

Responses to IntegrityBC's questionnaire for candidates running in the July 10<sup>th</sup> Westside-Kelowna byelection.

**1. If elected will you support legislative amendments to prohibit corporate and union funding of B.C. political parties?**

**John Marks, Independent**

I would be in favour of a dollar limitation, \$5,000 or \$10,000 per entity, that would include "donations of time" by staff, that are being paid by the entity. The donation limitation would therefore include cash and non cash items.

**Silverado Socrates, Independent**

I have not thought about this before but if a union or corporation wanted to fund me, that would not buy my support. Many years ago, I had a few American universities offering to pay for me to visit them. I went to one, but that did not mean I had to enroll in it. I still chose to stay in Canada with the ideal of helping to develop our talent pool and ability to compete with the world. I would hope that any party paying funds to my campaign liked the ideas I was campaigning on and that is why they supported it. However, if it proved that the person elected did not follow thru on the platform that got them elected, and were swayed by the power and money of those financial supporters, i think that there should be measures in place to punish both parties.

**Sean Upshaw, BC Conservative party**

Yes I would, here is why. These types of contributors do not and cannot represent the every day voter. They are inevitable steeped in special interests and their contributions are always an attempt to buy power through desperate politicians who need their money. So in the end the unsuspecting voter out there is left with the impression that a particular party must be what is best as after all they are running (buying) the best campaign.

**Dayleen Van Ryswyk, Independent**

Absolutely!! There will never be a level and fair playing field until this happens.

**2. What changes would you propose to the Local Government Act, specifically but not limited to the sections of the Act that govern local elections?**

**John Marks, Independent**

I would like to ensure that all individuals living within the local election district are able to vote, not withstanding their specific living circumstances. In my area there are a large number of individuals that live on Indian land and they are not eligible to vote in civic elections and also not able to vote or have a say in areas directly affecting them in band elections. I believe this situation should be addressed.

**Silverado Socrates, Independent**

At this time, I would say none.

**Sean Upshaw, BC Conservative party**

As you are aware the Local Government Act is a huge piece of legislation, far too complex to comment on here forensically. The one thing I would do is make changes to the validity of Official Community Plans. As they are now, they are really Official Community Suggestions. A citizen may purchase a property thinking that a certain reality is there and later they find out that the property they bought is now across the way from something that is completely contrary to the plan. As a result their lifelong investment or serenity is now disrupted and plummets in value.

**Dayleen Van Ryswyk, Independent**

I don't think an elected person should be able to give up their seat for another person, certainly not immediately after a general election and I'm not opposed to candidates having to live in their riding prior to the election.

**3. While the Legislative Assembly has a number of standing committees in place that can (and do) hear from stakeholders and members of the public, what enhanced role, if any, would you propose to increase and/or broaden the role of the public in the drafting of legislation before the Assembly?**

**John Marks, Independent**

I would support more direct referendums, particularly on issues that may have long term consequences.

**Silverado Socrates, Independent**

No answer provided.

**Sean Upshaw, BC Conservative party**

In reality this is supposed to be the role of the MLA. He/She is elected to run an office that has hired staff where citizens can and should come to help shape government. Ideally the MLA makes themselves available for Town Hall meetings on a regular basis to get the pulse of the riding. With all of this information, they then take that to Victoria and represent them. As it is now the MLA is just the local figurehead that doles out the goodies from Victoria when good PR is needed.

**Dayleen Van Ryswyk, Independent**

Public input and scrutiny is paramount to democracy. Major changes in policy should be put towards the people. Sitting in the legislature more often and discussing bills where MLA's can voice their constituent's wishes is paramount to the process.

**4. Do you support seeing more free votes in the Legislature (where MLAs could vote their conscience or according to the wishes of their constituents) and, if so, in what situations would these votes be allowed?**

**John Marks, Independent**

I would support more free votes where MLA's can vote according to the wishes of the majority of their constituents. I believe MLA's are there to represent the majority of their constituents and not themselves.

**Silverado Socrates, Independent**

Yes.. i think all votes should be free and any party not allowing this is contrary to democracy.

**Sean Upshaw, BC Conservative party**

Absolutely. This is a cornerstone in the BC Conservative platform. It is a radical departure from all other parties including the Conservative Party of Canada. When we have this change in procedure, then and then only will the individual voters have real genuine representation. As it is now the (dictator) leader of the party drives the agenda and all others fall in line or else they will be ousted by the party for actually using their minds. In matters of non confidence the free vote should also be allowed.

**Dayleen Van Ryswyk, Independent**

MLA's should always be voting their conscience and the way their constituents ask, otherwise they are ineffective representation. Unfortunately, party whips dictate the way MLA's are to vote. That's why Independent representation is a true voice of the constituent.

**5. What other proposals would you put forward to reform BC's democratic institutions and/or processes?**

**John Marks, Independent**

I would bring forward a private members bill that would require all future treaties be ratified by the public, through referendum, before signing. No political party should be able to claim that winning an election gives them a mandate to negotiate a treaty or treaties, that may potentially change the face of our future, without first having it ratified by the public.

**Silverado Socrates, Independent**

no comment

**Sean Upshaw, BC Conservative party**

I would propose line item budgeting for every single government expenditure. It would be cheaper to hire auditors to examine spending rather than just passing the cheque book to each government department and letting them recklessly spend the hard earned taxes that have been collected. Truly open Government. We need to be fully accountable to the trust we have been given.

**Dayleen Van Ryswyk, Independent**

**Simply said; more public input as well as independent oversight.**

**6. B.C.'s auditor general has reported on his concerns over the financial management practices at the BC legislature. What further changes would you propose to ensure greater transparency and accountability at the legislature?**

**John Marks, Independent**

I believe that the auditor general should be given as much power as necessary to do his/her job effectively and significant penalties, both monetary and criminal, would be available to use to discourage public servants and/or elected members who are shown to be less than forthcoming or have destroyed documents.

I would also sponsor a "pay equity for gov't workers" bill. This would ensure that compensation for government employees would be the same as what private sector employees earned for doing the same or similar work.

**Silverado Socrates, Independent**

If anyone is found guilty of fraud, their position should be terminated with no compensation. Criminal charges in some cases. Our elected officials are in positions of trust and they should never treat this lightly.

**Sean Upshaw, BC Conservative party**

As I said before, I would give this department a lot more power. They need to be given forensic powers as there is so much waste in government. This change alone would give us the ability to provide the much needed services we cannot afford now. It would also guarantee disciplined spending on behalf of all government expenditures.

**Dayleen Van Ryswyk, Independent**

MLA's should be required to document their expenses the same as taxpayers have to with Revenue Canada. That means receipts for expenses and full explanation of those expenses. Anything not properly documented should be disallowed. That's how it works in the real world and that's how it should work in the legislature. Public trust depends on everyone following the rules.

## **7. What changes do you propose to improve BC's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act?**

**John Marks, Independent**

I have no proposals at the moment.

**Silverado Socrates, Independent**

No answer provided.

**Sean Upshaw, BC Conservative party**

This blacking out of line after line in released documents is a joke. Either freedom of information is what it says it is or not. It would be my opinion the privacy act is out of control.

**Dayleen Van Ryswyk, Independent**

I have requested information from the FOI in the past and I have experienced the run around getting files. The 2 biggest issues I've found is the time it takes to get documentation, usually many months. Then there are the redacted documents and the reasons given for the redaction (S13, S14, S17, S21 etc) the reason given isn't always legitimate and then requires further investigation by the Privacy Commissioner which takes even more time. The government knows how to play the game, they know they can drag the release of documents out and that's just not right. Funding to the Ombudsperson's office also needs to be increased and the use of private emails to avoid scrutiny should be discouraged.

## **8. Would you support the introduction of other laws – sometimes called Sunshine laws – including but not limited to whistleblower protection, as called for by BC's auditor general?**

**John Marks, Independent**

Yes, I would support Sunshine laws, as called for by BC's auditor general.

**Silverado Socrates, Independent**

I would be open to the conversation.

**Sean Upshaw, BC Conservative party**

Yes I would. If government was open and honest in all it's dealings there would be no need for whistle blowers. But I say they should be afforded the protection of being able to honest enough to come forward and try and help out. Anonymity here would be a welcome addition to the corruption it is exposing.

**Dayleen Van Ryswyk, Independent**

There should be protection for those willing to come forward to report something that isn't right. Unfortunately, people are often persecuted when they do the right thing. We need to encourage rather than discourage honesty.