

Seeback shares focus for second term as Dufferin's MP

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Canada's 44th Federal election was called August 15 and held on September 20. The 36-day campaign was the minimum allowed per the Canada Elections Act and the Liberals once again formed a minority government in the re-election of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

In Dufferin-Caledon, MP Kyle Seeback was re-elected taking 46 per cent of the vote to beat out Liberal candidate Lisa Post (32.7 per cent).

Now entering his second term as MP in Dufferin-Caledon, Seeback is excited to continue to represent the area. He previously served as MP in Brampton South from 2011 to 2015.

"I was saying this the other day, I've been elected twice, but this is the first time I've been re-elected," he said. "So, with this being the first time I've been re-elected, it feels fantastic. You feel like you have that vote of confidence from the people you represent."

With very little time to campaign relative to previous elections and throwing in the ongoing pandemic, this election wasn't like any other Seeback had been a part of, both due to the circumstances and the tactics from opposing parties.

"We knew the election was coming," he said. "During the summer you could see that the Liberals wanted to call the election, so we were certainly ready when the election was actually called. What I talked about in this election was the degree of polarization that we saw in this campaign, and I thought it was really unfortunate. I think it was driven by two things, number one, the Liberals were trying to use vaccine status as a wedge issue to get votes, scare people, and rile up the Canadian public."

"On the other side, we had the PPC who was saying, agree with us 100 per cent on vaccines or we're going to try and rile people up on the other side. All I think it did was drive a lot of people into a really unhappy place during the campaign. I found people to be far more angry and polarized than I'd ever seen before, and this is the fifth election that I've run in. I really hope going forward that the Liberals strike a tone where we try and stop polarization of the pandemic and find ways to bring people together."

Knowing that the pandemic and the vaccine have been a big part of the reason why the country has been divided, Seeback hopes to see a less antagonistic approach and more of a focus put on educating about the necessity of the vaccine.

"With respect to how we bring people together, I think we've got to start having real conversations with Canadians," he said. "We have to stop trying to demonize people for their vaccine status; I think this is a really polarizing issue in this country. I want to say this very clearly, I think everyone should be vaccinated and I'm vaccinated, but for those who are not vaccinated, we have to find ways to build back the trust so that they'll make that choice. In the meantime, I think we've got to look at things like rapid tests to allow them to have some sense of normalcy in their lives as well."

The economic fallout from the pandemic has been arguably the biggest topic over the last 18 months and to help with recovery Seeback points to increased support of the industry that Dufferin-Caledon is built on.

"There's a couple big things right now that are the most important, and I talk about this a lot, in Dufferin-Caledon. Agriculture is the number one employer and number one contributor to GDP," he said. "There was a very important piece of legislation that was brought forward last parliament by a Conservative member to remove the carbon tax from farm fuels. It passed through the House of Commons, but unfortunately it did not receive royal assent because of the early election call."

?This is something that is critically important and I've heard that from farmers because the carbon tax for drying grain and a whole host of other things has made farming more challenging during this pandemic. That's a big thing that I want to make sure gets reintroduced into parliament and hopefully gets passed very quickly to help support our farmers. We also have to absolutely support small businesses and find ways to make sure they're able to come out of the pandemic in a good financial position. So, I'll be looking very closely at all the policies that the Liberal government is going to put forward on this.?

Seeing increased support from Dufferin-Caledon in his re-election bid indicates to Seeback he was doing a good job reaching and representing his constituents to get the issues they feel strongest about across to parliament and, if anything, he only plans to be even more accessible in his second term.

?One of the things you really want to get as an elected representative is you want to get over that 50 per cent of people voting for you, and I got really close this time (46 per cent),? he said. ?What I did in my first term in parliament representing Dufferin-Caledon is I campaigned on being open, reachable, and asking people how I should vote on certain pieces of legislation that come before parliament. And I did that, whether it was through mailings, social media, or town halls, I really wanted to get that feedback. That's something I even intend to increase during this term in parliament. I ran on a platform locally where I said, 'your vote, your voice,' and I mean that. Even for people who didn't vote for me, if you've got an issue that you're passionate about then I think it's my responsibility to bring that issue to parliament. I also think it's my responsibility to consult my constituents on how I should vote on certain issues and I'm absolutely going to continue to do that because I think the reason you're elected is to represent the people that voted for you and not just always toe the party line on every single issue.?

With a good grasp of the most important issues to Dufferin-Caledon residents after serving a term and hitting the campaign trail twice, Seeback says one topic has stood out above the others and he plans to go to bat for the people he represents on it.

?It might seem strange, but the thing I hear about all the time is broadband,? he said. ?The pandemic has made this really abundantly clear in a riding like Dufferin-Caledon?that is a predominantly rural riding?access to not just high-speed internet, though access is a critical piece to the component, but what I've actually heard from talking to some of my municipal counterparts is that a whole bunch of projects actually got delayed because of the anticipation of an election call and the actual election call. There are shovel-ready projects all across Dufferin-Caledon that were delayed because of this election and one of the things I'm going to do is really hold the government's feet to the fire to get that funding out and get those projects moving forward because people critically need broadband today in Dufferin-Caledon, not 10 years from now.

?The second thing with that though is price. I've heard stories of people paying \$200 to \$300 and up to \$400 a month for their broadband and we've got to fix that. I spoke about this in the last parliament because someone wrote to me and told me they're paying \$450 a month for internet and when you look at that with the Liberal government's commitment to everyone having affordable high-speed internet by 2030, but \$450 a year is over \$5,000 a year and multiply that by 10 years and that's \$50,000 that this person could be putting towards more important things. The affordability issue is huge, and the government needs to do something about it.

?One of the things we've campaigned on this election as Conservatives is opening up the telecommunications market to foreign competition because competition brings down prices,? he said. ?If they're not going to bring in competition then they better find another way to make this more affordable for rural Canadians across Canada. We have some of the highest wireless and internet fees in the entire world and we've got to get prices down and that's a huge mission I take with me to Ottawa.?

Now a few weeks into his second term, Seeback is ready to get back to doing what he loves, taking care of the most important issues to his constituents.

?It feels great to be back. I was just in Ottawa for our first caucus meetings to talk about how the election went and it's good to see a bunch of colleagues in person for the first time in a long time,? he said. ?I've bumped into a bunch of people in the grocery store and other places too who have issues they want to talk about and for me, what I enjoy so much is hearing from the people I represent on the issues they're concerned with and what they think we need to work on in Ottawa?that's what I've really been looking forward to.

?I hope the Prime Minister is going to call back parliament sooner rather than later, but we're three weeks past the election, and he still hasn't announced a date. We all want to get back to work and I want to get back to work in representing the people of Dufferin-Caledon.?