

Liberal Leah Taylor Roy wants to continue making difference in community



By Brock Weir

From part-time work to finance her education and, following Harvard, working in the banking industry, Leah Taylor Roy says her experiences have helped her understand what people need to get ahead ? and it is this experience she hopes to bring to the table should the residents of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill send her to Ottawa next month.

Ms. Taylor Roy, who secured the Federal Liberal nomination this summer, says being a Liberal, to her, means an environment that is ?open to ideas, open to people, inclusive and caring.?

?I think Liberal values are the values that we want to move forward with in order to make sure Canada is a caring country,? she says. ?It is not just about me or the individual.?

?Where you stand depends on where you sit,? says the mom-of-six, noting that the issues she sees on the minds of Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill residents vary with each door she knocks on. That being said, three key issues are rising to the top: the economy, affordability, and the environment.

The Liberal track record on the economy, she says, is ?very strong? with over one million new jobs created and the lowest unemployment rate in 40 years.

?There are a lot of things the Liberals have done very well and I think people are aware of that and appreciate that, but at the same time there have been a lot of cutbacks in the Province: the cutbacks to health services, to education, to seniors, people are feeling those things and I think there is a nervousness about what is going to happen going forward,? she says.

Affordability, particularly when it comes to housing, is a 'big issue' in the Region and particularly impactful on seniors, she says. The Liberal Party has worked to increase CPP benefits for seniors, rolling back OAS from 67 to 65, as well as rolling out new initiatives along the campaign trail that address increases for both OAS and survivor benefits.

On the issue of the environment, Ms. Taylor Roy says there are people who are concerned not just about what Canada is doing, but what 'we can do' moving forward.

'I think they are looking to the Liberal party because the Liberal party has the most actionable and affordable plan in place,' she says. 'I think the things that they have done already in terms of trying to ensure that our green spaces are protected, and our marine spaces as well, is important. I think the ban on single use plastics that has been announced is important, and I think the price on pollution is actually supported by a number of people, the fact that we have to look at what the full cost of everything we do is, not just the cost to our pocketbook - what it is really costing us as a society and then using the proceeds from that to develop green technologies to figure out how to develop more carbon sinks; we know tree planting is a huge thing, but there are other ways we can do that.'

Putting a 'price on pollution' was an election issue even before the writ was dropped earlier this month, with the governing Liberals promoting the issue with that term, with opponents, particularly the Conservatives, dubbing it a 'carbon tax.' No matter the semantics, Ms. Taylor Roy says when she faces questions about the matter when door-knocking, she tries to underscore that 'the price on pollution is designed to try and influence our behaviour, to have people think more about what they are doing when they make a purchase that has environmental impacts.'

'It is not simply a price to be paid on a punitive thing, rather [it is to] try and change behaviour,' she contends. 'Most families will be getting a rebate that equals the price they are paying for pollution. It is still the best mechanism to influence our behaviour and we all need to change our behaviours in order to meet our environmental goals. I try to talk to them about the fact that the price on pollution is being incorporated into the price we pay is important so that we are making choices based on true costs and not just the manufactured cost of something. I also try to talk to people about our future generations, that these issues are bigger than just our pocket book and it is really about what kind of Canada we want: do we want to be a leader when it comes to the climate change crisis? We need to generate revenue to invest more into alternative forms of energy and more research and to make Canada a leader in the field where we can export these technologies and help others, also just to set that example.'

To help bring about this change, one of the biggest skills she says she brings to the table is her

?total life experience? where ?caring about people? was fundamental every step of the way. Her father, a former Mayor of Newmarket, imparted in her the value of community service and building her own career from the ground up has given her a firm understanding of ?the hard work and people in our riding trying to work to get ahead, to succeed. It takes hard work, but it also takes opportunity in a fair playing field.?

?I think there has been a number of reasons for that, but I think the issues of childcare, reproductive rights, health care, pay equity, of making it so that women have equal opportunities that that they can function and be productive members of society to the same extent is important and I think those are things we can still work on,? she says. ?The Liberal government has a good track record and it is something I want to see happen even more.?