

VOTERS HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW THE COST OF PROMISES

The election promises are coming thick and fast - on taxes, pensions, child benefits, housing, climate change and a lot more. You can hardly tell the players and the pledges without a program, and even then it's confusing. The Liberals had a great idea back in 2015 to help voters sort through the welter of competing election promises.

They said they would give the respected Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) the job of costing out the parties' promises in the next campaign and making them public so Canadians could benefit from an independent, neutral estimate of what the various policies would cost.

To its credit, the Trudeau government delivered. It gave the PBO half a million dollars in special funding so it would be ready to deliver objective analysis of how the parties' pledges in the 2019 campaign would affect the government's bottom line.

So far, so good. The Conservatives, New Democrats and Greens all submitted promises to the PBO for costing, and its reports are readily available online. As of Sept. 24, the PBO had posted 17 brief documents giving cost breakdowns of pledges by those three parties. They're a useful resource for voters trying to make sense of the campaign.

You can find out, for example, that the Conservatives' promise to beef up Registered Education Saving Plans would cost \$145 million in the first year, rising to \$763 million by 2028-29, an estimate the PBO says it can make with "moderate certainty." That's better than relying solely on politicians' self-serving rhetoric and the party's own estimates.

The Liberal party, though, is conspicuous by its absence in this novel process. Even though it was the Liberals who had the bright idea of having the PBO analyze party promises, they aren't co-operating with the office in a way that would give voters a timely look at the financial impact of promises made so far.

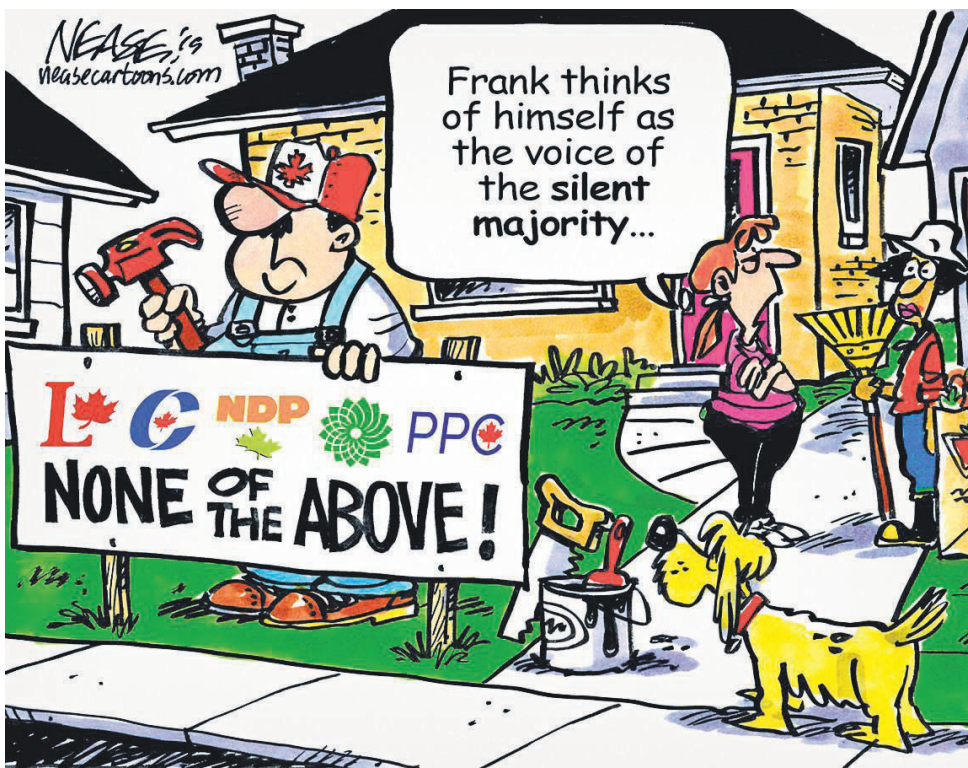
Under the rules, it's up to the parties to submit their campaign pledges to the PBO. And they must give the PBO written permission to publish the results.

The other parties have done that. But the Liberals haven't. They say they are submitting only "big ticket" items to the PBO for costing. And they are delaying the release of the office's analysis until they issue their full campaign platform because, they say, some of the promises are interconnected. Making individual reports public "wouldn't tell the whole story."

At the very least, this isn't living up to the spirit of the reform that the Liberals themselves put in place. The whole idea was to get real-time, objective analysis of the parties' promises. Manipulating the nature and timing of the reports risks defeating the whole purpose. Worse, it leaves the Liberals open to the accusation that they aren't coming clean with voters.

The Liberals should re-think their approach. This is no easy campaign for the governing party. It has a four-year record to defend, a record with many accomplishments but one that also has its share of bumbles and scandals.

TO LEARN HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR OWN CONTENT VISIT THEIFP.CA



MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION AT THE POLLS

TAKE TIME TO EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT CANDIDATE AND ISSUES, WRITES CARR



GARY CARR
Column

The federal election is just a few weeks away, and on October 21, you will cast your ballot for a local member of Parliament to represent you at Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

Before you vote, please take the time to learn where local candidates stand on key issues of importance for people living in our community.

To help you make an informed decision, we asked federal election candidates what they would do to:

- invest in roads and in-

frastructure;

- confirm regional and provincial regulatory roles in the proposed CN truck-rail hub;
- address climate change and support community resilience;
- deliver universal access to broadband internet; and
- support safe, affordable and accessible government-assisted housing.

We also asked if candidates would vote against their party if necessary to reflect the best interests of Halton residents.

As we receive candidate responses, we are posting them on our federal election webpage to help you stay informed and vote with confidence on October 21.

Some responses are already available, and I encourage you to check back for new information as we approach election day.

A strong Halton helps build a strong Canada, and

we will continue to advocate for long-term, predictable funding and legislative changes from other levels of government to help preserve our high quality of life, now and into the future.

To learn more about the issues outlined above and read candidate responses, please visit halton.ca.

For information about the federal election, including where and when you can cast your ballot, please visit elections.ca.

Your vote counts! By making an informed decision at the polls this federal election, you will help keep Halton a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire.

Gary Carr is Regional Chair of Halton Region. His column appears the first week of each month. To contact him, email gary.carr@halton.ca.

YOUR OPINIONS

SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AT THEIFP.CA

ABOUT US

This newspaper, published every Thursday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. The Metroland family of newspapers is comprised of more than 80 community publications across Ontario.

This newspaper is a member of the National NewsMedia Council. Complainants are urged to bring their concerns to the attention of the newspaper and, if not satisfied, write The National NewsMedia Council, Suite 200, 890 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4W 2H2. Phone: 416-340-1981

Web: www.mediacouncil.ca



newsroom@theifp.ca
IndependentAndFreePress
@IFP_11

WHO WE ARE

- Publisher**
Kelly Montague
- Regional General Manager**
Steve Foreman
- Regional Managing Editor**
Catherine O'Hara
- Managing Editor**
Karen Miceli
- Distribution Representative**
Iouliana Polar
- Real Estate**
Kristie Pells
- Regional Production Manager**
Manuel Garcia
- Production**
Shelli Harrison
- Halton Media General Manager**
Vicki Dillane

CONTACT US

The Independent & Free Press
280 Guelph Street, Unit 77
Georgetown, ON L7G 4B1
Phone: 905-873-0301
Classifieds: 1-800-263-6480
Fax: 905-873-0398

Letters to the editor
All letters must be fewer than 320 words and include your name and telephone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject letters. Published letters will appear in print and/or online at theifp.ca

Delivery
For all delivery inquiries, please e-mail lpolar@mittoncanadianchampion.com or call 905-234-1019.

