



FEDERAL ELECTION

MEET THE LOCAL CANDIDATES

BY THE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS POLICY COMMITTEE

Chamber Hosted the First Windsor And Essex County 2006 Federal Elections Event in December

Under a slogan "Meet the Candidates Event" the Chamber invited political candidates from all three ridings and posed five locally driven questions chosen by the Chamber to each of the political parties. The format was well received and the candidates were able to cover a wide range of issues important to our business community. The organizer of the event was the Chamber's Government Relations Policy Committee. The moderator for the event was Patty Handysides from AM800 CKLW. We are providing the issues and questions posed as well as the candidate's answers.

Order of Speaking:

Order of speaking determined by a draw was the following: Liberal Party of Canada, New Democratic Party of Canada, Green Party of Canada, and the Conservative Party of Canada.

Chamber Issues and Questions:

The Chamber posed the following issues and questions to each of the political parties at the Meet the Candidates event. Their answers are below.

1) Border Infrastructure

It is anticipated that the earliest date for a 3rd Windsor/Detroit border crossing will be in 2013, perhaps later. Meanwhile the City and County are experiencing heavy traffic volumes on its streets. Of particular concern is the volume of traffic on Huron Church road.

What do you propose as a short-term solution to alleviate immediate border issues in Windsor and Essex County?

Discuss your position and tell us how would you address both the need to have the new crossing as an economic lifeline allowing for a free flow of traffic and the quality of life issues through the proposed corridor.

2) Health Care

Health care has always been an important issue for Canadians. How would you ensure that health care is available and affordable to all Canadians; and what do you think the role of the private sector should be in our health care system given the Supreme Court of Canada's decision upholding the right of individuals to seek private health care?

3) Post-Secondary Education

Post secondary education is extremely important for the econom-

ic development of Canada and for Regional Economic Development. Canada's productivity has been declining relative to its competitors.

We need to improve the quality of our labour force in terms of education and skills training to rectify this.

What does your party plan to do to support post secondary education and skills training?

4) Government Budget and Fiscal Policy

While government revenues have been rising, program spending has been increasing far in excess of inflation rates. Moreover, corporate taxes and personal income tax rates are far higher than our international competitors.

What is your plan to lower the tax rate for businesses and individuals?

5) Passport Issue

As the Tourism & Hospitality industry continues to experience a decline in business the border continues to be a problem on many fronts. One of the more recent issues has been the U.S. decision to implement the more restrictive Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative for travelers from the U.S. and Canada. With the current U.S. law this would be a costly proposition for many spontaneous visitors on both sides of the Border.

What is your plan to address the issue of the Western Hemisphere Travel initiative requiring Canadian and U.S. Citizens to obtain a passport or a passport like document to cross the Canada U.S. Border?

Answers:

Liberal Party of Canada

Candidates present at the Event: Susan Whelan (Essex), Werner Keller (Windsor West), and Bruck Easton (Windsor-Tecumseh).

1) Border Infrastructure

Liberal Government is committed to moving quickly to allocate funds for a new crossing. People of Windsor should be concerned about Stephen Harper. New border crossing is important for the government. We need a representative in Ottawa to make decisions and make immediate infrastructure.

The government is committed to pre-processing the vehicles and committed to immediate infrastructure. Border is critical.

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2) Health Care

No one should be pulling a wallet to be paying for Health Care. Short-term solutions do not work. When we have a doctor shortage we need a short-term solution.

The party is not for a U.S. style private health care. Within 3 months of the election reducing wait times. Money for the 10 provinces is already committed. For the first time Canadians will know the maximum wait time.

3) Post-Secondary Education

In 2004 we issued the New Canadian Learning Bond. In November 2005 we approved access grants. It was \$210 Million for graduate scholarship programs. Jack Layton pulled the plug on that initiative. To support the Capacity we offered more than \$10 Billion in programs. St. Clair College and University will be well supported under a Liberal government. We recommend over 5 years a financial assistance for debt management.

4) Government Budget and Fiscal Policy

This is an important discussion. Paul Martin is responsible for the surpluses we experience today.

Financial record has been sterling. We had a large tax cut as stated in our Economic Statement. Further \$30 Billion income tax cuts. Cutting the rate in the first 3 Tax Brackets. We made Corporate Tax cuts to grow and invest in Jobs in our Community. Our Businesses have to compete. Capital advance will be eliminated. Stewardship is excellent. The two percent cut in the GST is taking care of large purchases not the everyday shoppers. Every economist will tell you that a tax cut is better than a value added tax cut.

5) Passport Issue

The U.S. Congress passed this law. This is an issue where Frank McKenna has been working diligently. We have to build consensus if we want to have this law repealed.

When the party was representing Essex the Congress was working together with our Parliament. The issue was the Border. I still have these contacts, said Susan Whelan.

Our record shows debt reduction that saves the country \$3.5 Billion in interest payments each year. The record shows surpluses and paying the debt. Paul Martin has a plan and has been clear on the Border.

The New Democratic Party of Canada

Candidates present at the Event: Brian Masse (Windsor West)

1) Border Infrastructure

Hour lost on the Ambassador Bridge. They are 80,000 hours of lost time and I see traffic creeping up to College. The delays are crippling the trucks up to Dorchester. There is lack of infrastructure investment in the country. There is a lot of talk about the tax cuts but no investment in infrastructure. The first thing is to get the city Counsellors and the Mayor back involved with the border issue.

First thing we have to do is pay for the Schwartz Report. The Government did not provide support. We need a sincere commitment. Paul Martin promise is one that is not going to be kept. What could we do in the meantime? Ferry service is an example. They subsidise the Ambassador Bridge and not the Ferry. One Business treated better than other business. Pollutants. Taxpayers are paying for pollution while the pre-processing is a safe way.

Second duty is to increase public confidence. We have announcements, but they don't produce the results. Only pittance has been spent of the money promised and some is not even committed.

We have to think about the environmental health and reduce local pollutants. Public ownership and oversight of the new crossing is key. Over 24 crossings on and only the one Bridge and one other is privately held.

These crossings have public border authorities. We have the people at the table. Why is Windsor treated differently? This is an Important issue for New Democrats.

2) Health Care

The government refused a Pharmacare commitment. What we have are regulation changes that are going to increase the cost of drugs. What we are talking about is legislation and a full patient protection. Even in the U.S. Bush is progressive on Pharma care. Romanow report is a new model. We do not accept private healthcare. We need to have more control over pharmaceuticals. There needs to be more regulation and legislation on Pharmacare.

3) Post-Secondary Education

We achieved a better balanced budget. We negotiated with the Liberals and we invested in the postsecondary education. The average student debt is \$20,000. We have deficit in funding our Universities and innovation issues. We will modernize the campuses and address the increased cost of education so young people coming out of Universities can start their families younger. Now they are delaying having families. We will Invest money into education, reduce cost for students and invest in University and colleges so that students have lower debt.

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4) Government Budget and Fiscal Policy

We are committed to balancing the budget. We will provide tax relief at the lower end but we will not have corporate tax cuts. If you want to pay for the education, infrastructure we should not have corporate tax cuts for large Oil and Gas industries. How can we have subsidies amid record profits in the form of government grants and tax cuts? 43% of the budget is balanced, Re-invest into the country.

Green Party of Canada

Candidates present at the Event: Jillana Bishop (Windsor West), and James McVeity (Essex).

1) Border Infrastructure

Current transportation system is unsustainable. We agree with some aspects of the Schwartz Report. We agree with the Schwartz position on the introduction of a rail tunnel, both commercial and rail tunnel. We agree with the increasing the Capacity of the truck ferry.

The Green Party is opposed to the ring road. It goes through the most environmentally protected areas of the County.

2) Health Care

The Green party is opposed to a two-tiered Health Care system. Most people cannot afford private health care. Preventative Health Care is a way to address the health issue. A healthier society is a more productive and healthier society. Starting at grade schools. Starting the kids young.

3) Post-Secondary Education

We have seen in the past 20 years that education is for the privileged. We don't see education as an expense but as an investment. We want to reduce tuition fees and make sure public funding goes into research and development. We want to boost development of apprenticeship program. Make sure that public funding is there. We support cooperative education. Also, to address the issue of personal debt we propose a single grant based on needs.

4) Government Budget and Fiscal Policy

We would reduce personal and corporate taxes. We will shift taxes to the non-renewable resources. We will increase disposable income and provide incentive to begin to invest in the economy.

5) Passport Issue

The Passport issue is not only a local issue. Passports should be provided by the government to everyone Free of Charge.

6) Why did you choose the Green Party?

I read their web page and I agreed with every value they represent. I have faith in the party. It is a very united party and we draw support across the political spectrum. We are for social responsibility and the fiscal responsibility. It is a more rational approach.

Conservative Party of Canada

Candidates present at the Event: Alfonso Teshouba (Windsor West), Jeff Watson (Essex), Rick Fuschi (Windsor Tecumseh).

1) Border Infrastructure

We fully support the Detroit River International Crossing process (DRIC). We will swiftly implement its recommendations. For 12 years the Liberals did nothing. We have a Prime Minister who promises one thing and does another. The NDP spending is \$100 Billion. Only Stephen Harper could be trusted to enhance the Border infrastructure.

2) Health Care

Federal government is not meeting its pledges. Waiting lists are not a solution. A Conservative government will address Canada's health concerns by adopting the by-partisan, Kirby Senate Committee's recommendations on medically adequate wait times.

Having already endorsed the 2004 Federal-Provincial Health Accord, a Conservative government will work with the provinces to embrace the Patient Wait Times Guarantee, into that Health Accord, ...by the close of 2006. And it will hold governments accountable for those commitments.

The Liberal status quo is not an alternative. 100,000 patients a year, are already fleeing to other countries when no alternatives remain. The poor, however, have no choice but to wait.

The acceptance of the guarantee is a promise to patients that they will receive treatment in a medically acceptable maximum time, for a publicly insured service.

If that guarantee fails, the patient will be allowed to exercise the paramount concern for his well being, by seeking timely service elsewhere with the government's insured blessing.

Or Layton's promise to halt payment to all private facilities, thereby causing your and my 80 year old parents to decide between digging into their meagre budget for an X-ray, or living with uncertainty.

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The choice is clear, an unreliable status quo; a scary, ideologically driven NDP vision; or the Conservative party's logical, incentive-driven reform, under a publicly funded system.

3) Post-Secondary Education

Conservative government believes in education. Liberals transfer money we will pay money directly to the students. We will work with the provinces. We announced tax deduction for textbooks of \$500 per year. Canada student loans cost \$20 million annually.

Today there are as many as 20,000 unfilled skilled trades positions, and that number is expected to grow to 50,000 by the end of the decade. First we want young Canadians to consider careers in trades. But there is little financial assistance available to those who choose to enter the trades.

We will change that by giving \$1,000 per year grant to anyone in the first two years of a registered apprenticeship program in the 45 red seal trades and as well, to other trades which are deemed important.

In addition, we will be giving tax recognition to people who purchase tools as a condition of employment. We will give a tax deduction for the purchase of tools, of up to \$500 per year, and the capability to deduct the capital cost allowance or depreciation from tools worth more than \$500 per year.

Lastly, we will also want to encourage businesses to take a chance on new apprentices. To address this concern we will give a tax credit worth 10% of the first \$20,000 of wages earned by an apprentice in the first two years of their program. That is, any

business hiring an apprentice in the red seal and designated trades will receive up to \$2000 reduction, per apprentice, per year, off their payable taxes.

4) Government Budget and Fiscal Policy

We are a true friend to business owners and the working class. I have met with 50 small business and we want to lower tax to 11% over 5 yrs plus GST. We need to keep jobs in Canada and have a thriving global economy. Today met with small business owners. Raise the threshold. 11%. If citizens want the status quo the factories are closing. If you want lower taxes, if autoworkers want security and Billions of dollars in tax relief the conservative plan is the only one. Wake up Windsor, we need the federal vision and representation for Canada.

5) Passport Issue

Liberal Government is sleeping at the wheel. Liberal response is to bash the U.S.

Conservative party has worked to solve the situation on the highest level. We met with the Border Caucus and the Northern States Caucus at the U.S. Congress. This issue is very low on the agenda with the Liberals. Maintaining the requirements. Commissioner. We will introduce new ports policy and new coast guard to assure the U.S. we are committed to the security of the Border. Americans already believe Passports are the law. We propose meeting with US representatives and US Ambassador. We need to sit eye-ball to eye-ball and make birth certificate and ID's sufficient and increase security and improve coast guard.



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