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Crewson pushes back against Tilson Petition

Across the nation, new Canadians, escaping four years of Syrian war and devastation, are being welcomed with open hearts and warm coats. However, in the office of Dufferin-Caledon's Conservative MP David Tilson, their welcome includes a petition, tabled in the House of Commons December 7th, calling for an emergency debate on the Liberal plan for resettlement. The government must respond within 45 days.

Mr. Tilson's assistant confirmed to the Orangeville Banner that the MP was acting on behalf of over 100 constituents who had signed the petition; the next day, the Caledon Examiner was told the number was closer to 65. The petition raises more questions about Mr. Tilson's role as the Chair of the Standing Committee on Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism for the House of Commons and what appeared to be a Conservative led halt to Syrian immigration last spring.

2015 Federal Liberal candidate, Ed Crewson is pushing back against the petition, saying of the Conservative MP, ?Holding this position, (Chair) one would think, David Tilson should be supportive of expanding citizenship, sensitive to the plight of the immigrant and enthusiastic about multiculturalism and yet David Tilson is petitioning the Liberal Government to have an emergency debate about receiving 25,000 Syrian immigrants. It would appear from this action and the quotes attributed to him and members of his staff in connection to the petition, that David Tilson opposes the Liberal government's intention to accept these refugees.?

With an awakening of national pride and a driving desire of Canadians to once again show the world our best side ? our humanity as a nation of peacekeepers ? Mr. Tilson's petition representing ?x? number of undisclosed residents in Dufferin-Caledon may create negative optics for the riding. There is also an accusation of false representation. Stewart Gunn, an Orangeville musician was quoted in the Caledon Enterprise December 15th as saying, ?He's (Tilson) somehow gone out and had 65 of his cronies sign on to his petition?? Gunn has since started his own on-line petition calling on MP Tilson to ?show his support for the Government of Canada's plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees as quickly as possible.? Gunn's goal is to have Mr. Tilson table it at the House of Commons. At the time this article was written, Gunn's petition was just starting to get attention with 313 signatures and increasing continuously. David Tilson had not responded to our request for a statement.

Ed Crewson says, ?Seeing the jubilation and relief on the faces of the refugees as they arrive in Canada, makes me cherish being a Canadian and proud of the gracious hospitality of our citizens.? He points to the enlistment in Dufferin-Caledon to bring refugees to the area, ?There are church groups forming to sponsor refugees throughout Dufferin Caledon,? he says. ?The community is rallying to the cause and 65 names on a petition, do not speak for Dufferin Caledon; David Tilson, who should be speaking for Dufferin Caledon, should be using his voice and the resources at his disposal to help resettle these 25,000 refugees in Canada.

By Marni Walsh