

Harper joined by area Conservatives for adoption announcement



By Mark Pavilons

Conservative supporters were primed last week, welcoming Conservative leader Stephen Harper.

Mr. Harper visited WaterStone Estate and Farms to announce tax relief for adoptive families. He also lent his support to York-Simcoe Conservative candidate and incumbent House Leader Peter Van Loan and Newmarket-Aurora candidate Lois Brown.

Van Loan stressed Mr. Harper has led a government that has fostered the lowest federal tax burden in half a century, resulting in one of the best middle classes in the world.

"He leads Canada on the world stage ? putting freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law as the cornerstone principles for which Canada stands," Van Loan said. "The result? A recent massive global survey showing Canada to be the most respected country in the world.

"He leads a government committed to helping Canadian families get ahead and build a brighter future.?"

Continuing with the government's move to cut taxes and increase the benefits to every family in Canada, comes the support for adoptive families.

Mr. Harper announced that a re-elected Conservative government would help make it more affordable for Canadian parents to adopt children by significantly increasing the value of the Adoption Expense Tax Credit and making it fully refundable.

"Our Conservative government believes that there is no higher calling than that of raising a child, and no greater reward," said Mr. Harper. "We have a proven record of helping make life more affordable for Canadian families, particularly when it comes to managing some of the additional costs borne by adoptive parents.?"

The Adoption Expense Tax Credit is a 15% ?non-refundable tax credit designed to defray the costs associated with adoption. The Harper government enhanced the credit in 2013 to make more expenses eligible and, in 2014, increased the maximum amount of the credit to \$15,000, indexed to inflation. A re-elected Conservative government will increase the value of the Adoption Expense Tax Credit further, raising the maximum amount to \$20,000, and make the credit fully refundable.

"Every year, thousands of Canadian families are transformed as they bring adopted children into their hearts and lives," said Mr. Harper. "We recognize that adoption costs can be high and, in some cases, prohibitive for families. That's why a re-elected Conservative government will increase the support available to these caring Canadians.?"

The Conservative leader noted that, in addition to the support adoptive parents receive from the Adoption Expense Tax Credit, the Conservative government has a strong record of helping make life more affordable for Canadian families through benefits like the enhanced Universal Child Care Benefit, the Family Tax Cut, and Tax-Free Savings Accounts, among others.

"All Canadian families with children aged 17 and under, including those who adopt, have benefited under our low-tax plan," said Mr. Harper. "We will continue our proven record of helping Canadian families in ways that tangibly improve their lives."

Joining Mr. Harper was Essex MP Jeff Watson, who, along with his wife Sarah, adopted their sixth child, Beatrice.

"Canada needs more Jeffs and Sarahs," Mr. Harper said, stressing they intend to cut backlogs and wait times for adoptive families.

When asked about the current Duffy scandal and wrongdoings by senators, Mr. Harper said his government enforces the rules and holds them accountable. Mr. Duffy took taxpayers' money, he said, and "I told him to repay it."

When asked about programs designed to boost agriculture, agri-tourism and the equine industry, Mr. Harper said being in King, it's easy to see the potential of these industries.

His government is encouraging tourism here from the U.S. and generally, they are supporting Canadian agriculture. He did admit that the equine industry has some unique challenges and issues.