

Wagner gets nod to run for NDP

Says Turner's move to Liberals opens door for NDP

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

While some people are irate over Garth Turner's decision to join the Liberals, Halton's NDP candidate has a much different take on the matter.

"It's great. I couldn't be happier," said Oakville's Robert Wagner Wednesday evening, less than 24 hours after getting the nod as the local federal NDP candidate.

"A number of Liberals told me last night (Tuesday) that they've torn up their party membership cards and that I can count on their support. His (Turner's) decision puts the riding on shaky ground and leaves the door wide open for the NDP to break through."

Describing Turner's move as another example of both the Liberals' and Conservatives' flip-flopping—in terms of issues and party members — 28-

year-old Wagner called the NDP the "logical decision" for the next election.

"A lot of things have me fired up about what the NDP is about these days. I think we offer a legitimate alternative for Halton."

A parks co-ordinator for the City of Hamilton and operator of an on-line media advertising business, Halton's new NDP flag-bearer said his party is committed to putting families first and has the greenest track record.

"The environment's definitely a key issue for me. I've done a lot of reading on things like pesticides," explained Wagner, who beat out Pat Heroux of Burlington at E.C. Drury High School



Robert Wagner

Tuesday night for the nomination.

While this is Wagner's initial sojourn into the federal arena, he's not a complete newcomer when it comes to politics — having run for Oakville town council in 2003.

So what does the Halton NDP candidate bring to the table?

"Enthusiasm, honesty and transparency. And I'm just a regular guy. It's like Tommy Douglas said, 'Why do we elect so many fat cats, why not put a regular old mouse in there?'"

Halton NDP secretary Mike Druiven expressed optimism over his riding's new candidate, stating "Robert's young and energetic, but at the same time he's got experience. He's going to get our message out there and be difficult for Turner and whoever the Conservatives run to deal with."

Looking ahead to a possible spring or summer election, Wagner suggested Halton may be ready for a change, and that "Turner may not be wearing his Liberal red coat for very long."

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