

## Ajax-Pickering Riding Report

By Tony Gosgnach

A Conservative Party newcomer will be attempting to unseat a one-term Liberal incumbent when voters go to the polls in the Ontario riding of Ajax-Pickering on Jan. 23.

Rondo Thomas will run for the Conservatives against Mark Holland for the Liberals. In the 2004 election, rookie Holland won the newly created riding by some 7,000 votes over then-Conservative candidate Rene Soetens. However, this election promises to be a much tighter race, as the riding will likely mirror the closeness of polls that show little distance between the two front-running parties.

The riding runs from Lake Ontario in the southeast to the Uxbridge-Pickering town line in the north and between Lake Ridge Road in the east and the Markham-Pickering town line in the west. It contains the town of Ajax and the part of Pickering lying northeast of Finch Avenue, Valley Farm Road, Highway 401 and Brock Road.

### The Candidates and Life and Family Issues

<b>Liberal</b> <i>Mark Holland</i>	<b>Conservative</b> <i>Rondo Thomas</i>	<b>NDP</b> <i>Kevin Modeste</i>	<b>Green Party</b> <i>Russell Korus</i>	<b>Christian Heritage Party</b> <i>Kevin Norng</i>
Voted for same-sex 'marriage' Bill C-38. Rated 'not pro-life' by Campaign Life Coalition.	Supports traditional definition of marriage. Rated pro-life by Campaign Life Coalition	Party requires candidates to oppose traditional definition of 'marriage'. Rated pro-abortion by CLC	Opposes traditional definition of 'marriage'. Party supports abortion rights.	All CHP candidates required to be support traditional marriage and be pro-life.

#### Liberal – Mark Holland



Age 31, married with three children, a Pickering native. Has worked as investment adviser for RBC Dominion Securities and as financial adviser for the CIBC in Ajax. Has also worked for various levels of government, including Ontario ministry of citizenship and immigration, and as a special assistant to Liberal MP Dan McTeague.

Holland was elected municipally in 1997. Went on to serve as a councillor for the Region of Durham and the City of Pickering through 2004, when he was elected a Member of Parliament.

He has consistently voted to change the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples and has spoken consistently, both in public and in Parliament, for this.

In his four-page "Mark Holland Update" to constituents in April 2005, Holland indicated his support for Bill C-38, which proposed to amend the definition of marriage, and took issue with those who protested the change by arguing that biblical statements concerning homosexuality have been rendered obsolete because: "Rules that governed society in biblical times change as society evolves. Many other practices also forbidden in the Bible are accepted today."

On March 21, 2005, in the House of Commons, he said that the marriage issue is "absolutely and fundamentally an issue of equality." Three days later in the House, he equated the marriage issue with earlier civil rights battles over slavery, racism and sexism and women's personhood.

During 2005 Holland voted in parliament for various motions to re-define marriage to include same-sex couples on April 11, May 4, June 27 and June 28.

Holland was rated as being "not pro-life" in 2004 by Campaign Life Coalition, the political arm of Canada's pro-life movement. The organization says he has not as yet answered a questionnaire it sent to him to determine his position on various human life-related issues for the 2006 election.

### **Conservative - Rondo Thomas**



Married with four children, graduated from Vanguard College in Edmonton and went on to join the Canadian Air Force as an officer. Later served as a member of the board of directors of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons and as chairman of the Board of Education in the Eastern Arctic. Currently is the vice-president of Canada Christian College in Toronto.

He was present at a rally attended by thousands of people in defence of traditional marriage at Queen's Park last May 23. He also took part in a press conference for that event held earlier.

In September 2003, CBC News reported that Thomas spoke for the Evangelical Association, representing about 500 religious educators, when he helped launch an effort to defend the traditional definition of marriage.

Thomas answered the Campaign Life Coalition questionnaire on life issues last April and responded in a pro-life manner on all points. He stated that he considers himself pro-life, believes human life begins at conception and would support measures to introduce and pass a law to protect every unborn child from conception (fertilization) onward.

### **NDP - Kevin Modeste**



Has worked as an administrator and on the board of directors for the Black Business and Professional Association, as well as for the provincial government. Since 2000, has served as a constituency assistant for former MPP Frances Lankin and current MMP Michael Prue.

Modeste was rated as being "pro-abortion" by Campaign Life Coalition for the 2004 election, as a result of a letter received from the central office of the federal New Democratic Party that stated all persons must agree to a pro-abortion stance in order to stand as candidates under the party's banner.

During the current election campaign, NDP candidates have been distributing a statement signed by party leader Jack Layton, which asserts that all NDP candidates must adhere to three principles when they agree to accept the nomination from their riding association. These include commitments to women's "right to self-determination" with respect to "reproductive choices," physician-assisted death "in certain situations" and same-sex "marriage."

### **Green Party – Russell Korus**



Married, with two children. Now studying law and ran in the riding of Vaughan in the 2004 election.

The website wheredotheystand.ca reported that Korus responded he would vote against any motion affirming marriage as a union between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others. The homosexual lobby group Equality for Gays And Lesbians Everywhere (EGALE), meanwhile, reported that Korus responded positively to all 12 questions it posed with respect to rights for homosexuals in Canada. This included support for same-sex "marriage," ending discrimination against trans-sexuals, the elimination of provisions in the Criminal Code against anal intercourse and the decriminalization of all private sexual activities between consenting adults.

The federal Green Party platform calls for equal rights for all individuals regardless of "sexual orientation," eliminating the causes of population growth by giving men and women "greater control over their fertility," (which includes support for abortion) honouring and valuing sexual "diversity" and recognition of, and respect for, "sexual minorities."

### **Christian Heritage Party - Kevin Norng**



The CHP is the only party that is officially pro-life and pro-traditional marriage. All candidates are expected to adhere to the party position on life and family issues.