

DEBATE 1, June 15, 2004 (Windsor West) at the Caboto Club

Q 1. Health Care is the number one concern of Canadians, how would you ensure that it is universally available & affordable & what do you think is the role of the private sector in the delivery of Health Care Services.

A 1: Richard Pollock – Liberal Party – Windsor West

The Liberal Party is committed to public funding and delivery of Health Care. The Party has commissioned the Romanow Report. The emphasis of the Liberal plan is to reduce the waiting times while assuring performance.

A1: Jordan Katz – Conservative Party – Windsor West

The Liberals cut \$25 Billion from Health Care. Paul Martin uses private Health Care. We need to get back to the Health Accords.

A1: Rob Spring – Green Party – Windsor West

We will reinforce public Health Care, as it is the backbone of the country. Concentrating on the human side, we believe in prevention of disease and will work to invest in these areas. Healthy environment will contribute to reductions in the costs of Health Care. We are against genetically modified foods. Whereas social policy promotes dealing with illness we will promote healthy life style and community.

Q 2. The Chamber supports a healthy and positive relationship with the U.S. and this is critically important to Canadians. What are your views on this issue and how will you strengthen this relationship.

A 2: Richard Pollock – Liberal Party – Windsor West

The Liberal Party will strengthen the relationship with the U.S. and strengthen our sovereignty. Harper will trade our sovereignty. U.S. does not need help to get into Iraq. We understand that the Americans deal with increased risk in their country. We would work toward rule-based synergy. The U.S. has been a good friend and continues to be a strong ally. We need to be strong and independent. U.S. needs Canada to get out of Iraq. We have so far instituted a Ministry of Public Safety to deal with security. Paul Martin will restore Canada to prominence on the world stage.

A 2: Jordan Katz – Conservative Party – Windsor West

Our goal is to strengthen the relationship. We need to show respect to our closest ally. By our previous actions we have insulted the U.S. as a country. On an individual action level that relationship was damaged. We now need to mend that relationship. The NDP does not think that is necessary. The issues of significance like the Boarder Crisis, BSE, and Lumber need to be dealt with.

A 2: Rob Spring – Green Party – Windsor West

We need to build positive relationship with all countries, respecting our differences and diversity. The Green Party has no specific U.S. policy. We will promote continued relationship but not at the expense of Canadian sovereignty. We say no to the softwood policies of the U.S. and Star Wars military strategy. Our natural resources should be processed in Canada.

Q 3: There continues to be a shortage of skilled labour force in this area. What would your party do to improve the current employment and apprenticeship programs?

A 3: Richard Pollock – Liberal Party – Windsor West

Paul Martin was successful in balancing the budget. We are the only G7 country to do so. In Canada, 3 Million jobs were created since 1993. Our employment improved to 3rd in the world. Paul Martin has a 5-year plan and we will invest \$1.3 Billion in commercialization and industry. We made announcements on the investments in the Auto industry. Paul Martin has the vision. We provided \$100 Million for the Ford Oakville plant. This will create 4100 direct jobs and a commitment worth \$1.2 Billion from Ford Canada.

A 3: Jordan Katz – Conservative Party – Windsor West

We need to expedite the process dealing with foreign credentials and eliminate barriers to training. We will encourage immigration in areas with skill shortages. We will improve the student loan program. We will provide tax-free funds for education by making the savings programs better, the R.O.S.P's.

A 3: Rob Spring – Green Party – Windsor West

We are supporting creative initiatives. We will boast participation in apprenticeship and learning for life through Co-op and Apprenticeship Programs. We will emphasize Mentorship between senior skilled professionals and the young. The question is are we prepared to position ourselves for the Green Economy? Are we leaders on the Green Economy or the old Economy? This can be achieved through technology. We will also speed up accreditation for immigrants with the necessary skills needed by industry.

Q 4: The latest Federal budget has called for continuing reductions in the Federal Debt. Some argue that the debt is already low enough and the funds earmarked for debt reduction should be used to increase program spending. Do you support continued debt reduction and how will you ensure the taxpayer's funds are spent in a responsible way?

A 4: Richard Pollock – Liberal Party – Windsor West

We are world model for fiscal responsibility. We have a \$3 Billion contingency fund and we have brought a balanced and prudent approach to finances. This fund is necessary for such things as SARS and tainted beef. If not used, the fund will be applied toward the debt. Yes we need to reduce the debt to GDP ratio further, but it has already been reduced significantly. We will bring Health Care, Home Care and Pharmaceutical Care as priorities for Canada.

A 4: Jordan Katz – Conservative Party – Windsor West

We have to make sure funding is available for the debt. The debt of \$510 Billion accounts for \$35 Billion in interest charges or 20% of the budget expenditure. No year-end spending binges for Liberal friends. We are responsible for solving the debt. We will aggressively reduce the debt and even bring the Debt to GDP ratio down by introducing debt reduction legislation. More money will be available for programs as the interest costs are less.

A 4: Rob Spring – Green Party – Windsor West

Money spent on interest reduces availability for programs. Bank of Canada must take control of the debt. We propose a national business plan for government programs and spending with detailed quarterly reporting. We will bring open, honest and accountable government being representative of the citizens.

Q 5: The Bi-National planning group has recently suggested the earliest date they foresee a third crossing at the Windsor-Detroit border to be 2013 and potentially much later. Do you consider this acceptable and if not what do you propose can be done in the short term to alleviate the problem.

A 5: Richard Pollock – Liberal Party – Windsor West

We need to look closely at Harper's plan for our deficit. The Bi-national process date of 2013 is not acceptable. We need a political will to resolve this problem. All the NDP does in this area is hand brochures. The Liberals brought the funding in March and we need to build on the \$82 Million commitment.

A 5: Jordan Katz – Conservative Party – Windsor West

The 2013 date is unacceptable. Infrastructure takes time but the timeline can be shortened. We need better relationship with the U.S. now. The U.S. customs processing is the problem. The border has overcapacity at 130% and the delays are coming from the customs side. We have enough capacity on both crossings. FAST program is one of the solutions that should be embraced.

A 5: Rob Spring – Green Party – Windsor West

The 2013 date is completely unacceptable. It is a long time for the infrastructure and the Green Party would move on the problem immediately. We are for economically viable ways to cross the border, to foster new ways of doing things. When 30% of trucks are half full it is not economical. We need better strategy in these areas not a short-term answer. Staging areas do not work; just in time does not work. Inter-modal must be brought in.

DEBATE 2, June 16, 2004 (Windsor-Tecumseh) at the Serbian Community Centre

Q 1. Health Care is the number one concern of Canadians, how would you ensure that it is universally available & affordable & what do you think is the role of the private sector in the delivery of Health Care Services.

A1: Joe Comartin – New Democratic Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

Mr. Romanow did an outstanding report on Health Care with recommendations on how to fix the system. Sufficient funds are available to support our Health Care system but the solution is more than sufficient money. It goes beyond that. We need to ask what we can do to reform the system. The report does not focus enough on the Mental Health issues. Under no circumstances will there be privatization of the Health Care system under the NDP.

A1: Rick Fuschi – Conservative Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

Under the Liberals \$25 Billion have been removed from Health and Education. Reforms are badly needed.

A1: Rick Limoges – Liberal Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

I am concerned that for Stephen Harper's Conservatives the Health Care is not the first priority. We support the Health Accord. We will invest at least \$37 Billion over the next 5 years. Another \$2 Billion for national home care will be committed. It is expensive to provide government Health Care. Ontario spends 41% of its Health Care Budget on Health Care. Canadians expect reasonable essential services. We have made it a priority to reduce the waiting times for health services.

Q 2. The Chamber supports a healthy and positive relationship with the U.S. and this is critically important to Canadians. What are your views on this issue and how will you strengthen this relationship.

A 2: Joe Comartin – New Democratic Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

The U.S. is overwhelmed by its security needs. Racial and religious profiling does not help in this security situation. Canada has to point this out to the U.S. The bottom line is that we are independent and sovereign country. The Conservative party would deteriorate our sovereignty and so would the Liberals only slower.

A 2: Rick Fuschi – Conservative Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

The relationship with the U.S. is vitally important for our economic relationship. The Liberals have made the relationship poor. Since 9/11 the U.S. is concerned about its security. We need to get serious about these U.S. security concerns when we deal with our immigration policy.

A 2: Rick Limoges – Liberal Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

We have taken the steps necessary to improve the relations with the U.S. Paul Martin has good rapport with U.S. administration but we don't have to follow the U.S. as the Conservatives, who

wanted to follow the U.S. into Iraq. Liberals will have an independent military policy. We can maintain our Peacekeeper status. We will continue to work with the U.S. and facilitate better cooperation. On this issue the parties have very different approaches.

Q 3: There continues to be a shortage of skilled labour force in this area. What would your party do to improve the current employment and apprenticeship programs?

A 3: Joe Comartin – New Democratic Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

There is a crisis in this area that is coming. In the next 20 years there will be lack of skilled workers and 25% loss as a result of retirements. We cannot import skilled trade people as we have been doing for the last 10 years. For those skilled immigrants that come to Canada we need programs to ensure their full capacity. NDP Party will spend additional money for immigrants. In the domestic programs, unless private sector gets more involved it will not be successful. A good example of this type of involvement is the Herman High School program that was funded continuously with great deal of success.

A 3: Rick Fuschi – Conservative Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

We need continued prosperity. Besides giving grants to corporations we can level the tax playing field. We will lower taxes to achieve economic prosperity. There is considerable uncertainty in the major auto plants. We need to extend education to skilled immigrants and we need clearer re-certification programs. For these goals we need to work closely with the provinces.

A 3: Rick Limoges – Liberal Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

Liberals invested \$1 Billion into the auto sector for training and development of its workforce. The Tool and Die industry needs trained people. We will work with the training institutions like the College and the University. The industry needs to be more productive to be competitive with lower wages.

Q 4: The latest Federal budget has called for continuing reductions in the Federal Debt. Some argue that the debt is already low enough and the funds earmarked for debt reduction should be used to increase program spending. Do you support continued debt reduction and how will you ensure the taxpayer's funds are spent in a responsible way?

A 4: Joe Comartin – New Democratic Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

At the federal level the debt is not utilized appropriately. Our national Debt to GDP ratio needs to fall below 40%. Our target should be 25%. In the U.S. that ratio is off the map. The NDP believes we should pay toward the debt annually and within budget.

A 4: Rick Fuschi – Conservative Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

\$30 to \$40 Billion a year is going to debt re-servicing. Meanwhile 31\$ Billion is spent on grants to subsidize government contracts. We have waste and mismanagement. The Ad scam is just the tip of the iceberg.

A 4: Rick Limoges – Liberal Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

When Liberals took over the Debt to GDP ratio was 70% now it is 40 %. The savings can for that be redirected toward programs. When I was at City Council I was in support of the City's fiscal fitness policy. What you save on the Debt you can reinvest in infrastructure. The Chretien government provided a balanced budget for 7 straight years. I believe that we have to control debt, debt charges eat you alive. We need fiscal prudence.

Q 5: The Bi-National planning group has recently suggested the earliest date they foresee a third crossing at the Windsor-Detroit border to be 2013 and potentially much later. Do you consider this acceptable and if not what do you propose can be done in the short term to alleviate the problem.

A 5: Joe Comartin – New Democratic Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

Where we are at now precedes 9/11. Americans have used security to slow the border down. It becomes a tool in a trade war. A 13-year wait for a new crossing is not realistic plan to solve the border issues. We need to negotiate a realistic position with the U.S. The federal government is not focusing on the issue. All levels of government need to agree on a site, and the Environmental Assessment will increase rapidly.

A 5: Rick Fuschi – Conservative Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

I am unhappy with the process. It is important to address issue now and be realistic about proposals in existence now. Local MP's should accept responsibility. I blame the current MP's. They have stood in the way by politicizing the issue. Our City Council and the Bi-national Committee need to cut through red tape.

A 5: Rick Limoges – Liberal Party – Windsor-Tecumseh

Traffic Problems are a result of U.S. Customs. There was more truck traffic in 1994 than today. The U.S. is trying to protect its safety. We are in need of locally driven solutions. We need to work with local, provincial governments and the business community. For whatever solution we bring we need to know what the environmental impact would be. We have a real issue with the infrastructure. The Huron Church needs a fix. Short-term solutions are needed.

DEBATE 3, June 22, 2004, (Essex) at the Verdi Club in Amherstburg

Q 1. Health Care is the number one concern of Canadians. How would you ensure that it is universally available & affordable & what do you think is the role of the private sector in the delivery of Health Care Services.

A 1: David Tremblay – New Democratic Party – Essex

We believe that Health Care is a number 1 priority. We believe it should be in public hands. We will enhance the Canada Health Act. We already have a two tier Health Care under the Liberals. The role of the private sector is to provide the supplies necessary for the health system, to hospitals. No private individual should profit from Health Care. We need cheaper and more effective Health Care. The U.S. cannot be a model in this respect and we need to protect our model.

A 1: Jeff Watson – Conservative Party – Essex

This is one of the key issues in this election. The money spent in the sponsorship scandal could pay for 250 full time nurses at full pay. We need to clean up government. National Health Care Accord with the provinces was signed but not implemented. Under Conservative government we will have public Pharma Care. The new Conservative government will expand services.

A1: Susan Whelan – Liberal Party - Essex

Health Care needs reform. In 1993, after taking over from the Conservative government we were almost broke from Conservative mismanagement. Money with alone cannot fix Health Care and reform will be more valuable than cash. It is about people taking care of people. We are committed to a publicly delivered health system. We have our 5 in 5 Plan that will provide additional funding to deal with key health problems: heart, diagnostic training, fast tracking of foreign Doctors and home care programs.

Q 2. The Chamber supports a healthy and positive relationship with the U.S. and this is critically important to Canadians. What are your views on this issue and how will you strengthen this relationship.

A 2: David Tremblay – New Democratic Party – Essex

Communication is a two way street and there needs to be a level playing field. This is not there. The U.S. is a great trading partner. We need to find a way to improve our agriculture sector and we have to match some of the funding for that sector like in the U.S. The Canadian farmers require investments. We also have to get away from just buying from the U.S. and selling raw products. We should develop our own processing plants etc.

A 2: Jeff Watson – Conservative Party – Essex

Our relationship with the U.S. is our greatest asset. To be able to influence the most important international player is significant. Conservatives will not withdraw from the relationship like the NDP or the Liberals. Anti Americanism is unnecessary irritant to a strong relationship. We will

repair the tattered relationship. We would invest in our coast guard and our military. We support NAFTA.

A2: Susan Whelan – Liberal Party - Essex

Canada and U.S. are each other's longest trading partners. We believe in an independent Canada but place a strong value on inter border relationship. I have developed a good working relationship with the American Congress. We talk about the issues like the BSE crisis and we work on various issues on a number of fronts.

Q 3: There continues to be a shortage of skilled labour force in this area. What would your party do to improve the current employment and apprenticeship programs?

A 3: David Tremblay – New Democratic Party – Essex

There is still a shortage of skilled labour today. Apprenticeship is how you learn a trade. You learn on the job. The problem is theory-based training. There is currently no optional course for young adults on the shop floor. This is because of cutbacks by the Federal, Provincial and Municipal government. This has led to less exposure to trades. The Tool and Die industry needs skilled people. Majority of people in skilled trades are immigrants.

A 3: Jeff Watson – Conservative Party – Essex

Multimillion dollar programs don't mean anything if you cannot access them. Small business is facing red tape when trying to take advantage of these programs. Tax cuts proposed by the Conservative party will help all business. We also need to expedite qualification documents for immigrants with the necessary skills, improve post secondary access and research in the private sector. Lastly, we need to remove politics surrounding grants.

A 3: Susan Whelan – Liberal Party - Essex

Training is a provincial issue and the Federal Government funds employment insurance. We are also continuing to seek advice and input from industry. We have a history of funding skills and training and we have a workplace skills strategy. There is a public funding for St.Clair College, a funding for Training Research and Development. This will ensure that we maintain the 3rd highest income per capita.

Q 4: The latest Federal budget has called for continuing reductions in the Federal Debt. Some argue that the debt is already low enough and the funds earmarked for debt reduction should be used to increase program spending. Do you support continued debt reduction and how will you ensure the taxpayer's funds are spent in a responsible way?

A 4: David Tremblay – New Democratic Party – Essex

You cannot blame the NDP for our debts because we have not been in a position to govern. At the local level debt is a foreign word. Municipally we operate on balanced budgets. We have a surplus situation at the federal level. We need to reinvest the surplus in the economy.

The needs of the community can be served well by those funds. We can reinvest these surpluses in Health Care and the Environment.

A 4: Jeff Watson – Conservative Party – Essex

Debt reduction is done as an afterthought. Careful thinking, planning and spending has to go into the debt reduction. The largest expenditure is the interest on the debt, not Health Care but the debt. Debt reduction is still important to the Conservatives.

A 4: Susan Whelan – Liberal Party - Essex

When the Liberal government came to power in 1993 there was a deficit of \$42 Billion a year. We had to balance the Budget and have a contingency Budget of \$3 Billion. If that contingency plan is not used it goes toward repayment of the debt. The interest payment on the debt was 37 cents for every dollar of the budget. That number today is 21 cent. The Debt to GDP ratio was 70%, today it is 40% and we have a plan that by 2010 will see that ration down to 25%. We have better accountability than ever with a Controller General and we have a Controller in every department. We have reorganized Auditor General's office to ensure more accountability.

Q 5: The Bi-National planning group has recently suggested the earliest date they foresee a third crossing at the Windsor-Detroit border to be 2013 and potentially much later. Do you consider this acceptable and if not what do you propose can be done in the short term to alleviate the problem.

A 5: David Tremblay – New Democratic Party – Essex

15 years ago local governments recognized the need for a 3rd crossing. Windsor is the most important crossing and the NDP leader is the only one that mentioned the crossing. We need a well-planned approach. There is a concern for plant closures if the border does not improve. Any future crossing should be publicly owned.

A 5: Jeff Watson – Conservative Party – Essex

There was a lack of vision, foresight on this issue. This problem has been 10 years in the making. We knew the trucks were coming and we did nothing for it. We treated it as an infrastructure problem where the money is being thrown. We never engaged the citizens of Windsor and Essex County. The future will determine if we are only a speed bump or a major transportation hub. We can become some of the hottest development land. This needs leadership, not cruise control. The Conservatives will improve the relationship with the U.S. The Liberal's have delayed the border process.

A 5: Susan Whelan – Liberal Party - Essex

After signing NAFTA the Conservatives were in support of building in Sarnia where there has been great progress. The Conservatives have underestimated the importance of a bridge in Windsor. There has been great improvement with NEXUS, Tunnel improvements have taken place and there is the \$300 Million fund. It is not easy to make the border project work. We have to work in consultations with four levels of government on both sides of the border. Let's not find only a quick fix, divide neighborhoods. We need a solution for the next 100 years.