opposition and making change more difficult to achieve. Demonstrations tend to be short-term attention-getting events rather than initiatives that drive stable, long-term change.

On the other hand, when there is **widespread public support** for change, it will be difficult for even the most determined politician to resist.

But in a democracy, the majority isn't always clear about what it wants. Sometimes there is broad public support for a bad idea or a policy that is generally misunderstood. Politicians will often go along with these ideas, implementing laws they believe the public wants. This is how poor public policy gets established.