

PC, NDP candidates trade barbs on Metro Morning^[1]

PC candidate Christine Elliott, NDP candidate Peter Tabuns spoke on Tuesday morning

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

[Audio segment available online, "NDP or PC? Two candidates make their pitches"]

Is there anything Progressive Conservative and New Democratic Party candidates can see eye-to-eye on, two days from Ontario's provincial election?

On CBC Radio's Metro Morning to make final pitches to voters, Christine Elliott, PC candidate for Newmarket-Aurora, and Peter Tabuns, NDP candidate for Toronto-Danforth, agreed on one thing: despite the gruelling hours, they both enjoy meeting new people while on the campaign trail.

Go beyond that, however, and the similarities dry up — including when it comes to what those voters are telling them.

Tabuns said the voters he has met are intent on stopping Doug Ford and want to see money put into transit and repairing schools.

"Here in Toronto, people went through the Ford administration municipally, and they don't want to see a repeat," he said.

Elliott, meanwhile, said she has heard from business owners who "feel that they're under attack" from high taxes, hydro rates and Ontario's new labour laws.

Just what is a 'fully-costed' platform, anyway?

In the joint interview on Monday, Elliott and Tabuns threw barbs that, by now, are familiar to anyone who has followed the campaign.

First, both spoke about the PC platform, which has been criticized for failing to provide detailed information as to how the party will pay for initiatives listed in its platform and failing to specify when it aims to balance the provincial budget.

On Tuesday, Elliott defended the platform, saying it is "fully costing" because it has costs listed next to each initiative.

So where will the money come from to pay for things such as a promised 10 cent reduction in the cost of gas?

"It's going to come from the programs that the auditor general has already found," Elliott said. "There's also international studies that have shown that, for example, in our healthcare system, we're spending billions of dollars on an annual basis but we're not getting best value for

those tax dollars."

Talbuns disagreed.

"For a party that can't even provide a platform showing how they're going to be funding their initiatives, it's extraordinary to say that they're going to be fiscally responsible," he fired back.

That set up Elliott for a familiar retort, criticizing the NDP for a math error in its own fiscal plan.

Tabuns said the mistake has already been addressed. "Again, we actually put out numbers," he said.

Two visions on child care

The pair also sparred over competing ideas about how the province should help Ontarians find and pay for child care.

The NDP has proposed creating a low-cost public child-care program that subsidizes spaces on a sliding scale, while the PCs are proposing a 75 per cent refundable tax credit for children 15 and under.

Elliott said her party's plan main benefit is that it will work better for people who live in remote areas or who do shift work not on a 9-to-5 schedule.

"Our plan is flexible... people can use this credit, and they can use it for their own babysitters, whatever works best for them," she said.

Tabuns responded by arguing that there is evidence that children fare best when they are in public and non-profit care.

"There will not be an end to private childcare if we fund public care. But if we're going to spend our money, we're going to spend it where its most effective," he said.

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