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## **My Vision of the Role of an Independent MP**

Being a Member of Parliament is a noble task, yet few in Canada would use the word 'noble' and 'politician' in the same sentence. As an MP you are, in reality, an advocate for the people - a voice for those who cannot speak out. In a democracy it is the people who dictate policies to the government and not Members of Parliament who dictate government policies to the people.

Unfortunately, party politics has silenced MPs from representing their riding, especially in Haldimand-Norfolk. The parties, of course, will tell you that an MP with a party affiliation can 'get things done' much better than an independent MP ever could, especially if that party governs the country. Well, you decide whether that has been true. The strength of democracy is NOT the party, but rather lies within the integrity of the individual MP and his/her determination to go the distance for his/her constituents.

We should not forget that individual MPs can hold the deciding vote as they remain true to their own convictions. It was just a few years ago that Chuck Cadman, as an independent, was the deciding vote. Back in 1990s it was a single vote from Elijah Harper that caused the end to the Meech Lake Accord. We normally don't believe one vote or one person can make a difference but that is because there are so few times when individual people will stand up for the riding instead of caving in to party politics.

I believe an MP's job requires the person to be pro-active and not passive. This means the MP must show leadership and be willing to be the first to be involved in the issues facing the public. For the past two years I have demonstrated the willingness to communicate openly with people. I have held several town hall meetings to both inform the public about the serious issues facing them, but also to listen. I have worked diligently to research, document and aid Haldimand's struggle to restore law and order in the face of the apathy of governments – both Liberal and Conservative. Several media outlets and reporters, including the National Post, Ryerson Review of Journalism and Katie Dawson of the Sachem have recognized this work as being extremely valuable in keeping the public informed. And, I have protested with the people of Haldimand-Norfolk. A true leader does not avoid the tough issues facing the people he is paid to represent, even when the discussion may be painful or unpopular.

Sometimes as an MP you know that solving a problem can't be done overnight, but as a leader you still need to stand with the people. Just knowing that their elected member cares enough to stand with them is enough. None of us are islands, and the role of an MP includes working hard to bring communities together to accomplish great tasks.

An MP's job is much, much more than merely standing up and asking a question in the House. It is going into the corporate offices and helping to promote the riding. It is using the resource of one's position to improve the lives of others. It is writing the letter that may open the doors to address the concerns of a person in the riding. And sometimes it is just sitting and listening to someone who needs to vent their frustration over the failures of government. A true leader doesn't avoid controversial issues but learns how to help people channel their frustrations in positive manners and live through them until they are addressed. It is the people who are the last line of defence against the injustices and failed policies of governments. We, as Canadians, take it for granted that our freedoms and democracy itself are ensured simply because we're Canadians. As the citizens of Haldimand know all too well, our rights and freedoms can be easily taken away with no lawful basis whatsoever while the politicians we trusted to speak out for us remain shamefully silent.

My vision of an MP is one that fights for and speaks out on behalf of others, not the party. As an Independent I will not have two masters but one: you - the voter of Haldimand-Norfolk who dictates the terms and length of my employment. I will be answerable to you, and you deserve to see results for both entrusting your vote and your hard earned money to me.

In my view there is no greater and nobler job than to be an advocate for you and your community.

Gary McHale, Candidate  
Haldimand-Norfolk

***To learn more about Gary McHale and his passionate advocacy on behalf of the people of Haldimand-Norfolk, please see ['About Gary'](#) at [www.GaryMcHale.ca](http://www.GaryMcHale.ca)***