

?Proof is in the pudding? for Conservative candidate Menegakis



By Brock Weir

?Stay the course? is a frequently heard mantra in the 2015 Federal Election both for supporters and detractors; but for those ?naysayers? out there, Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill Conservative candidate Costas Menegakis says ?the proof is in the pudding.?

?I would ask them to look around their community, I would ask them to look around their neighbourhoods and I would ask them to look at their own families,? he says. ?I would ask them to look at what's happening in other countries and parts of the world and to be informed.?

The right way forward, he says, is to continue keeping taxes low. A key plank of the Conservative platform is just that, he says, to ?leave money in the pockets of the people who know best, the people who actually run families.?

Indeed, this is an issue he says he most frequently encounters knocking on doors in Aurora and Richmond Hill. First and foremost, the economy is on the minds of voters, particularly the areas of the economy that have the greatest impact on families with younger children.

The Universal Childcare Benefit is one factor that goes into ensuring money is left with families to make decisions on issues that impact them, but so too is Canada's financial health as a whole.

?The entire Conservative platform on the economic front is focused on families and particularly focused on ensuring that by cutting taxes and providing very much needed support to families it allows mom and dad the opportunity to have funds in their hands because they know what is best for their children.?

Unusually, he says, as he goes door-to-door, the second most frequent areas of concerns he encounters are provincial matters. Outside of that, focus then turns to security and international threats posed by ISIS and other groups.

?People are interested in ensuring they are safe in their communities which, of course, provides me an opportunity to speak to them about some of the pieces of legislation we, as a government, have put in to ensure our streets and our communities are safe,? says Mr. Menegakis. ?It is a very serious decision for any person to stand up in Canada's Parliament and vote to send our brave men and women into conflict. People have expressed on a number of occasions they feel it is the right thing to do because the alternative is not even an alternative for us.

?As Canada has done in the past, where we have sent men and women to bring in freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of

law, we stood up. We have no other alternative, in my opinion. It is the best course of action. We have leaders from other parties who [say we shouldn't be participating and instead send humanitarian aid]. If anyone thinks humanitarian aid is going to stop someone who has the coldness in their heart to cover their face and chop another human being's head off needs to have their head examined.?

This election is Mr. Menegakis' second campaign after first being elected the MP for Richmond Hill in 2011. An entrepreneur having run a marketing and logistics company by trade, he was previously an active volunteer on the campaigns of others. Eventually, however, he said the time came to step up and put himself forward for the nomination.

It was quite a learning curve, he said, to get a full handle on the platform and engage with residents on just what it contained, but it was ultimately very rewarding. Four years on, and running in this newly-created riding, he says there is 'nothing more satisfying than giving back to your community and working collaboratively with municipal leaders to ensure important infrastructure and important projects in the area are well-funded and well-looked after.?

'Working together has given me more insight when I knock on the door, so I can give residents a more balanced view based on what I have seen over the last four years and what the results have been for the community,' he says.

And, reducing taxes has been key in achieving results, he says. It allows more money to be invested back into the economy, he adds, noting 1.3 million jobs have been created since the 2008 recession, 'most of them full-time, well-paying jobs,' and people in Aurora and Richmond Hill have come to appreciate how much more money they have in their pockets.

'As a platform, the Prime Minister is quite right: this is not a time to experiment with schemes,' he says. 'This is the time to stay the course, to keep taxes low, to create jobs, and focus on a strong Canadian economy. The proof is in the pudding. We're doing very, very well. We have a balanced budget this year.

'What I have seen over the last four years is that [our] focus is always on making Canada better and making our community better. The Prime Minister has a saying I absolutely love: 'We will always govern in the best interest of Canadians, even if sometimes we make decisions that might not be politically advantageous to our party.' We will do the right thing because governing by doing the right thing for Canadians, you always walk with your head up in your community knowing you're doing the right thing for the people you live with, communicate with and who give you the confidence with their vote.

'Any elected official is sitting in a borrowed chair. It belongs to the community they represent.?