

Debate letter 'factually untrue?', says Menegakis

(Re: Voter felt 'humiliated' after all-candidates debate, October 8)

Kudos to Mr. Williamson for becoming involved in the democratic process at a young age.

He and others like him will one day be assuming leadership roles in our country.

The experience gained through community involvement such as joining a local campaign and attending the September 24 federal All-Candidates Debate, will serve him well as he goes forward in his career.

His letter to the editor however, is factually untrue. A recording of the meeting clearly shows that out of the dozens of questions asked from the floor during the 75 minute 'open floor' portion, the majority challenged the Conservative platform.

I was happy to answer each and every one. This included responding to Mr. Williamson's question which was, 'Why do you continue to give tax breaks to the 1% while the middle class suffer?' It was understandable if the noise in the room made it difficult for Mr. Williamson to hear my response.

I stated that his was an excellent question and that every single Canadian family is benefitting from our Conservative Government's tax breaks.

Moreover, the average Canadian family of four is now receiving \$6,500 more in tax breaks and credits, to use for their own family priorities, than before Stephen Harper became Prime Minister of this country.

What is most distressing to me in Mr. Williamson's letter, however, is his accusation that I viewed him less equal because of what he describes a physical impairment.

He concludes this as a result of me having to ask him to repeat his question several times.

Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Admittedly, I had difficulty in hearing his question.

I asked the moderator on stage for clarification and she also was unable to hear. Whether it was the quality of the floor microphone, or the frequent heckling throughout the evening, it was simply difficult at times to clearly hear the questions.

I have devoted a great deal of my adult life volunteering for organizations that assist the differently abled including an organization called The Accessible Channel. This national media organization provides media access for Canadians who are blind, vision-impaired, deaf or hard of hearing.

It is my core belief that persons with outwardly visible and/or non-visible impairments deserve as much respect and equal treatment as anyone else.

I hope that someday, differently abled persons will not feel it necessary to identify themselves as such, and that through education and awareness, we will automatically look at each other, regardless of ability, as equals.

I am confident that youth like Mr. Williamson can do much to bring about this change.

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