

Tilson not moving aside for O'Leary, or anyone

By Bill Rea

In terms of his political career, Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson is staying put for now.

Rumours have been circulating this week that Conservative Party leadership hopeful Kevin O'Leary is eying Tilson's seat.

It was reported on the blog [theribbon.net](#) that there were rumours that executives in the local Conservative riding association have been discussing a possible bid by O'Leary to replace Tilson.

'I don't know how these things get going,' Tilson declared. 'I'm not giving up my seat for Mr. O'Leary or anyone. That's definite.' Tilson, who will be marking his 76th birthday Sunday, said he hasn't made up his mind on whether he will be a candidate in the next federal election, expected in the fall of 2019.

'I haven't decided what I'll do,' he said, adding that decision likely won't come until some months before the actual election.

Tilson said he had heard nothing about the rumour until a colleague from eastern Ontario asked him about it. 'I've never even met Mr. O'Leary,' he said.

He seemed almost amused that the idea had been raised.

'It's a delicious story, of course, if Mr. O'Leary wants to come and represent this riding,' Tilson observed. 'He's going to have to wait for me to leave.'

In terms of the leadership race, Tilson confirmed that he's backing Michael Chong, from Wellington-Halton Hills.

'Michael's a long-time friend of mine,' Tilson said. 'He's a bright young man.'

The matter was news to the local federal Conservative riding association.

'I have no idea where the rumour originated and had never heard of the blogger who tried to breathe life into it,' association President Steve Cavell said in a statement.

He also pointed out Tilson was elected MP and has served the riding well.

'And he does this with the full support of the riding association board of directors,' Cavell stated. 'That support extends to the end of the current term and beyond if he wishes.'

And the O'Leary camp doesn't seem interested in moving Tilson out.

'It's a rumour,' O'Leary's Press Secretary Ari Laskin said, adding their effort is completely focused on the leadership race. 'We're not focussing on any riding.'