

Talk Of The Town

Provincial Conservative but Closet Federal Liberal?

By Ben Embiricos
Stouffville Free Press



So election time is here again. This time it's the Feds. For the first time I find myself undecided.

At the moment I am asking myself, barring some kind of dramatic personal conversion, is it possible to vote for one party at the provincial level and then turn around and vote for a different one at the federal? If one votes based on the candidate or party leader then the answer must always be yes. But what if, like me, you typically vote along party lines or more specifically according to ideas or a political philosophy?

I moved to Canada a little over ten years ago. After becoming a citizen here I have voted Conservative at both levels of government. I thought it would ever be thus. For the October federal election though I am contemplating the unthinkable and voting Liberal.

How do I reconcile voting Ontario PC and then (maybe) federal Liberal? I will explain. But first I should apologize to the candidates. Apologies are due because for me the qualities of the local candidate are the least important factor in choosing how to cast my vote. I know this will ruffle some feathers but evidence suggests that I am not alone in my view. Even the leader for me is much less important than the philosophy and the ideas they pursue.

I know Greg Hines our NDP candidate personally. His positive attitude and charisma can light up a room. But personally I would not vote NDP whoever they put up because I disagree with their world view. I don't know the Liberals' Jane Philpott but she is well thought of by many people whose opinion I value. Her volunteer work speaks volumes. She walks the walk as well as talking the talk.

I don't know our current Conservative MP Paul Calandra personally but I voted for him last time. Since then he has at times been a figure of controversy both in parliament and in his clashes with our former mayor. But he has been a visible and busy presence within the riding. The Greens are going with Myles O'Brien. Like many people I would not consider

voting Green whoever they put up for election. To me the environment is important but not the starting point.

So back to my question at the outset: How can one vote for different parties at different levels of government even if the choice is based on values rather than candidate or leader?

To answer this I think it bears looking at who does what in Canada. In the UK where I used to cast my vote before 2005, the central government historically took on most of the important responsibilities. I say "historically" because one of Tony Blair's legacies was to pass some powers to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In contrast, the role of Canada's federal government is more limited. This is especially so where the economy is concerned. To my mind Canada (and especially Ontario) has vastly underutilized its considerable human and entrepreneurial resources. This is due to excessive regulation in almost all areas of business, overly powerful unions that reduce economic flexibility and a creaking public bureaucracy. There needs to be freedom for more small and medium sized businesses to innovate and grow.

These same changes will also encourage greater foreign investment. There is much to suggest that foreign companies see Canada as a difficult place to do business.

But the federal government has limited ability to address all of this. These are primarily provincial responsibilities. So symbolism aside, if the Feds have a limited role in fixing what ails our economy that leaves me and perhaps some others to be free to consider the current government on grounds other than pure economics.

I am less than happy with the federal government's performance on most non-economic fronts but that would make for a whole separate story. For now at least I must consider whether I am a federal Liberal even whilst I remain a provincial Conservative. Do you have a similar mismatch? Get beyond the branding and see if you can challenge yourself to think it through.

All Candidates Meeting Set for October 5

Stouffville area residents will get the chance to take stock of the Markham-Stouffville riding hopefuls for the October 19 federal election on October 5. An all candidates meeting is to take place from 7-9 pm on that date at East Ridge Evangelical Missionary Church at 12485 Tenth Line.

Candidates expected to be on hand include Paul Calandra, Conservative; Jane Philpott, Liberal; Greg Hines, NDP; Myles O'Brien, Green Party

The event is a joint project between the Stouffville Chamber of Commerce and the Markham Board of Trade. Stouffville Sun-Tribune editor Jim Mason is to act as moderator.

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WhiStle Radio to Air Candidates Interviews

WhiStle Radio will feature one on one interviews with each of the candidates for

the Markham-Stouffville riding in the upcoming federal election during September. The interviews will occur in the 8 to 9 am time slot of the Tuesday edition of the station's Stouffville Morning programme according to the following schedule:

Tuesday, September 15: Gregory Hines, NDP

Tuesday, September 22:

Jane Philpott, Liberal

Tuesday, September 29:

Paul Calandra, Conservative.

Tuesday, October 6: Myles

O'Brien, Green Party.

The programme can be heard on WhiStle Radio at 102.7 on the FM dial or on the internet at www.whistleradio.ca

Stouffville Morning is

broadcast every weekday from 7 to 9 am on WhiStle Radio, Stouffville's community radio station.



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