

# NEWSLETTER

September 2011—ELECTION SPECIAL

## Ontario Provincial Election—Your Participation is Key!

With the provincial election only days away, candidates in the Ottawa region are making their final attempts to capture your vote.

At the helm of the Ontario Liberal Party is Dalton McGuinty, Ontario's Premier since 2003. Seeking to replace him are Progressive Conservative Tim Hudak, who was elected PC party leader in June 2009, and Andrea Horwath, elected NDP leader in March 2009. Individuals with an interest in rental housing should also pay careful attention to the candidates vying for their riding, and to the platforms they represent.

EOLO is making contact with key candidates to ensure they are aware of our views on rental housing. We also urge you, as a landlord, to take your concerns to the next level by becoming involved in the election. Although it is not in the interest of landlords to make rent control and other housing concerns a campaign issue, there are many ways you can still have a positive influence.

In this special election edition of the EOLO newsletter, we provide a report on each provincial party's stance on

issues affecting landlords, as well as information about the races in the Ottawa region, with brief profiles of the main candidates. (See page 2.)

### How can you get involved?

Learn where local candidates stand on the provincial issues affecting the rental housing industry (rent control, property taxes, housing policy and municipal powers).

1. Offer to put up signs at your properties.
2. Volunteer to help on Election Day - help voters to get to the polls or be a scrutineer.
3. If you can, make personal contact with your preferred candidate and offer your support.
4. Offer information about the issues that affect our industry (briefly).

If you do nothing else, VOTE on October 6, or at an advance poll. This year, the advance polls are open for long periods of time and at numerous locations.

## Key Election Issues for Landlords

The Ontario provincial election is scheduled for October 6. The key issues for landlords are the parties' views on:

- HST
- Rent control and the guideline
- Welfare policy and minimum wages
- Electricity policy and prices
- Corporate taxes
- Building more social housing
- Ontario housing benefit

- Existing social housing stock
- Inclusionary zoning

The following information provides a detailed account of where the parties stand on the issues, based on their past actions and current statements, including responses to a survey by the Alliance to End Homelessness. As the parties' positions have remained fairly consistent in the past, they should be a good indicator of what they may do in the future. See the table beginning on page 4.

## Ottawa Area Riding Information

### Ottawa West-Nepean

Liberal Bob Chiarelli has an interesting battle for re-election ahead of him. The former Ottawa Mayor and incumbent MPP, is running against Progressive Conservative Randall Denley, a journalist best known for his work with the Ottawa Citizen. Running for the NDP is Wendy Byrne, a lawyer and former Regional Councillor for Bay Ward. This riding has alternated between the Liberals and Tories for over a decade.



Bob Chiarelli



Randall Denley



Wendy Byrne

#### **Fast Facts**

- Liberal MPP Bob Chiarelli has worked to give low-income Ottawa residents better access to affordable housing. As Ottawa's Mayor, he facilitated reductions in the multi-residential property taxes.
- PC Candidate Randall Denley's goals are to clean up government and lower taxes.
- NDP Candidate Wendy Byrne would like to remove HST from essentials like home heating and hydro.

### Nepean Carleton

For the last five years, PC incumbent Lisa MacLeod has represented Nepean Carleton, which remains a fairly consistent Conservative riding. Having worked as a political advisor and commentator, MacLeod beat out the Liberal opposition by almost 10,000 votes during the 2007 election and is likely to retain her seat. She is running against Liberal Don Dransfield, a founding member of a local industrial marketing firm and Ric Dagenais, a bilingual analyst with CUPE, who is running for the NDP.

#### **Fast Facts**

- PC Incumbent Lisa MacLeod is an advocate for tougher legislation on grow operations and drug labs.
- Liberal Candidate Don Dransfield has provided advice to shape environmental, dangerous goods and waste-management policy across all levels of government.
- NDP Candidate Ric Dagenais is passionate about fighting homelessness and improving social services.

### Ottawa Centre

Ottawa Centre has remained a red riding since 1995 but was previously in the hands of the NDP for well over a decade. The NDP focuses its Ottawa efforts on this riding. Constituents of Ottawa Centre voted in Liberal MPP Yasir Naqvi in 2007 but also elected the NDP's Paul Dewar as their federal Member of Parliament in 2006. Yasir, who is also president of the Ontario Liberal Party, is running against NDP Candidate, Anil Naidoo, a former political aide and campaigner with Maude Barlow's Council of Canadians (which focuses on health care energy and water policy) and PC candidate Rob Dekker, a former union president at Bell.

#### **Fast Facts**

- Liberal Incumbent Yasir Naquvi has championed SCAN legislation, which would help protect law abiding tenants and landlords from drug dealers and gang members. He has also helped secure funding to build over 350 new affordable housing units in Ottawa and has been the Co-Chair of the Capital Food Bank Blitz since 2005.
- NDP Candidate Anil Naidoo continues to work in defense of human rights, to reclaim public services and protect the environment.
- PC Candidate Rob Dekker wants to reduce taxes.



Yasir Naquvi



Anil Naidoo



Rob Dekker

### Ottawa-Orleans

Ottawa-Orleans has been a "swing riding" for the last 12 years, alternating between the Liberals and PCs. Former Ottawa City Councillor and Liberal MPP, Phil McNeely, is the incumbent. He was first elected to the Ontario Legislature in 2003. Competing for the Ottawa-Orleans riding are lawyer Andrew Lister for the PC Party, and Douglas McKercher, a writer, editor and teacher, who is running for the NDP.

#### **Fast Facts**

- Before entering politics, Liberal MPP Phil McNeely was a professional engineer. He has served as Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term

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## City of Ottawa Area Riding Information

(Continued from page 2)

Care, Minister of Transportation and Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

- If elected, PC Candidate Andrew Lister would like to provide tax relief to safeguard education and health care.
- The NDP's Douglas McKercher would like to focus on job creation, innovative health and social services, and community development.

### Ottawa South

The Conservatives maintained a stronghold on the Ottawa South riding since 1937, winning 14 consecutive elections. It was Dalton McGuinty, Senior, who finally took the seat for the Liberals in 1987, holding it until his death three years later. His son, Dalton McGuinty, Junior, won the seat for the Liberals later that year and became leader of the Liberal Party in 1996. Also running for the Ottawa South seat are PC Jason MacDonald, Communications Director for Carleton University, and NDP Candidate, Wali Farah, who is the Director of Programs at the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization.



Dalton McGuinty



Jason MacDonald



Wali Farah

### **Fast Facts**

- If re-elected, incumbent Dalton McGuinty would like to move forward on several initiatives, including widening Highway 417 from Nicholas Street to Ottawa Road 174. He says this project will create over 1,800 jobs, ease traffic congestion and pave the way for light rail transit in the City of Ottawa.
- PC Candidate Jason MacDonald wants to put more focus on healthcare and education and eliminate needless bureaucracy.
- NDP Candidate Wali Farah is dedicated to welcoming immigrants and refugees into Canada and helping them get settled into their new communities.

### Ottawa-Vanier

Liberals have held this riding since 1971 with incumbent

Madeleine Meilleur claiming her seat as MPP in 2003. Meilleur spent a decade in municipal politics before entering provincial Parliament. Running for the PC's is Fred Sherman, a former Director of Communications and Legislative Affairs for the Minister of State for Multiculturalism and Status of Women. Running for the NDP is Paul-Étienne Laliberté-Tipple, a lawyer who has worked for Nortel and the Government of Canada.

### **Fast Facts**

- Liberal MPP Madeleine Meilleur is a registered nurse and lawyer who has specialized in labour and employment law. She was an Ottawa City councilor for many years, and supported property tax reductions for rental housing. She has been the Minister of Community and Social Services since 2006 and has fought for the inclusion of persons with developmental disabilities and women fleeing violence.
- PC Candidate Fred Sherman has worked with local residents to introduce energy-efficient recycling initiatives in Ottawa-Vanier.
- NDP Candidate Paul-Étienne Laliberté-Tipple has taught employment and labour relations at the University of Maryland and was once employed at the United Nations and World Bank.

### Carleton-Mississippi Mills

This riding was created in 2007 taking 58% of the Lanark-Carleton riding and 18% of Nepean-Carleton. Norm Sterling served as MPP for the PC's from 1977 to 2011 but was ousted this year in a nomination contest by Jack MacLaren. Also running for the seat are lawyer Megan Cornell for the Liberals, and Liam Duff, a fourth-year communications student, for the NDP.

### **Fast Facts**

- PC Candidate Jack MacLaren is a cash-crop farmer who is best known for his work as president of the Ontario Landowners Association and Carleton Landowners Association— two organizations that have fought for rural landowner rights and facilitated the successful "Back off Government" campaign.
- Liberal Candidate Megan Cornell is working on the development of a healthcare hub in the area, which would act as a one-stop location for medical services, diagnostics and support.
- NDP Candidate Liam Duff is committed to building a more sustainable and effective health care system.

## Key Election Issues for Landlords

<b>EOLO and Party Positions on Housing Policy Issues</b>			
<b>EOLO</b>	<b>Liberal Party</b>	<b>Progressive Conservative (PC)</b>	<b>New Democratic Party (NDP)</b>
<b>HST</b>			
The Liberal government adopted the HST on July 1, 2010. As a result, landlords must now pay the provincial portion of HST on utilities, on the labour component of maintenance and repairs, and on property management fees.	The Liberal government has made no mention of HST in its election campaign. Because the Liberals only implemented HST last summer, they are likely to keep the system as is.	The Conservatives say they will remove HST from electricity, heating oil and natural gas used for residential heating.	The NDP plan to remove HST from electricity and home heating. They will also reduce HST on gasoline by 1% a year.
<b>Rent Control and the Guideline</b>			
Rent control impedes a landlord's ability to cover increased expenses, such as those incurred as a result of HST. EOLO wants a guideline which is higher to allow for quicker cost recovery for landlords.	Because the Liberals changed the rules for above-guideline increase applications, landlords are unable to claim utility cost increases for the HST. In announcing the 2012 Guideline at 3.1%, the Liberals said they will change how the guideline rent increase is set, as "the current formula no longer works [since it is too high.]"	The PC platform does not address rent control. In recent decades the PCs have listened better to landlord concerns than the other parties.	For the first time in decades, the NDP election platform does not promise tighter rent control.
<b>Welfare Policy and Minimum Wages</b>			
Landlords want to see a cost-effective welfare system, which provides adequate income support. Youth unemployment, low wages and low welfare rates prevent individuals from affording a rental of their own. However, most landlords are opposed to increases in the minimum wage since that reduces low-wage employment and drives up labour costs.	The Liberals have raised welfare rates by about 7% since 2004, which is slightly less than inflation. They have also raised the minimum wage well beyond inflation, and introduced a Child Tax Benefit to help combat child poverty rates in the province.	The PC's have promised to streamline the welfare system (now governed by about 800 often contradictory rules) and to allow recipients to retain more earnings from part-time jobs, which will encourage a transition to full-time work. The PC's also plan to impose a one-year ban on eligibility for social assistance for new Canadians.	The NDP have promised to streamline the welfare system and encourage recipients to transition out of the welfare system by retaining more of their earnings from part-time work. They also say they will raise the minimum wage to \$11 per hour and index it to the cost of living.

## Key Election Issues for Landlords

<b>Electricity Policy and Prices</b>			
Increases in electricity costs negatively affect the rental housing industry. Landlords pay the added costs, and ultimately pass the costs on to tenants.	The Liberals expect to continue to pay substantial prices to buy electricity generated from windmills and solar systems in order to promote renewable energy. They have agreed to pay Samsung \$7 billion in exchange for investments in green energy in Ontario.	The Conservatives say they will restrain electricity price increases. If elected, the PCs plan to kill the Liberals' deal with Samsung and avoid driving up electricity prices.	The NDP are committed to curbing the price of electricity. They have committed that future large-scale electricity generation will be publicly owned and will not include nuclear power plants.
<b>Corporate tax rates</b>			
While most landlords are not affected by corporate tax rates, EOLO supports lower taxes on all landlords.	The Liberals reduced the provincial corporate tax rate, and apparently plan to allow a further cut to take effect as scheduled.	Conservative leader Tim Hudak has pledged to cut the provincial corporate tax rate to 10% to help foster job creation. He says he will not increase taxes, establish new taxes or give taxation authority to third parties or municipalities.	The NDP proposes to raise the general corporate tax rate to 18%, but provide tax credits for companies that invest in buildings, machinery, equipment or training. Those credits seem to offer little for landlords.
<b>Building new social housing</b>			
EOLO believes that there is enough social housing, although some of it should be converted into supportive housing. EOLO would like to see any additional money put into housing allowances or a housing benefit.	The Liberals say they have invested more money toward affordable housing than any other government, namely more than \$2.5 billion in repairs, new construction and rent supplements since 2003.	The PC's intend to scale back investment in non-profit and co-op housing.	The NDP have committed to funding the construction of more than 50,000 new affordable housing units in the next 10 years. They say they plan to invest \$1.1 billion in affordable housing programs, focusing on new social housing. <i>[Based on the subsidies needed by current projects, the financial requirement would be much more than that: Ed.]</i>

## Key Election Issues for Landlords

<b>Ontario Housing Benefit</b>			
An Ontario Housing Benefit would provide a monthly subsidy to low-income tenants to bridge the gap between their rent and 30% income. This would provide support for tenants renting in the private market, without adding any administrative burden to landlords.	The Liberals have indicated they will consider a housing benefit.	The PCs have historically been in favour of helping needy people with modest amounts of money rather than through services provided by government. Subject to the deficit problem, the PCs may introduce a housing benefit.	The NDP plan to implement a housing benefit that will provide about \$96 a month for renters who pay more than 40% of their income on rent and about \$120 for families that pay more than 30%. This benefit is expected to cost \$240 million a year.
<b>Existing social housing stock</b>			
EOLO believes that funding the maintenance and repair of existing social housing stock is more economical than investing in new social housing.	The Liberals have built and repaired over 270,000 affordable housing units. They recently signed a deal with the federal government to invest \$480.6 million in Ontario's housing stock.	The PCs may leave the funding of social housing repairs with the municipalities.	The NDP say they will improve access to low-cost financing for affordable housing construction, renovation, and repairs. They will also invest \$300 million in a low-income energy efficiency program for social housing, not-for-profit and co-op providers.
<b>Inclusionary zoning</b>			
Allowing municipalities to require developers to provide low-price housing is a hidden tax on new housing development, which will drive up the price of new housing thus making all housing more expensive, and working against housing affordability.	The Liberals say they are in full support of allowing municipalities to set standards when it comes to development and plans for affordable housing construction. They have also said they will not allow mandatory inclusionary zoning.	The PCs are unlikely to allow mandatory inclusionary zoning.	The NDP say they will allow municipalities to adopt inclusionary housing practices. They believe such a requirement for developers to provide low price housing will assist overall housing affordability.

## Not all polls are created equal

By Krista Johnston, EOLO Communications Coordinator

Contradictory polls of the Ontario provincial election have raised much speculation in recent weeks as the CEOs of Ipsos Reid called into question the untraditional data collection methods of competitors in their industry.

In an open letter to Ontario's journalists, issued September

14, Senior Vice-President John Wright and Ipsos Reid CEO Darrell Bricker outlined a six-point plan for the media to help ensure they are presenting "a better and more informed reporting of the polls."

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## Not all polls are created equal (cont'd)

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"We've all seen over the last few days a confusing cacophony of polls on the Ontario election," the letter states. "Depending on what poll you read, McGuinty's Liberals are on a roll, Hudak and the Tories are comfortably ahead, or the Grits and Tories are neck and neck. All polls are not created equal."

The two CEOs, who lead all of Ipsos Reid's political polling for the media in Canada, say they have done polls in every major election since 1988. Both have stated that polling methods, such as Interactive Voice Response (also known as robo-calling), are not in fact, actual telephone calls, and are tremendously biased. In their letter to the media, they pointed out that in the last federal election, IVR polls were massively off on the final results, and underrepresented the Tory vote. They added that online methods, used to predict votes, should also be called into question.

"You will find that some heavy thumbs are being applied to adjust for under-represented voting groups," the letter claims. "While the weighting can produce very good results, it really amounts to no more than an educated guess. And, if that's the case, the results should be reported as such."

Pollsters are never held accountable for their indiscretions, incompetence or mistakes, Ipsos Reid says. As a result, Ipsos Reid feels a moratorium should be placed on all "new" polling techniques until they have been tested against more traditional methods which have a successful track record. This, they say, should have been the case with IVR in the federal election.

"It's a pretty minimum standard to be right at least once with a new methodology before you get to lead a newscast or get the front page headline in the newspaper," the Ipsos Reid letter points out.

Abacus Data stated recently in the media that it likely prompted the open letter from Ipsos Reid because of the survey it released earlier in the week using a non-traditional online method that is similar to one used to assess consumer brand preference.

In the company's online rebuttal entitled, "Don't be Afraid of Innovation," Abacus explained that the traditional way of measuring voter intention involves asking individuals how they would vote if the election were held today. The problem, it says, is that many respondents are undecided early in the election but still must identify which party they are leaning toward.

In its poll, Abacus said it looked at voter intentions and

decision-making differently. It asked respondents how likely they are to vote for each party. Because this question is phrased differently, the poll indicated that the Conservatives were leading the race.

"In Ontario, the PCs have the most committed voters but there's a large group of potential voters who are wavering between more than one party," the online rebuttal stated. "Is it right to force those respondents to make a choice? Is that choice reported in a poll a false choice?"

Even if this kind of poll was executed correctly, it is not the standard election scenario that's tested in a vote question and should not be reported as a "current vote," Ipsos Reid says. And just because a polling company divulges its margin of error and the questions it asks, doesn't mean it provides an accurate representation of the voting public's intentions.

"All of this MUST stop," the Ipsos Reid letter reads. "We are distorting our democracy, confusing voters, and destroying what should be a source of truth in election campaigns - the unbiased, truly scientific public opinion poll."

Abacus continues to defend its decision about conducting the online poll as opposed to the traditional telephone survey. The company says that pollsters have used a sliding scale for years to gauge purchasing intent and brand loyalty. Although this method is a different way of measuring voter intentions, Abacus says it doesn't mean it's incorrect or flawed.

"Online survey methods demonstrate that online research, when done correctly, can be just as accurate, if not more than, traditional telephone polling. Sure there are challenges with online research, but they are not any bigger than those faced by researchers using telephone surveys," Abacus states. "New ideas should be celebrated not attacked by established companies that have a vested interest in the status quo."

Online forums surrounding this issue have brought forward a number of opposing opinions from Ontario citizens. Some feel that untraditional methods which are used to rate brands like Nike and Sony are inappropriate during an election. Others point out that many pollsters are hired to work exclusively for specific media chains and are therefore butting heads over their own agendas.

This conflict over polling methodologies underlines the fact that all political opinion polls are as much for entertainment as they are for information. The only poll that really matters is the one taken on Election Day.

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