

## Canada Votes 2025: Candidates share how they will tackle community safety, crime

York Region has seen an uptick in car-related crimes in recent months and reports of home invasions are also on the rise, including here in Aurora as recently as last month.

As Canadians look ahead to voting for a new Federal Government on April 28, The Auroran polled confirmed candidates in both Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill and Newmarket-Aurora on what they are hearing from residents at the door and how they plan to address their concerns should they be elected to represent the community's interests in the House of Commons.

### **AURORA-OAK RIDGES-RICHMOND HILL**

Conservative candidate Costas Menegakis says crime is one of the 'top concerns' he has heard in Aurora and often comes up while campaigning at the door.

'Many people no longer feel safe in their own neighbourhood,' he says. 'One woman shared with me that multiple homes on her street were broken into, and she asked, 'When did Canada become like this?' Another resident called after I knocked on her door, explaining that she and her neighbours avoid opening their doors due to the recent violent home invasions. The catch-and-release bail policies of the Liberal government has led to a sense of insecurity. The same people are committing the same crimes over and over again.

'Pierre Poilievre and I are committed to restoring safety to our streets. We will put jail before bail for repeat violent offenders, ensuring dangerous individuals are kept off the streets. By implementing tougher measures, we can rebuild trust in our justice system and bring back the safe communities Canadians deserve.'

In responding to the question, incumbent Liberal candidate Leah Taylor Roy pointed to investments the current government made in local policing, including \$121 million towards York Region's Guns and Gangs initiative.

'Thanks to the tireless efforts of local law enforcement and federal funding support for York Region's Guns and Gangs, York Region has seen a nearly 30% drop in auto thefts in 2024 - a major win for our community. But we know the work isn't done,' she says. 'Under the Liberal Federal Government, we passed Bill C-48 Bill, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (bail reform), which strengthens Canada's bail laws by ensuring community safety is a priority in bail hearings. We recognize that the Ontario government is the responsible entity that appoints judges and justices of the peace who decide bail, and funds the court system and operates jails where those denied bail are held.

'A Mark Carney-led Liberal government will continue to keep our neighbourhoods safe by: Increasing support for police and municipalities to crack down on organized crime and auto theft rings; Tightening border and port security to prevent stolen vehicles from being trafficked overseas; [and] Investing in better tracking technologies to quickly recover stolen cars and prevent future thefts.

'Canada's reputation as a safe, welcoming country is part of our national identity - and we will always fight to keep Canada safe and strong.'

### **NEWMARKET-AURORA**

Liberal candidate Jennifer McLachlan says she approaches this issue as someone with a 20+ career in security. She says she understands the concerns regarding crime in the community, noting, 'people in Aurora deserve to feel safe in their homes and in their neighbourhoods.'

“I commend the work of York Regional Police, which produces a detailed annual crime statistics report, providing valuable insights into crime trends across our region,” she says. “By using this kind of evidence-driven analysis, we can ensure our policies and investments directly target the areas of greatest need and have the most impact. Our Liberal government has already made meaningful progress in combating auto thefts, working closely with provincial and municipal authorities, as well as law enforcement partners across the country. But we know more needs to be done – and we are taking decisive action. We have reformed Canada's bail system to ensure it no longer works in favour of repeat violent offenders. New measures include a reverse onus provision for serious, repeat violent offences involving weapons, expanded lists of firearm offences that trigger stricter bail conditions, and requirements for courts to consider an accused's history of violence when making bail decisions. Courts are also now required to state clearly, on the record, how they have considered the safety and security of the community in all bail decisions, increasing transparency and public accountability.”

“Concrete steps” have also been taken to address the flow of illegal guns from the United States, including increased border security.

“These efforts build on our broader strategy to ban assault-style weapons and to target organized crime rings that are often behind sophisticated auto theft operations. Finally, it's essential to remember that enforcement alone is not enough. Safer communities are built when we also invest in prevention – supporting mental health initiatives, youth programs, and community-based crime prevention efforts. A Liberal government will continue to invest in these areas to address the root causes of crime and create safer, more resilient communities.

“As your candidate, I am fully committed to working with York Regional Police, all levels of government, and our community partners to ensure Aurora families feel safe and secure. Through evidence-based policy and a firm commitment to public safety, we will protect our community and give residents the peace of mind they deserve.”

Conservative candidate Sandra Cobena says residents have safety concerns and it's a “quiet worry” of “I don't feel as safe as I used to.”

“It's the mother locking her doors before dusk. The senior double-checking the garage. The family who no longer sleeps soundly because the headlines have crept too close to home,” says Cobena. “As a mother of three young kids, I feel it too. Crime isn't just statistics – it's a feeling. And right now, too many feel vulnerable.

“Pierre Poilievre is the only federal party leader that can be trusted to tackle this crime crisis and provide our police with the support they desperately need. We will restore order by ending the Liberals' dangerous experiment of catch-and-release. Repeat violent offenders will face jail, not bail. We will stop taxpayer-funded drug handouts that fuel chaos, crime and homelessness. Conservatives will fund treatment for 50,000 people to treat addiction with compassion and accountability – not with more taxpayer-funded poison.

“Canadians are generous, but we are not fools. We believe in compassion, yes – but with consequences. Aurora deserves to feel like home again: safe, familiar, free. That is the Canada I will fight for. That is the promise we will keep.”

**By Brock Weir**