



Feature

## ARTICLE

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### VOTERS HAVE MUCH TO CONSIDER IN THE 2025 ELECTION

**\*\*CASTING A PROTEST VOTE IS A WASTE OF TIME\*\***

By Dean Hickey

This week I have decided to offer my readers some insights as to the federal election that will be decided on Monday April 28th. My regular City Hall column will return next week.

**THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION OF 2025** will certainly be well remembered by all those who take an interest in the political matters of our country.

In most neighbourhoods throughout Durham Region, residents have witnessed the coming and going of volunteers at their doorstep — some offering up a series of political talking points, and others more inclined to speak from the heart. All of which, upon the whole, may well be considered as relevant to the future of the country and of individual communities such as Oshawa. Given the chance, I would offer up a story to every eligible voter, one that I would find necessary in the telling. They would be made to understand the realities associated with casting, what I may reasonably describe as, a 'protest vote'.

Many large urban centres are known to be free-thinkers and to often rail against the established order of things, however, the result is an entire community literally removing itself from the corridors of power.

Parliamentary representation, whether it be at the federal or provincial level, means more than an elected representative's constituency staff answering inquiries on matters that involve various forms of financial assistance and other social programs.

It should be the strongest object of everyone in the community to have a place at the table where real decisions are made on matters of national and international importance. A lone voice shouting objections on purely ideological grounds may offer some satisfaction to disgruntled voters, but it keeps, at a distance, that part of the political body which renders us safe and ultimately prosperous. As a result, voters may find themselves somewhat marginalized.

To take the matter even further, it becomes unusually bizarre when constituencies such as Ontario's Kitchener Centre and British Columbia's Saanich-Gulf Islands see themselves best represented by a political party that exists in name only. I am, or course, referring to the Green Party which currently holds two seats in a country comprised of 343 federal districts.

The number one question in all of this may be seen to focus entirely on what is truly best for the community in an age of tariff threats, global volatility in matters of war, economic uncertainty at home, and the need to participate in a truly meaningful way.

Oshawa residents will choose their next MP from a list of only four candidates, three of whom represent Canada's main political parties, being the Conservatives, Liberals, and New Democrats. Also on the ballot will be a candidate from the Green Party, which as I have indicated, exists in name only.

Any Canadian who believes greater things might be obtained by casting a vote for one of the smaller parties in this election will overlook the stinging reality that comes from a conscious decision to stay out of high-level decision making. They will fail to see the extent to which strength through association and success by way of intelligent decisions are the basis for maintaining the security and prosperity of our community.

We must be careful when considering our position among Canada's Parliamentary decision makers.

**THE IMMINENT COLLAPSE OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY** appears to be in full swing. Nationally, the NDP are in a very challenging place. Some polls have them in single digits in voter approval, with much of their support bleeding to the Liberals under their new leader. One polling expert has said their leader, Jagmeet Singh, might well lose his own seat in the BC riding of Burnaby South. The populist, left of centre message of the New Democratic Party no longer appears to impress most Canadians.

Many can recall the glory days that began in 1961 under then-leader Tommy Douglas who brought in publicly funded health care, which remains a defining moment in this nation's history.

Where there was once a forceful alliance with organized labour, there now remains only a fraction of the power and influence that used to exist, as most low wage workers tend not to have a union representing them. In fact, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 773, have endorsed Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre.

Jagmeet Singh's inseparable connection with the Trudeau Liberals remains, as he takes credit for expanded dental care, a pharmacare plan, and a \$10-a-day child care program. However, his party was seen to evolve, gradually, into what may now be considered as nothing more than a progressive version of the Liberal party. The NDP has lost its core identity, and in the process, its relevance in this election.

**THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEBATE HELD ON APRIL 17TH** was certainly an eye-opener for anyone who is even remotely in support of the Liberal leader, Mark Carney. He was truly awful, and I say that in a non-partisan way. He fumbled, paused, sounded insecure, kept his head bowed down a great deal, and was literally crushed by his opponents on practically every issue during the debate.

The Conservative's Pierre Poilievre was clearly focused and on message as he sought to portray Carney as an extension of the last nine years of Liberal rule, accusing him of "regurgitating" lines from Trudeau's staffers who were in the studio. Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet was true to form, offering Carney a reality check as he destroyed many of the Liberal leader's proposals, including an east-west energy grid that would conflict with Quebec's already established energy programs.

In my view, Canadians have an opportunity, and indeed a duty, to help bring this country out of what can only be described as a decade of darkness. The damage caused by 10 years of reckless and misguided Liberal Party rule is widespread, and the rebuilding must start now. Our very survival as a nation depends on it.



## Todd McCarthy

MPP - DURHAM

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## Lisa Robinson

PICKERING CITY COUNCILLOR

### Inside Pickering's City Hall Where Truth Is Silenced and Corruption Is Protected

By Councillor Lisa Robinson

Democracy doesn't die overnight. It dies slowly — through silence, coverups, and backroom politics. And in Pickering, it's dying behind closed doors.

Over the past year, I've brought forward numerous motions reflecting the concerns of everyday residents — motions about safety, fairness, fiscal responsibility, and respect for Canadian values. And nearly every single time, they were blocked, ignored, or buried.

Not because the motions were wrong — but because they were inconvenient.

This council doesn't want uncomfortable questions. They want control. And they're willing to rewrite the rules to keep it.

Let me be clear: what's happening inside Pickering's City Hall is not democratic — it's draconian.

We've seen the bylaw amendments. The procedural games. The scripted meetings. The selective enforcement of rules designed to silence residents and dissenting councillors.

Public comments are cut off. Delegations are shut down. Meetings are moved online without public input. And when people do speak up, they're branded as "alt right", "dangerous." or they are character assassinated.

This council — led by Mayor Kevin Ashe and backed by insiders like Brenner, Cook, Nagy, Pickles, and Butt — has used every tool at their disposal to suppress public voices and punish those who don't fall in line.

Meanwhile, city employees who mislead council or the public are protected, not reprimanded. Whistleblowers are ignored. Those who speak inconvenient truths are targeted.

I've brought forward motions to: (Only to name a few)

- Play the national anthem before council meetings
- End corporate gifts and perks to councillors
- Restrict sexually explicit performances from allowing minors
- Ensure flags flown on public buildings represent all Canadians equally
- Increase safety options in public changerooms
- Pause development deals that lacked transparency

- Require cameras to stay on during virtual meetings
- Improve public consultation boundaries
- Repeal the "climate emergency" declaration
- Establish a department of government efficiency
- Restore respect for Canadian tradition and neutral governance

How many were refused a seconder? Too many to count. But Mayor Ashe himself has said it outright — it's not the message, it's "the messenger." He stated he doesn't want to hear from me. He's biased, and he's admitted it.

And it shows — in the attacks, the games, and the complaints.

Let's talk about those complaints.

Every single Integrity Commissioner complaint that's gone forward against me has come from:

- The Mayor
- Members of Council
- The Corporation of the City of Pickering
- The CAO
- Or even Mayor Ashe's own family

The only exception? A Facebook post — where three drinking buddies filed a complaint based on lies. What the public doesn't know (yet) is that a sitting councillor was involved behind the scenes — encouraging it, fueling it, and waiting for the fallout.

That's not integrity. That's political warfare.

They know they can't beat me with facts — so they hide behind procedure and weaponize process. They fear the truth I speak, because it shines a light on what they've built: a city hall run by insiders, for insiders.

I've lost nine months of pay standing up for you. But I haven't lost my voice — and I haven't lost my resolve.

I am Councillor Lisa Robinson — your People's Councillor. I will keep standing, even when I'm standing alone. Because when they silence me, they're trying to silence you. And I won't let that happen.

Not now. Not ever.

### Ontario Supporting Agri-Food and Business in Whitby

WHITBY — Lorne Coe, MPP for Whitby, announced today that the Ontario Government is providing an investment of \$40,000 to Taltis Foods Incorporated in Whitby through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Agribusiness' Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Labour Force Management Strategies Initiative.

The Labour Force Management Strategies Initiative supports primary producers and processors in addressing local labour challenges within the agri-food sector. Through pilot projects, the Initiative promotes innovative attraction, recruitment, and retention strategies to build a resilient workforce — creating jobs and boosting the local economy in Whitby and all across Ontario.

Funded under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) — a five-year (2023–2028) joint investment by federal, provincial, and territorial governments — up to \$4 million has been allocated to drive impactful, community-based workforce solutions across Ontario.

"The Government of Ontario is committed to strengthening the competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of Ontario's agriculture, Agri-food, and Agri-based products sector," said Lorne Coe, MPP for Whitby and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, and Children, Community and Social Services. "This support will foster long-term sustainability and economic prosperity in communities like Whitby across the Province."

"At Taltis Foods Inc, this funding from the Government of Ontario will help us strengthen our workforce through improved recruitment, targeted worker support, and new training programs. This amazing opportunity is a key step for us in growing a resilient team while continuing to deliver quality African-inspired products to Canadians. We are extremely grateful. Thank you, Ontario. Thank you, Canada."

- Gilles Tchianga, CEO & Founder, Taltis Foods Inc.

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