

Local Liberals to pick candidate Saturday for Aurora's south riding

Local Liberals are set to gather in Oak Ridges this Saturday to pick their Federal candidate for Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill.

Brian Chamberlain and Leah Taylor Roy are the two candidates vying for the position, which has been vacant since last September following the decision of incumbent MP Leona Alleslev to cross the floor to the federal Conservatives.

Mr. Chamberlain was the first candidate to throw his hat into the ring. A resident of the riding, he is an entrepreneur who provides advice for businesses and other organizations spearhead change.

"I made the final decision [to enter the race] in early February and what influenced it was I want to have this seat go back to the Liberal side," Mr. Chamberlain tells The Auroran. "I think floor crossing breaks a fundamental bond with voters and I believe we have to have a government that is committed to taking action for climate change. I don't believe anything else is acceptable for my children and the next generation.

"My perspective is we're a highly entrepreneurial, well-to-do riding within Canada. I think we're a lot more influential than we might think we are because we're a swing riding and I think that one of the choices we're going to have this fall is: do we want to delay, at potentially very high risk, any kind of a conversion to an economy that better represents our environmental perspective and our new environmental values, or are we going to delay that or take it head-on? I think if we want to take it head-on as entrepreneurs, I have a lot to offer."

Mr. Chamberlain says he believes government can provide support and incentive to business where it makes sense, but ultimate change, employment and economic success has to come from the people. The government, he says, "has to have your back but it really shouldn't be in your face."

"My view would be to work with the small and mid-sized employers and companies around the riding and work with them on how they can best expand, how they can best export, and I think when you start looking at clean tech and even clean manufacturing, I don't see any reason why our riding can't be right at the heart of Canada's export strategy. It has been, in the past, around auto parts and there's no reason why it can't continue to be."

Ms. Taylor Roy comes into the race with a similar passion for fighting climate change. A resident of northern York Region, Ms. Taylor is from a political family - her father, Tom, was previously mayor of Newmarket while her brother, John, is the incumbent - and, as the mother of six, she decided now that her youngest is 18, the time was right to "make a difference."

?This is a critical election not only for domestic reasons but also for global reasons,? says Ms. Taylor Roy, who brings her own experience as a business leader, a Masters in Public Policy from Harvard, and background as a lifelong Liberal into the mix. ?I think with everything happening in the world right now, to be faced with an Andrew Scheer Conservative government with Doug Ford in Ontario and Jason Kenney in Alberta?it would be disastrous to Canada. I have spent some time in the United States and I saw what happens when you get a divisive president like Donald Trump. It's bad for the country and I just did not want to see the same thing happen in Canada. If I can make a difference, if I can help, then I want to do that.?

The first way she can help, she says, is ?beating Leona Alleslev and help return this riding to the Liberal fold.?

?I want to help the Liberals become the government again,? she continues. ?Things like climate change is a huge issue and the Conservative platform, at best, is taking us sideways and backwards in many respects. We can't afford that. With increased flooding, there is a lot municipalities have to do and the Provincial government isn't being particularly cooperative with municipalities right now.

?The economy is the best it has been in 40 years in many, many respects, but there is still more to do and I think the Trudeau Liberals know that. There is work for us to do, in terms of especially our youth, and ensuring with all the cutbacks in funding for education, we try to help as much as the Federal government can, to ensure that young Canadians have the opportunities to get the training they need to be part of the evolving economy.?

The Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill Federal Liberal Riding Association will hold its nomination meeting this Saturday, August 10, from 2 ? 5 p.m. at the Bond Lake Arena, located at 70 Old Colony Road, Richmond Hill.

By Brock Weir