

Neuropsychologist Roy joins Newmarket-Aurora race for Liberals



As a neuropsychologist, Dr. Sylvain Roy is no stranger to advocacy, but now he's looking to be on the other side of the table as the next MPP for Newmarket-Aurora.

Roy was confirmed as the Ontario Liberal candidate for Newmarket-Aurora ahead of this June's Provincial Election, the second candidate with a medical background to challenge incumbent Christine Elliott, who also serves as Ontario's Health Minister.

'The reality is, I think, people have noticed that a lot of issues were not tackled by the Province in the past three years,' he says. 'I am trying to keep a positive campaign and really focus on post-pandemic issues, but some of the reasons why we're here today is there has been inaction. Part of it is probably due to COVID, but we can't blame everything on COVID for files not to move forward as well. The fact we have, even within the party, so many nurses, physicians and myself, a neuropsychologist, running, many health care professionals are now saying. 'We're standing up and we have to be able to speak to the issues and we feel that we have not been heard.'

'I think we're seeing firsthand the gaps that were there [before the pandemic] have been made worse by the pandemic and health care professionals are saying, 'We need true representation. We need true leadership in these files.' It's not a political thing, it really needs to happen.'

In his field and at home Roy has been a long-time advocate. As a dad with a child with autism, struggling with his family to provide them with the services they need, and still being on wait lists for services for more than a year, he says those 'little things' added up for his decision to run.

While health care, he says, is a primary concern, he is also focused on the Liberal Party's plans to reduce poverty.

'There have to be some progressive ideas and there is also beyond a need for fiscal responsibility,' he says. 'I think there are some key issues that need to be tackled. To the best of my knowledge, these are issues that are more central to this party as opposed to the

other [and] for me there is an alignment there (with the Liberals) and I think I can help the party win the election and provide my feedback to the party. I have three kids and, quite frankly, it is challenging sometimes. Imagine a family without the proper resources, deciding between rent and food. Child care is a big idea and right now we're the last province that has not signed up [with the Feds] on that. Why is that?

?One central issue I have heard in the riding is really about seniors. It might be a little cliché in a sense, but the long-term care situation was really traumatic, but beyond that, the simple idea of home care and how the services have been crumbling under the feet of caregivers, for example, where nursing and PSW services are not reliably offered anymore. That is affecting a lot of people in the Region, folks like myself who have children but also parents to care for. There is always a situation where our seniors need care and we need to keep them in their homes as long as possible.?

Another central issue is education where, over the course of the pandemic, children and youth have had to pivot quickly between in-person and virtual learning opportunities. How each student fares in these environments is as individual as they are, he says, and parents and children have both ?suffered? under the status quo.

?We have to take a really serious look at what the recovery will look like and that is my focus,? he says. ?These are core issues, I think, have to be something we focus on not for one week or two weeks at a time, but I think all policies, everything we do, we have to be mindful of things like underlying the policy to mental health, the environment. All these things will have to be long-term strategies we think about.

?The climate crisis we're seeing across the world right now ? how do we prepare our towns to meet that challenge in the future? More broadly, how do we make sure we have a sustainable world to live in? I think these are core issues the Liberal party itself will tackle, but it won't happen in one month. I think it is something that happens over years and we have to implant the right policies right here and right now to tackle those in a comprehensive way as we move forward.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter