

# South York Region throws in welcome mat while voting Liberals back to parliament

BY ROGER VARLEY  
Staff Writer

While the voters of Canada gave the Liberals the keys to Parliament once again Monday night, electors in southern York Region threw in the welcome mat.

The four Liberal victors in the region's south were returned with overwhelming majorities.

Maurizio Bevilacqua, for example, took 67.1 per cent of the vote in Vaughan-King-Aurora, compared with the Liberal Party's national average of 40.78 per cent.

The others were almost as impressive: John McCallum, 66.7 per cent in Markham; Elinor Caplan, 64.6 per cent in Thornhill; and Bryon Wilfert, 59.2 per cent in Oak Ridges.

However, in York-North, the region's northernmost riding, Karen Kraft-Sloan was returned as the Liberal incumbent with only 46.6 per cent of the vote.

Conservative Joseph Wamback and the Alliance's Bob Yaciuk split the right-wing vote straight down the middle. Their combined vote of 24.5 per cent each would have ousted Sloan.

So what was the difference that made York Region's southern ridings welcome the Liberals with open arms, while their northern neighbour remained cool?

Robert McDermid, political science professor at York University, suggested a particularly strong economic boom in the southern part of the region had a lot to do with it.

"There's a younger, upwardly mobile middle class who have put together a decent life," he said.

Noting the large number of residents of Asian and Italian backgrounds in the south part of York Region, McDermid also pointed out that first-generation Canadians have always voted "disproportionately" for the Liberals.

"The Liberals were the founders of multiculturalism and the Alliance is against it."

But he also suggested Sloan suffered in comparison to her southern colleagues because the Tories ran a strong candidate in Wamback, who has name recognition in the riding.

"I suspect that where the Progressive Conservatives ran a credible candidate, Conservative supporters came back," he said, explaining that those voters other-

wise would have voted Liberal or even NDP, rather than Alliance.

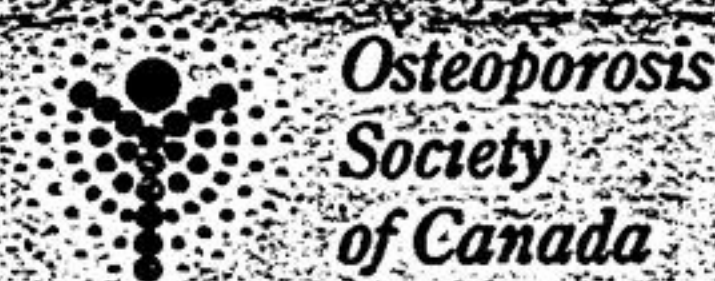
McDermid continued the theory of Conservative support going to the Liberals instead of the Alliance in looking at the growth in hi-tech industry and entrepreneurial activity in the southern ridings.

"That's the conundrum," he said, acknowledging people involved in those sectors are usually expected to support right-wing parties.

"But the Liberals are just as right wing in some respects as the Alliance," McDermid continued.

"The Liberals have always been successful in co-opting the ideas of other parties when it's proven convenient."

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