

Disabled student, campaign volunteer ?disappointed? with Alleslev?s decision

I was sitting in my indigenous studies class at Carleton University this past Monday when I first read a CBC news headline which read ?Toronto-area Liberal MP Leona Alleslev crosses the floor to join Conservatives.?

When I first read the headline I thought that I was dreaming, However, as continued reading I realized that what I was reading was true and this had actually happened.

Ever since the news broke, I have been pondering what could possibly drive her into this decision?

Leaving the question alone from moment of what drove her to do this, what is even more troubling to me though is the fact that this is allowed to happen.

People in Aurora voted Liberal in the last election. Whether that was the right decision or the wrong decision will be determined in the outcome of the 2019 election. However, until then the people of the community in which MP Alleslev serves voted Liberal in the last election therefore they should have a Liberal MP.

If it is Alleslev?s wish to join the Conservatives then she should have resigned her seat in House, wait till the next election and run as a Conservative. In my view, that would be the honourable thing to do.

It is absolutely no secret that I volunteered on Leona Alleslev?s campaign for election 2015. I will not be supporting her again in 2019 under the Conservative banner. I vowed never to vote Conservative after Costas Menegakis humiliated me on account of my disability during an all candidates debate that took place in the midst of the 2015 election campaign.

I cannot in good conscious support a party that has done nothing for those with disabilities.

It saddens me that MP Leona Alleslev would support a party that believes in propping up the 1 per cent in our society and does absolutely nothing to support people like me with disabilities. If that is truly her beliefs, then she is definitely not the person that I thought she was.

The picture was taken from me, however I was so happy to stand shoulder to shoulder with her in the signed photograph I had with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Now I'm left to wonder what will happen next.

I have always when looking at difficult and complex issues looked at the big picture, taking my personal interest out of the equation and look at what will benefit the most number of people. Ask anybody who knows me and they will tell you that I have always tried to help others before helping myself. I have always stuck to my principles. I bring that same approach to politics.

In closing I say this: I find MP Leona Alleslev's decision very concerning and very disappointing. Even though I no longer have a personal or professional relationship with MP Alleslev and have not for quite some time, I thought that she would remember people like me who helped her, people like me who need a strong voice in Parliament because, as a person with a disability, we often do not have a seat at the table.

This is my point that I was trying to make earlier about principles: it is not always about you it's about the people you serve in the best interest of those who do not have a voice.

I hope that MP Leona Alleslev quickly learns the people like me who are disabled do not have a voice in any Conservative party.

Benjamin Williamson
Ottawa (formerly Aurora)

(Editor's Note: During the course of the last campaign, Mr. Menegakis denied intentionally humiliating Mr. Williamson. Rather, the Conservative candidate said he was unable to hear the question asked of him in the crowded meeting)