

Candidates, Campaigns, Censorship, and Commitment

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As I begin this article, our two by-election candidates are beginning their final week of campaigning before the June 30 vote. David J. Reimer, CHP's Interim Leader and our candidate in the Macleod riding in Alberta, has had tremendous opportunities to meet with voters both in their homes and businesses, as a participant in the Okotoks Parade, and as a panellist in several all-candidates forums. The response from the public has been positive and encouraging. David will be pouring himself out this week to reach as many communities as possible, with the helpful support of the Lethbridge electoral district association (EDA) and local members in Macleod. Some of the CHP National Board were privileged to spend a couple of days campaigning with David and his team following the National Board meetings in Coaldale.

Linda (Gibbons) Groce and her supporters are preparing for another round of brochure distribution in Trinity-Spadina. Thousands of brochures were distributed last Saturday and a final push will be made this week. Already, Linda has succeeded in shifting the status quo. She won a small political victory Monday when she was allowed to take her rightful place at the table in a public "all-candidates" forum. Although not originally invited to participate on the platform, she and her team showed themselves diligent with prayer, persuasion, and patient perseverance. What an encouragement! After consideration, the organizers of this forum—to their credit—were willing to make a last-minute change and include our candidate in the line-up. What was shaping up to be a "some-candidates" forum became instead a place where the CHP candidate was welcomed and allowed to present herself and CHP's Better Solutions to the voters of Trinity-Spadina. We are grateful to the hosts of this forum for their flexibility and willingness to include our candidate.

This favourable outcome reminds us that the Christian voice (as well as the voice of the unborn) deserves a hearing in the public square. Other event organizers and some media may still think censorship is a useful tool to suppress the truth. It happens even in the House of Commons. We cannot allow a narrowly-biased elite to determine who may—and who may not—speak to voters and to our youth. Whenever we see the shameless manipulation of voters taking place, CHP members must continue to press the media and other gatekeepers of news and opinion to understand that such bias and discrimination is contrary to the very system of democracy that all-candidate forums, the orderly registration of voters, and the privilege of casting a ballot are meant to protect. We thank Linda for her fearless presentation of truth. In the end, truth wins.

We have faced discrimination before and other CHP candidates have been told they were not invited to participate in public forums. It is likely that some of our candidates may encounter this type of bias in the future. It may be useful to prepare ourselves with a clear understanding of why such arbitrary hand-picking of "winners" is contrary to democracy. We must be prepared to patiently present these reasons over and over.

There are at least four reasons why organizers of “all-candidate” forums should not be able to include some candidates and exclude others:

1. It is obviously false advertising *and* misleading to voters to claim one is hosting an “all-candidates” meeting when some legitimate candidates registered with Elections Canada are not included.
2. It sets an arbitrary standard of credibility, placing the current better-known parties and candidates on a pedestal (call it an “old boys’ club”) and giving the impression to voters that the less well-known candidates or parties have nothing to contribute to the public discussion.
3. By presuming beforehand which candidates may be more likely to win or which candidates the audience may be more likely to vote for or which parties may be getting more press, the organizers are ignoring the idea that another candidate may have information or policies to present which the audience has not yet had a chance to consider.
4. Most importantly, creating an opportunity for only a few chosen candidates to communicate directly with voters provides material support to those candidates who are included. Under Elections Canada regulations, organizations (such as businesses and unions) are not allowed to contribute to the campaign of any candidate, either cash or gifts in kind. But that is exactly what they are doing by offering this biased coverage. Voters who do not hear from the excluded candidates are more likely to vote for one of the candidates on the stage. This amounts to a campaign contribution in kind and should be made illegal. It is already immoral. It is censorship of the worst kind, a censorship of ideas.

We wish our candidates well as we approach voting day. If you have not already done so, you can learn more about their campaigns or even make a contribution at <http://www.chp.ca/june-2014-by-elections/>. We really appreciate all those who have assisted in any way. Your sacrifices for this good cause have made a difference.

We expect the next general election on October 19, 2015 (although some pundits say it could come even sooner) and have already begun preparing for it. We are actively seeking for willing and able candidates, campaign volunteers, and donors to help advance the cause of the CHP—a return to moral government based on solid biblical principles. To achieve the goals for which we are striving will take commitment and sacrifice. With our two by-election candidates setting such a great example, we hope that many of you will step up to the plate and make yourselves available for the 2015 election campaign. Please let us know how you can help. A candidate and campaign-team training session will be included on the agenda during our Leadership Convention (Nov. 5-8, 2014); plan now to attend the Convention and become part of the campaign team in 2015. Be sure your CHP membership is current. If you’re not already a member, join here¹.

Footnotes

¹ www.chp.ca/get-involved