

Finding Candidates and Filling in the Blanks

Rod Taylor

Leader, CHP Canada

Since its founding convention in 1987, the CHP has had its detractors. Of course, the poor-choice lobby and the gender-agenda folks have argued against our platform and attacked our core policies (protection of innocent human life at all stages, defence of traditional marriage between one man and one woman, freedom of speech and religion, etc.). Those attacks were expected and, as they say, "It's a free country." That's the beauty of our electoral system: Canadians representing various positions on an array of topics are free to promote and debate their ideas and to seek to inform and persuade voters to choose their party or candidate to bring their values to Parliament.

The more difficult challenges have come from the folks who agree with us on many issues but have not been willing to support us at the polls, mostly for pragmatic reasons: they have thought that the CHP is "too small" to make a difference or that our candidates, by earning the votes of a small percentage of the voters with our principled policies might become "spoilers" to decent men and women in one of the bigger parties and cause them to lose. This second objection is often mistakenly called "splitting the vote," as if choosing a principled pro-life candidate over the representative of a larger party—often one who will not speak out on the slaughter of the pre-born—somehow undermines the principles behind the vote.

Our point has always been that principles matter and that only candidates and a party who are willing to speak boldly on the "life and family" issues during a campaign will have the courage and a mandate to debate those issues once elected. As for the "too small" complaint, it's obvious that every party begins small. Our current Conservative majority began as the Reform Party which was unable to elect a single member in 1988. The NDP also began as an idea and the Greens—who now hold two seats in the House—struggled through several election cycles before finally electing their first MP.

Nevertheless, these arguments have acted against the growth and electoral success of the CHP like a self-fulfilling prophecy. Since we were considered "too small," many social conservatives were reluctant to join or to support us with their finances, thus hindering us from getting bigger. Those who thought we could never win—even though they loved our policies—refused to vote for us, ensuring that our poll percentages remained low. Had we been seen as serious contenders, many of these folks would have voted for us and we might today have MPs in the House. At the very least, our platform would have gained additional publicity and our principles would have been discussed by the networks and the campaign teams of the bigger parties.

In response to these challenges, the CHP is adopting a unique campaign strategy in 2015 and to achieve the best results we are asking for help from every pro-life, pro-family group in the country. We would love to be able to offer a solid pro-life candidate to every voter in Canada. How many candidates we can put forward depends on you! Our intention is to focus our efforts on ridings where the Conservative incumbent or candidate is not wholeheartedly and unequivocally pro-life. Since many Conservative candidates will not talk about abortion or will not fill out questionnaires, this can be difficult to determine but we have been examining voting records and where possible, asking those candidates directly. We don't need to ask the Libs, the NDP, or the Greens. Since Justin Trudeau's bombshell statement last year, it's become obvious that there will be *no* pro-life candidates in any of those parties.

The Conservatives—in spite of Mr. Harper's vow to never allow *any* legislation on abortion to be passed while he is Prime Minister—still have a handful of outspoken MPs who have addressed the issue and a slightly larger group

who have supported pro-life bills and motions with their votes. Once again, we tip our hats to those brave men and women who have demonstrated their pro-life credentials within a party whose leadership has never supported their cause. However, the vast majority of Conservative MPs and unknown incumbents have not shown that courage and in the districts where they are running, we believe voters deserve a pro-life choice! Your vote for a solid pro-life candidate is the only tool you have to impress on the candidates and the political parties they represent that being pro-life is not a liability but an asset.

Questions:

- Does this mean that the CHP will not run *any* candidates against pro-life Conservative candidates? Not quite. We have several strong CHP EDAs with candidates ready to go and they have been preparing for this election for some time. We are not going to dictate to them that they must not run. After all, that's what political parties do! Our candidates still have a powerful contribution to make to the debates. Our party platform still stands out as unique and deserves a hearing by the voters. What we are saying is this: In the past, we have looked for candidates to represent us in every riding in the country, regardless of the position of the current MP on important life and family issues. In the lead-up to this election, we are only looking for candidates to challenge Conservative incumbents or nominees who have been a disappointment to the life and family movement. Conservative candidates who are reluctant to discuss the issues or will not take a clear position also deserve a CHP candidate to run against them and raise the issues.
- So if I don't have a CHP candidate in my riding, is there any way I can help? Absolutely! Just because you do not have a CHP candidate in your district does *not* mean you can sit out this election. Your membership and support for the CHP is more important than ever. Our national campaign team is developing tools and ads which we hope to make available across the country. Of course, these require money. As your national leader, I have already traveled to Ottawa and Toronto, promoting our CHP platform. I hope to bring the CHP message to many more communities and to be able to support our candidates on the campaign trail. Again, this will require funds. We hope to do a brochure mail-out to ridings where our candidates will run and your Election Readiness Team is busy working on tools for our candidates. During the election period, any of our candidates could benefit from people willing to make phone calls. If you have a good long-distance plan, you could offer to make 100-200 or more phone calls to voters in the district of your CHP candidate of choice. And of course, if you have the time and the ability to travel, you could offer to help in the riding of your choice for a week or two. I know that I will be needing volunteers in my campaign and will appreciate any amount of help. The *first* thing you can do to help is to help us find candidates for the ridings where we hope to run. *Please* send us your suggestions: the prospective candidate's name (it could be *you*) and the riding you think needs a CHP candidate.

So, if you're not already a member of the Christian Heritage Party, join today!¹ If you are able to make a donation—however big or small—to the important work of the CHP, please give something today² so that we can make the CHP known to many more Canadians. This could be a very good year for the CHP! We are filling a need that no other party can and by working with other pro-lifers we can both advance the cause of righteousness in our nation and make the name of the CHP better known.

Footnotes

¹ www.chp.ca/get-involved

² www.chp.ca/donate

The Christian Heritage Party of Canada
www.chp.ca • NationalOffice@chp.ca • 1-888-VOTE-CHP (868-3247)
PO Box 4958, Station E, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5J1
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