

# Ontario Liberal Party Candidate:

Jon Hurst

By: Harry Rudolfs

Jon Hurst wants to be the next MPP for Wellington-Halton Hills. He's taking an unpaid leave of absence from his long-time position as Town Councillor to run as a Liberal candidate for the provincial seat.

Hurst has been a strong opponent to the Hidden Quarry project and says he will continue to do so if elected to Queen's Park. "All that truck traffic going through Acton? It's bad enough now. We see no willingness from the proponent to sit down and discuss with us truck routes and that sort of thing."

On another local issue, Hurst thinks the school bus procurement process is flawed. "I was very upset and disappointed to hear about what happened to Tyler Transport," he said. "That's the unintended consequences when you make a decision and don't consult the community."

A lifetime Acton resident, Hurst says he has been working hard learning to familiarize himself with Wellington county and its concerns as well. "Since I've been nominated, I've been up north to Fergus and Elora five times to better understand their issues. It certainly is a diverse riding. The big issue in Wellington County is protecting the water table. Nestle wants to pump a substantial amount of water out of their new well west of Elora."

He was also dismayed to hear PC leader Doug Ford's comments about opening up the Greenbelt to development (which were quickly reversed). "I don't think Ford understands what a Greenbelt is or how it works. He said it's just a bunch of farmers' fields. It is a bunch of farmers' fields, but it's much more than that, and it's connected to wet lands and rivers and ecosystems."

A bright spot on the Liberal platform is the promise to extend all-day two-way GO Train service between Toronto and Kitchener by 2024. "The people of Acton have benefited from having a GO Train stop in Acton," said Hurst. "The challenges will be upgrading the tracks and infrastructure."

High hydro rates are a



concern to many voters, but Hurst thinks that the Wynne government has done much to mitigate those costs. "When the Liberals came to power the infrastructure was in bad shape, and they had to invest something like \$70 billion. Since then, we haven't had any brown outs, and the hydro bills that customers are receiving today have been reduced by 25 per cent. Above that, low income families can apply for further reductions of up to 40 to 50 per cent."

Hurst acknowledged that remortgaging the hydro debt from a 20 year to 30 year term, pushes more of the debt onto a future generation. "It was a necessity to get the overall hydro bill down for everyone."

Another contentious topic is the sex education curriculum in schools that has come under fire from some parents. Hurst offered his thoughts on this. "I know Doug Ford has said the Conservatives would remove and revamp the curriculum. And I realize that some parents think their children are learning too much at a young age. But I've seen kids on devices that are as young as two years of age," he said. "Because of their early connection to social media, I think it's important that the kids should learn about all the negative things that they should be aware of. After all, it's 2018."

Hurst also commented on the move to a \$15 minimum wage by next January. "People make adjustments," he said. "Raising the minimum wage was an effort by the government to try to make sure that people were

earning a livable wage. A substantial number of people and families depend on minimum wage jobs as their main source of income. I think you have more loyalty from an employee when they feel they are valued and you'd probably have less turnover."

Hurst was acclaimed as the Liberal candidate at a meeting in Rockwood on April 30. He thinks his wide experience as a volunteer and town politician will serve him well at Queen's Park. "I've proven I will fight for people and stand up for them. Being an MPP is basically doing the same thing as I've been doing on a bigger scale. It's all about helping others—and there's more joy in that than anything else."



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