

Patrick Brown has support to get leadership back

By Bill Rea

Former Ontario Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown wants his old job back, and he's obviously prepared to fight for it. Two days after filing papers to enter the leadership race and being kicked out of the PC caucus, Brown addressed a crowd of about 150 people, many of them supporters, Sunday at a banquet room in a hotel near Pearson International Airport.

"Our party is at a crossroads," Hamilton Centre PC candidate Dr. Dionne Duncan told the crowd, stating they have chosen policies that will support the middle class and cut enormous hydro bills. She added Brown is the best leader to deliver that platform to voters. "We will not abandon him right now."

Brown was forced to step down as leader last month, after media reports that two women had alleged serious sexual misconduct. Brown initially "categorically" denied the allegations, but issued a statement a couple of hours later announcing he was resigning. In the weeks that have passed, he said he has been working hard to clear his name.

He also stressed his humility and sense of purpose for the good of the province, and that it's important the party finish what it had started, which includes defeating Premier Kathleen Wynne "and her disastrous government."

"We have been building this party together, and it is more diverse than it's ever been before," he remarked, adding the work that's been done so far has been vilified without due process.

"It's been devastating, and that's an understatement," Brown declared, adding the last couple of weeks have produced one benefit. "You learn who your true friends are."

Brown asserted the actions he's been accused of could not have happened, adding he's already taken two lie-detector tests, and passed them both.

"When truth is on your side, you have nothing to fear," he remarked.

He also defended the Tories' platform in the coming campaign, known as the People's Guarantee. He said it focuses on commitments to improve the lives of families.

"We can't fight amongst ourselves," he declared, stressing the need to fight for the people of Ontario.

"Our platform was built by you, the grass roots," Brown remarked, pointing out it calls for a 22.5 per cent cut in middle class income taxes, as well as a 75 per cent refund in child-care expenses to make it more affordable, and a trust and integrity guarantee, so all will be able to see how a Brown government does when it comes to keeping what it pledged.

Brown said he was determined to do the job he was elected to do, adding losing another election could tear the party apart. He added thousands of party members had a hand in creating the platform, pointing out they can't ditch what's been developed. He also said they can't make policy on the fly. "That is a recipe for disaster," he said.

"We must deliver on the People's Guarantee so we can defeat Kathleen Wynne on June 7," he added.

"I stand for the people's guarantee, and I do so proudly," he concluded. "You created it and I embraced it."



Patrick Brown addressed his supporters in Mississauga Sunday.