

The provincial election is coming; Are you ready?

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Caledon residents and voters from across this province will be heading to the polls June 7 to decide which party will form the next government of Ontario.

Through the history of this province, the government has played an active role in transforming the climate in which local businesses must operate. Whether it is business taxes, employment wages, environmental or public health regulations or land development, previous governments have had, and future governments will have, a lot to say about how businesses do their business.

There is a commonly held expression in politics that, "Businesses don't vote. People do."

For the most part, this statement is true. But it mostly ignores the very important role that business owners can play in any particular election. So as a business owner, what can you do leading up to the provincial election?

Here are three simple steps any business can take to have impact.

1 ? Learn: Knowledge is power and the first and most powerful step for any business or resident to take is education. Over the next few months, all political parties will be releasing their election platforms. In fact, the Progressive Conservatives have already released their platform, entitled the People's Guarantee.

As these platforms are released, take the time to look through them for the items that are going to have the most significant impact, either positive or negative, on your business. Also, look for those things not in their platforms that might help your business thrive in Caledon.

Business organizations, such as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, can also be an important resource in understanding the potential impact of specific platform promises.

2 ? Engage: There will be no shortage of opportunities for you to engage with Dufferin-Caledon candidates. Take the time this election period to interact with those that are seeking to represent Caledon at Queen's Park. Ask questions, seek explanations, put your ideas forward. The more candidates hear from you and your business, the more they will better understand the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead over their next four years in office as your Member of Provincial Parliament.

3 ? Hold Them to Account: Election platforms should not be just promises made and then forgotten once the winning party assumes office. They should act as a road map to making Ontario and its communities better places for residents and businesses.

Staying engaged with your local MPP and highlighting the needs of your business, not just during the lead up to the election, but also during their four years in office, can go a long way toward realizing the changes you need to make your business a success.

As a Caledon business owner, your voice can be a valuable resource to help educate and influence with the goal of positively impacting your business.