

Menegakis 'very pleased and deeply humbled' by election win



Costas Menegakis often says that Members of Parliament go to Ottawa to sit in seats lent to them by the public and residents offered him a chair once again after flipping Aurora's south riding Blue on Monday night.

Menegakis, who previously represented the riding of Richmond Hill between 2011 and 2015, flipped Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill for the Conservatives, overtaking incumbent Liberal Leah Taylor Roy by a significant margin.

Menegakis had received 32,518 votes compared to Taylor Roy's 26,461, as the final poll came in Tuesday afternoon.

Speaking to a crowd of supporters at the Aurora Soccer Club, an audience that included MPP Michael Parsa and Mayor Tom Mrakas, Menegakis thanked his team for helping them knock on more than 80,000 doors in Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill when there are only 35,000 in the entire riding.

'This was an extraordinary campaign,' he told *The Auroran*, when asked about the mixed results for the Conservatives on April 28, which saw the Party fall short of government with leader Pierre Poilievre unable to retain his seat.

'There were things that happened that were beyond our control, starting with, of course, Donald Trump being elected as the President of the United States and when he came up with the tariffs it changed the dynamic of the campaign quite a bit,' he continued. 'What I heard door to door going across Aurora and Richmond Hill from people, over and over again, there was the issue of affordability, the issue of crime, the issue of immigration, the important issues that people are affected with and families are deeply affected with. I think that is what we saw in this riding. People came out overwhelmingly to support, and I really appreciate that.'

'It was a hard-fought campaign, it was a clean campaign. I congratulate all of the other candidates and I look forward to working with everybody so we can do all that we can to bring as much support as possible federally to the great Town of Aurora and the City of Richmond Hill.'

For the first half of the campaign, pollsters had Aurora's south riding leaning Liberal, with its status changing to a toss-up in the final heat. When asked what he believed helped his campaign secure the riding in the most important poll of all, Menegakis attributed their 'ground game' to an amazing group of volunteers out there.

'I kept my ear to the ground, listened to what people had to say, I kept knocking on doors, took a few hits from people here and

there, but the important thing is to listen to your constituents and to act for them," he said. "Somebody who is elected sits on a borrowed chair. It doesn't belong to them. It belongs to the people who gave them the right to sit in it. That's always been my motto. That has always been my policy. To me, it is important that we listen to the people and that is what I did. I knocked on doors and listened to what they had to say, and I made my pledge that I would work tirelessly for them.

"I am happy tonight. I am excited, I am happy, I am very, very pleased, and I am deeply humbled as well with the support from the people and deeply humbled by the warm welcome I got on the doorsteps of people in their homes when they opened their doors. I walked away from each and every home being grateful for being welcomed and engaged in conversations. Some people were supportive and some people were not, but pretty much everybody was respectful " and that's why we live in the best country in the world."

Menegakis' 32,099 votes translated to a vote share of 52.8 per cent over Taylor Roy's 42.6 per cent.

Rounding out the results were Tom Muench of the Green Party with 1,769 votes, Danielle Maniuk of the NDP with 834 votes, and Igor Tvorogov of the People's Party of Canada with 255 votes.

By Brock Weir