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Chong has a tough road

It is still a long way to go until the May 2017 Conservative leadership convention, and that's probably a good thing for Michael Chong, MP for Wellington-Halton Hills, who recently declared his candidacy.

Chong has won a series of elections here by ever-increasing majorities, but it will take a lot of hard work, shrewd strategy, good fortune and a big pot of money to convince party members across Canada that he can knock off Justin Trudeau and lead a government.

His task got a bit tougher on July 12 as Tony Clement, the former Health Minister for both Ontario and Canada, who lost the 2003 leadership race to Stephen Harper, announced that he still wants to be Prime Minister. Clement is the biggest name to join the race, but already on the track are former Labour Minister Kellie Leitch, former Industry Minister Maxime Bernier and Calgary MP Deepak Obhrai.

Others considering a bid are former Justice Minister Peter MacKay (who Chong supported in 2003), cabinet veteran Lisa Raitt, former junior cabinet minister Michelle Rempel and Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan. That's some heavy hitting competition, in a tough arena. Candidates have to pay the party a \$50,000 fee, plus another \$50,000 deposit, just to run for the leadership. They are allowed to spend up to \$5 million each on the race.

Chong also has cabinet experience, as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Sport. That was cut short after less than a year in 2006 when he resigned from cabinet to express his opposition to a motion put forward by Prime Minister Harper, which recognized the Québécois as a nation within a united Canada.

Chong said it was akin to ethnic nationalism, which he opposes. At a press conference, he said, "I believe in one nation, undivided, called Canada. That he resigned on a matter of principle is a feather in his cap, but he lost out on a possible nine years of cabinet service that could have made him a front-runner for the leadership."

He also spoke out on climate change and supported the Kyoto Protocol, despite his own party's opposition to it. He gained a lot of respect and a higher profile in recent years with his success in getting his Reform Act passed by Parliament. It will give more power to backbench MPs and make leaders more accountable.

Since the public is always interested in a fresh face and a change from old ways, Chong should be a serious contender.

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Letters to the editor

Please, park where you are supposed to

I have gone on the Georgetown Market Place Facebook site with the following issue as I can't find an email for them.

Can something be done about the persons who park in the No Parking zones in the driveways of the mall. Notice the word drive not park.

There are only two lanes and today outside Walmart one big white SUV was parked outside the Walmart entrance and another two cars in front of him.

One had two ladies who were over the yellow line with the four-ways flashing and they were just gabbing, no emergency, but they now blocked the only lane left for the rest of us to use.

I spoke with Walmart and really

there is nothing they can do and they had a customer talk to one of these people and the person gave them a rough time.

There are fire route signs all over the place. Why can't the mall not sometimes call the parking authority?

I know you are private property but I think you should have your security workers walk outside sometimes and move these people along.

Your customers should not be the ones to have to do this and it's a dangerous situation.

If an EMS had to get to someone having a heart attack they would have a hell of a time doing so.

It's even worse in the winter when the lanes are already tight.

Unfortunately it's not only in front of Walmart that this happens. The banks also have people waiting for others who have popped in well people it's taking longer than you think.

No one is more special than anyone else and there is lots of parking

at the mall.

If you are letting a senior out or someone who can't walk far, fine but don't just sit with your head down texting while you are parking illegally. It's rude and a safety issue.

Debra Hayes,
Georgetown

Letters must include the author's name, address and daytime phone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length. Publication is not guaranteed.
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