

Opponents no match for Chong

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being declared re-elected by national news media shortly after 10 p.m. A few minutes earlier he had received a congratulatory phone call from his closest rival Liberal Barry Peters.

"I'm thrilled with the results," Chong told a scrum of reporters. "We worked hard in this campaign. We worked harder than we ever had to re-earn the voters' trust and respect."

On the campaign trail, Chong said he heard "loud and clear" three major issues from voters: economy and their jobs, rising costs of food and fuel and the state of our democracy.

"I take those concerns back to Ottawa and make those concerns my priority," said Chong, adding he will also continue to work on his bill about House of Commons protocol. "I'm not letting that issue go. I think people want Parliament reformed and they want their democratic institutions functional."

"I've always believed that a member of Parliament should stand up for their constituents, and reflect the views of the people that elected them and should always stand up for Canada, and that's what I plan to do with this new mandate when I return to Ottawa," he told his cheering supporters.

Chong noted the increasing number of youth supporting his campaign, and

he urged them, "to stay involved. You are the future of this country and it's your political involvement that's going to make a tremendous difference down the road."

Chong was disappointed to hear about phone calls misdirecting people to other polling stations Monday.

"I think that's despicable. That kind of behaviour has no place in a democracy," he said, adding the perpetrator should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Despite the results locally and nationally for his party Peters said he felt "great."

He said his expectation in the campaign was to "close the gap" between the Conservatives and Liberals in the riding, and also to get his name out there for future elections.

"We knew what we were up against (in Chong)," said Peters. "I wasn't oblivious to the fact I was running against an established incumbent who's been elected three times very successfully."

On the outcome nationally for his party, Peters said, "clearly the Liberal party has been sent a message."

"We're going to have some rebuilding to do."

"I don't think the local candidates could have much say in what happened. My result was very much defined by what happened nationally," he

said.

Peters said a lot of Canadians cast their vote for the party leader, and believes that was the case in this riding for NDP candidate Anastasia Zavarella who was "non-existent" in the campaign.

Peters hopes to run again in the next federal election.

The mood was sombre at Ares Family Restaurant as about 30 Liberal supporters followed the election results awaiting Peters' arrival.

Zavarella said she was "very pleased" with the results.

She believes she was swept up in the NDP orange wave and perhaps also because she was able to effectively get her message out through the media.

"If there's a next time it will be a different campaign, that's for sure," said Zavarella, who did not make it out to any local all-candidates meetings.

"We were expecting to do better," said Bouteiller, who was putting down Zavarella's showing locally also to the NDP's success nationally.

He's not sure if he will run again, saying he "will take that one step at a time."

"I stood up as the candidate for the principled voters who told me they were unable to vote for any other candidate who put forward their name," said Streutker.



Liberal candidate Barry Peters gets a hug from his mother Karen Monday night at Ares Restaurant. Peters went down to defeat to Conservative Michael Chong.

Photo by Jon Borgstrom

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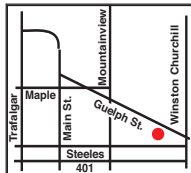
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