

Candidates differ on what to do about ISIS

By Bill Rea

The threat ISIS poses for Canada is an issue in the current federal election campaign, but the four candidates seeking votes in Dufferin-Caledon are split on how to address it.

That was one of the issues raised in the last week as the four candidates were contacted for their spontaneous responses to predetermined questions.

Their replies are presented here in alphabetical order.

Is the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP)
going to benefit Canada?

At this point, we haven't seen all the details, Liberal candidate Ed Crewson commented. We're not rendering judgement with hard details.

He added Prime Minister Stephen Harper's negotiating skills have not proven very effective.

It certainly is, Conservative incumbent David Tilson said.

He added the partnership will give Canada access to 40 per cent of the world's markets and some 800 million consumers, with reduced tariffs.

It's an incredible agreement which is certainly going to benefit every aspect of Canadian society, he said.

It's not, replied Green Party candidate Nancy Urekar, who commented the problem is not so much with trade deals. It's just that they're not fair.

It's corporatizing, which is scary, she added, adding TPP will impact dairy and poultry farmers.

She also said it will allow foreign corporations to sue the government if it passes laws that impact on investors.

We oppose that part especially, she said. We want to protect our farmers as well.

No, it's not, remarked New Democrat Rehya Yazbek.

She added it's not going to be a benefit in the riding because there is so much dependence on agriculture. It's going to wipe out supply management.

Yazbek added dairy, poultry and egg producers will be impacted, as well as the automotive industry, pointing out many Dufferin-Caledon residents commute to the Honda plant in Alliston of the Chrysler facility in Brampton.

The money is not going to the jobs for the future, she commented, adding the NDP would advocate renegotiating the deal, adding it's not yet final and still has to be ratified by Parliament.

Do the provinces have too much power?

The provinces have a lot of responsibilities, Crewson remarked, adding they've been responsible for local and social issues since Confederation.

He said a lot of the problems have to do with the feds not providing the financial support to address issues.

I don't think so, Tilson replied. I think there's a balance between the federal government and the provinces.

He said there are sometimes conflicts, but the two levels of government generally do get along. He agreed there could be concerns with provincial legislation regarding things like wind turbines and aggregates, which are sometimes imposed without proper consultation.

I don't think so, Urekar commented. I do think we need to work with the provinces.

She added the Greens advocate the creation of the Council of Canadian Governments, that would be represented at the federal, provincial, municipal and First Nations levels. They would work together to find creative solutions to issues facing the country.

No, Yazbek replied. I'm all for always pushing power down, actually.

She added the closer to the ground the powers are, the more democratic they are. She also pointed out all the provinces are distinct, and they all contribute to the function of the country.

How much of a threat to Canada is ISIS?

?I guess the biggest thing is the convincing of Canadians to that cause,? Crewson said.

He pointed to the need to teach the values of Canadian culture, and not the violent extreme beliefs of ISIS.

?That's been the Canadian way,? he said. ?We have been a multi-cultural country. We're strong because of our differences.?

?It's a serious threat,? Tilson said, adding there have been indications that ISIS plans to come to Canada and do damage at facilities like shopping malls. ?These are serious threats.?

He also pointed out some Canadians have switched to ISIS, and the government will have to deal with that through legislation in order to make Canadians feel safe.

?I think we need to be very careful of threats to our security,? Urekar said. ?We have to protect our security, and we have the laws in place to do that.?

Urekar added Bill 51 (the Anti-Terrorism Act) doesn't add to security, but it takes rights away from Canadians. That bill will be repealed if the Greens get influence in the House of Commons, ?which we will, quite shortly.?

?I don't think it's as much of a threat as we've been hearing from the Conservatives,? Yazbek commented.

She also pointed to the need to educate people to be inclusive. ?This is a problem that needs to be fixed on the other side of the world,? she said.

As well, Yazbek said Canada should focus more on peacekeeping, which it's good at.

Should we bring back the long census form?

?Yes,? Crewson said. ?We need the long form census in order to provide economists and communities (the information) to make the right decisions.?

?I think it was a big mistake for the Conservatives to end it,? he added, observing Chambers of Commerce want it back.

?It's never gone,? Tilson remarked, pointing out it's now voluntary as opposed to mandatory.

He added there have been concerns about people's privacy, adding the government really doesn't have the right to know how many bedrooms people have in their houses.

?Absolutely yes,? Urekar declared, pointing to the need to promote evidence-based decision making. She also pointed to the need to unmuzzle scientists as part of the evidence-based decision making.

?Yes, most definitely,? Yazbek said.

She added it provides necessary information that helps set the Canadian identity.