

Ontario Votes 2018: 'Canada will allow every single one of us to live the dream,' says Parsa



By Brock Weir

The first Member of Provincial Parliament for the newly-created Ontario riding of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill will be Progressive Conservative Michael Parsa.

Mr. Parsa, a Richmond Hill businessperson, secured the riding handily in Thursday night's Provincial Election, overcoming Liberal candidate Naheed Yaqubian by a wide margin.

Mr. Parsa won 56 per cent of the vote — or 25,214 ballots — over Ms. Yaqubian, who came second with 9,178 votes.

She was followed by third place finisher Katrina Sale of the Ontario NDP, who received 8,188 votes, and the ballot was rounded out by Serge Korovitsyn of the Libertarian Party, Santiago Amesh Desilva of the None of the Above Direct Democracy Party, Margarita Barksy of the Ontario Moderate Party, Janusz Bitlykin of the Freedom Party, and Abu Alam of the SRP.

After the results were clear, Mr. Parsa, accompanied by his family, including wife Valerie and their one-week-old niece, received a rock star reception from supporters at a packed Aw, Shucks restaurant.

'This journey, for me, started a few years ago,' said the Iran-born Mr. Parsa. 'I joined the Conservative party in 1993 [and] never in my wildest dream did I think that a young immigrant to Canada would one day have the opportunity to run for office and be elected. The reason I get up every day in my campaign and I tell my team, 'win or lose, that we have won already,' is because of you, Canada, Ontario and all Canadians who gave me an opportunity. You have given every young immigrant who is in this room a chance to say, 'I can do it. I can make it. Canada will allow every single one of us to live the dream.'

There were plenty of thanks to go around as the room swelled full of people.

He told them that as the duly elected MPP, he will work hard to represent the interests of everybody in the riding, across party lines. 'We talk about representation and with the help of my team we will be the best office that will serve every single constituent in the community and there will be absolutely no exceptions,' he said. 'If you supported for me and voted for me, thank you. If you didn't, please get to know me. I want to represent you, I want to serve you, I want to serve you from the bottom of my heart. It doesn't matter if you didn't believe in me. It doesn't matter if you didn't support me, I believe in you and I want to serve you.'

Addressing his fellow candidates, he said it was 'a difficult night' for the opposition and said he wanted to 'extend a hand' to 'let them know we are here to serve the people.'

'The race is over, it was a great race, [and] I want to congratulate all the candidates who ran here, from the Liberal party, to the New Democratic Party, from the green Party to the Libertarian party' now the journey begins,' he concluded. 'We have to be humble, we have to work hard, we have to go out there and show the people of Ontario and the people of this riding association that we will earn their vote and their trust. They gave me a vote of confidence.

'As my good friend Costas [Menegakis, former Richmond Hill MP] said, they allowed me to borrow a chair that belongs to you for four years. Trust me, I will not forget that and every single day I will be sitting in Queen's Park — which I can't wait to do, to be

honest with you! ? I will be reminded of all of you, the hard work, the dedication, the many contributions that you made, because whether it was financial, whether it was in person, your heart, your love, your desire, you believed in us; you believed in our campaign and thank you for helping my campaign. Thank you for allowing me to be here tonight, thank you for helping me get elected. I can't wait to start the next four years of my life with all of you.?