

Lawyer Cherniak to represent Ontario Liberals in next Provincial election

Amid speculation Ontarians will return to the polls for an early election in 2025, the Provincial ballot is shaping up in the riding of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill.

Challenging incumbent Progressive Conservative Michael Parsa, who serves as Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, will be Richmond Hill-based lawyer Jason Cherniak for the Ontario Liberals.

Cherniak was acclaimed the party's candidate last week in a riding meeting attended by, among others, MP Leah Taylor Roy, Markham-Stouffville MP Helena Jaczek, MPP Stephanie Bowman, and former Liberal cabinet minister Chris Ballard.

This is not the first time Cherniak has sought to carry the Liberal banner in the riding. At the federal level, he and Leona Alleslev vied for the Liberal nomination in 2015. Alleslev, the ultimate victor, eventually crossed the floor to the Conservatives.

Addressing the audience, Cherniak thanked his wife and children for their support and delineated a history of service in his own family.

"My grandfather, Leslie Cherniak, came from Russia in the 1920s. He started at school without speaking a word of English, like many newcomers who come here today. My grandmother, Lucy, had to leave school in Grade 9 so she could cut hair to support her family. My father started working as a teenager and he kept working up through his 70s? from that side of my family I learned that you have to work hard to earn your place in this society," said Cherniak.

"On the other side, my grandfather, Monty, came from England in the 1930s during the Great Depression. He was successful in business and was chair of Mount Sinai Hospital, largely responsible for building the building we all know today. My grandmother, Judy, raised \$1 million to build Roy Thomson Hall by playing her ukulele and selling seat sponsorships. My grandmother got me started donating blood and now at 110 donations. She also brought me to my first political event that I remember: in 1990, we went to Queen's Park to see David Peterson start off that election campaign. Hopefully Doug Ford is going to get the same punishment when he calls an early election. From that side of my family, I learned that if you do what you love you really can make a difference in this world. Here I am doing what I love and working hard to help my community."

Cherniak says he's been a long-time supporter of the Liberals both at the Provincial and Federal levels because, "I believe if you're born into poverty, you don't have to live that way your whole life."

"I believe we need to protect our environment: the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Greenbelt, especially from people like Doug Ford. I believe that we need to have strong businesses that create jobs and we need to bring fiscal sanity back to Queen's Park," said Cherniak. "Doug Ford got elected by saying that Katheen Wynne was bankrupting this province. Did you know that he is now spending \$1,000 more per person than she ever did, and that's from the Frasier Institute, a right-wing think tank. Somehow while doing that he's spending less money on healthcare than any other province in Canada.

"We have a healthcare crisis in Ontario, but Doug Ford would rather throw away billions on his pet projects? up to \$1 billion to cancel a deal with the Beer Store, up to \$1 billion to build a spa where Ontario Place used to be, tens of millions to tear out bike lanes, and those bike lanes were built while he was premier. He spends money like a rich kid who got it all from his parents. I wonder why?"

"What we need is a Premier who cares about all of us. I have actually known Bonnie Crombie for 15 years?. Now that she's Ontario Liberal Leader her priorities are clear: she wants to improve affordability by lowering income taxes for everybody: 22 per cent for the middle-income tax rate.

"I am here today because I know Bonnie Crombie has the right priorities for Ontario. I am here because I know Doug Ford has the

wrong priorities for Ontario. I am here today because we need a change in Ontario and I want to do my part to make that happen. Bonnie Crombie has the right plan for Ontario, she is the right person to replace Doug Ford, and we need to all do that together. I really believe we can do it.?

Cherniak previously served as a two-time present of the Richmond Hill Rotary Club and on the Richmond Hill Board of Trade, as a member of the Richmond Hill Public Library Board, and Chair of the Library Board's Intellectual Freedom Committee.

By Brock Weir