

# THE VOTER'S VOICE

## Meet the Candidates for the June 7 Election

### The New Democratic Party of Ontario Candidate:

### Diane Ballantyne

By: Trish Bell

Yes, there is an NDP candidate for Wellington-Halton Hills, despite logistical delays in getting her signs up.

Diane Ballantyne, a Ferguson high school teacher who spent her early career at both Acton and Georgetown's high schools, said her long standing record and commitment to social justice was sought out by the Ontario NDP, who approached her about running. After careful consideration, Ballantyne said she felt the time was right.

"I feel hopeful and absolutely optimistic," said Ballantyne. "Clearly there is a momentum for change provincially."

It is also clear that she feels those who struggle

the most should be the priority.

"Universal pharma care and dental care are important everywhere," said Ballantyne. "The stats show people are going without and in a society as wealthy as ours, it is shameful that seniors are going without pills or parents can't afford asthma medication for their kids."

Yet, what policies matter to those in such a varied demographical and geographical area may surprise all candidates. When asked about the Hidden Quarry project, Ballantyne admitted that she would need to learn more but did say an area water policy was a number one priority locally.

"There is a lot of water taking here, in various communities, and I

am not able to support anything that may pose long-term damage to the local water table or environment," said Ballantyne. "Reducing the carbon footprint in Ontario is essential, our plan would invest in things like all day, two-way GO service and other public transportation services."

And she distrusts Provincial PC Leader Doug Ford's ability or desire to protect the environment too.

"I think we should all be very disturbed that a leader of a major party says he will do something—develop the greenbelt—that does not reflect how the majority of Southern Ontarians feel," Ballantyne said. "We should be concerned that without a platform of any kind,

there may be more flip flops to come."

Meanwhile, the NDP plan for Hydro is something Ballantyne is proud to promote.

"Over the available 10-year window, we will put Hydro back into public hands, returning billions in revenue to public coffers," she said. "We will eliminate rural delivery charges, time of use pricing and reduce the price by 30 per cent."

And while she was unfamiliar with the recent changes to the school bus procurement policies that recently saw long-time Acton business Tyler Transport lose out during the bid process, she did recognize the issue was riding-wide.

"It is the NDP's position to help grow and



protect small business, throughout our platform, so I would need to learn more about the process so that we could advocate for these businesses."

As a teacher, Ballantyne also sees the new sexual education program as a "much-needed solution that was in absolute need of rewriting and updating, considering the different times and experiences youth now find themselves." She said, "it is a well-developed curriculum created and delivered by highly qualified and trained professionals." And while

she feels that it is the "responsibility of parents to seek out the right education for children, she also feels parents should acknowledge that sometimes they are not experts and should defer to the expertise the education system provides."

The only female name on the ticket here, Ballantyne said she "hopes people recognize that it is a time for change, the platform is hopeful, and that they can count on her as a person who was working on this even before the platform existed."



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