

The NDP is in the process of electing a leader to replace Jack Layton. The election will take place at their convention on March 24, 2012. The good thing is that every member can vote and be counted. Those who want to participate must become members by February 18. Their convention will be held in Toronto, making it easy for all GTA people to participate in person. However, people also have the option of voting online or by mail. There are eight candidates to choose from: Peggy Nash, Brian Topp, Paul Dewar, Romeo Saganash, Niki Ashton, Martin Singh, Thomas Mulcair and Nathan Cullen.

The Liberal Party will be electing their permanent leader in 2013, but the process and backroom manoeuvring has already started. Different hopefuls are feeling around, talking to people and testing the water to assess their chance of being elected. Soon, alliances will be formed, commitments made, candidacies announced and campaigns launched. The Liberal party provides even more opportunity for people to participate in choosing the right leader than the NDP. Even the non-member supporters will be able to express their opinion through voting.

To those who care about our country as to what type of Canada we will have in the future, and to those who want to see good leaders with inclusive vision and sensible views leading our country, you have two rare opportunities to do your part in making it happen that way. Get involved, become members or supporters, assess the candidates and stand up for the best of them. You can use the following criteria to evaluate the candidates and to select the best of the bunch. The best candidate to be the leader of the party of your choice is the one who:

1. Has a track record of public service with personal integrity and principled approach.
2. Is blessed with communication skills, vision and personality that are fitting for a successful Prime Minister.
3. Condemns Islamophobia and does not harbour bias against the Muslim community.
4. Is committed to rights and freedoms of all citizens and residents, and does not harbour imbalanced feelings for, or against any segment of Canadian society.
5. Stands for social justice.
6. Opposes Canadian military involvement in other countries except as peace keepers.
7. Understands the importance of having a balanced foreign policy towards all nations of the world based on principles of fairness and justice.
8. Lacks negative baggage that may hamper popular acceptability among the general public.
9. Is not a fanatic or missionary for any religion or ideology.

I would strongly urge everyone to become a member and get involved. Those who would like

## **Two Opportunities to Improve the Political Landscape**

Tuesday, 24 January 2012

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to do so in a coordinated fashion, feel free to contact me.