

Ontario Votes 2018: 'We have returned Ontario to the people,' says Elliott



By Brock Weir

Voters have returned Ontario to the people.

This was the message delivered by Newmarket-Aurora's MPP-elect Christine Elliott to a jubilant group of supporters at her Newmarket campaign office as the numbers rolled in on Thursday night.

Ms. Elliott, the former Whitby MPP and Progressive Conservative leadership candidate, ousted incumbent Liberal Chris Ballard in last week's Provincial Election, bumping the former cabinet minister down to third place in the polls.

'Tonight, you have helped elect the most diverse, capable, hard-working PC caucus that represents all parts of Ontario and our team, the Progressive Conservative party, has never been better prepared to govern Ontario,' said Ms. Elliott at her victory party, which was attended by campaign co-chairs Lois Brown and Bill Hogg, Newmarket Mayor Tony Van Bynen, and Charity McGrath, the riding's former PC candidate who was dramatically ousted by Doug Ford shortly after he secured leadership, citing irregularities in her campaign.

Ms. Elliott then congratulated her fellow candidates on a hard-fought campaign.

'I will always have respect and admiration for anybody who puts their name forward for public office,' she said.

Addressing Premier-elect Doug Ford, Ms. Elliott said he will 'lead our province with courage and conviction' to 'get Ontario back on track,' as will, she said, the roster of returning and newly-elected MPPs in the new PC majority government.

Ms. Elliott was joined at the podium by her three sons, triplets, she shared with her late husband Jim Flaherty. Turning to them, she hailed the home team.

'We have been through a lot these past few years, but I think more than anyone knows, you are my strength, my courage, my rock, and I am so proud to be your mom.'

She is also proud, she added, that the people of Newmarket-Aurora elected her to represent their interests at Queen's Park. To supporters, she said she and the PC team are 'ready to bring real change to Ontario.'

'During the 10 years that I served as an MPP and for all of the travels I have done since then, I have heard the same thing, no matter where I went, no matter where I went. I heard, 'Christine, I need your help,' she said. 'I am trying to feed my children, clothe them, pay my hydro bill and it is becoming impossible. Or outside, I've heard I can't get my mother into a long-term care home and I can't get a family doctor for her. Do you know what else they said to me? They said, 'Will you listen?' Such an honest, simple request. Here's my answer to them, to all of you tonight, to everyone in Newmarket-Aurora: yes, we are listening. Yes, we hear you, and yes, help is on the way.'

'We know that for too long the government has not listened. For too long, we have had a government that thinks better than you do; a government that would rather fight with doctors and nurses than fix our healthcare system, a government that would rather drive up hydro rates than make life more affordable. For 15 years, four elections and a debt that has grown so tremendously that interest payments on that debt are the third largest expense in government after health care and education - it is a shame, but I can tell you that that out of control spending is stopping right now.'

The new PC government, she said, will oppose any 'any measure that makes life more unaffordable for Ontarians.' Taxes will be cut, innovation will be the key to protecting environment over taxation, hydro bills will come down and Ontario's 'broken' health care system will be fixed with reduced wait times and doctors and nurses will be shown the 'respect they deserve,' she said. 'We are going to lead Ontario to the place where we belong, a place of opportunity, of jobs, of prosperity, a place of compassion for everybody of every background and for every walk of life; a place of hope where our young people can find jobs, good, better jobs, right here at home in Ontario and where all of us can fulfil our dreams. With your help today, we have returned Ontario to the people,' she concluded.

Ms. Elliott, who faced criticism from her fellow candidates and members of opposing parties for being a candidate parachuted into the riding with no real roots in the community told The Auroran after her election victory that now that the deal is sealed, she is looking to plant those roots right now.

'I do plan to get a home in Newmarket-Aurora,' she said. 'I have looked at some listings, but I didn't want to get ahead of myself, but I definitely will be buying a place here.'