

Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill Votes 2022: PC candidate Michael Parsa seeks second term as MPP



The novelty of working in such a storied landmark as the Ontario Legislature hasn't worn off for Progressive Conservative candidate Michael Parsa.

Walking through these corridors is just as exciting now as it was when he was first elected as Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill's MP in 2019, and he is hoping voters place their confidence in him for a second term in the June 2 election.

Should he be returned to Queen's Park, Mr. Parsa says he will continue to fight for small businesses and tackle the issue of affordability for all residents.

"The last two years have been very difficult for the people," he says. "Students, seniors, there is just so much, but I am an optimist and I really do feel the worst is behind us now and it's about rebuilding again and making sure we're better than we were even before the pandemic."

During his rookie campaign in the last Provincial election, fighting for small business was a top priority for Mr. Parsa, who came to the table with a small business background of his own. This remains a top priority for his second turn at bat.

"We all know the importance of small business in our community as a whole, but it's the influence they have on the local communities that matter," says Mr. Parsa. "They are the light in local communities. I am going to be a strong advocate for small businesses, especially after what they went through the last couple of years. They were asked to do so much to help us fight the virus and they did. We were able to do what we were able to do because of the support of the people and, for the most part, because of our businesses and small businesses in the righting."

"I also want to make sure life is more affordable for people when we go back. Take a look at the prices of items, from gas prices to groceries - that is huge. We have to make sure we do everything we can to lower the cost of living for people; that means making sure gas prices are low for people [and] continuing to make sure that life all around is more affordable."

Several bills have been passed in the legislature, he says, to lower gas prices, a move he contends "will help everybody" as lower fuel costs will, in turn, lower the price on groceries and many other areas.

"Housing is so important," he continues. "I have heard it time and time again that because of inaction from before we just never had enough housing. We don't have supply to meet the demand and that is really Business 101. You have to know when you have

demand for a particular product, and this product being a home is essential? all types of homes. For the first time last year we had over 100,000 housing starts in Ontario and that is the highest since the early 1990s. The housing rental units is the highest since the 1980s in Ontario again. That is what you can do to make sure life becomes more affordable for people.?

Another high priority is making sure support is there for seniors.

?Our generation has a lot to be thankful for what we were left before and it was our seniors who left it, so we can't let them down now,? he says. ?When I looked at the waiting list for those looking to get into long-term care [it was] unacceptable. They've got to make sure that?in their golden years they live in dignity, they're happy, they're comfortable, and that means us doing our part to make sure the facilities they need and depend on is there for them.

?We're making long-term care a priority, we're making sure that seniors have the right homes when we need them.?

Another priority for all sectors is ensuring all parts of the riding ? and indeed all parts of Ontario ? have access to high-speed internet.

?It is mind-boggling to think that there are still areas in our riding that did not have access to high-speed internet and that is unacceptable in 2022 for people to not have access and still rely on dial-up and other very costly options, which is why we have \$4 billion invested in high speed?to ensure that every corner of this province is connected to high-speed internet by 2025.

?I will continue advocating for small businesses. I want to make sure we have long-term care beds here. Some are going to be built here finally in Aurora but we need more. We have to make sure we have that infrastructure in place. The health, safety and wellbeing of the people is first and foremost. With the help of so many in our healthcare profession, the sacrifices they made, we were able to fight the virus and now we're one of the best jurisdictions when it comes to vaccination rates, when it comes to the number of cases, [and] we now have the capacity to fight future waves if there are any and we need to be able to do that.

?The first four years were a great honour and I am really excited if I have the opportunity to back and continue working for the people.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter