

Endorsing Alnoor Gova for the Burnaby-Douglas Federal NDP

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Friday, February 18, 2011

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I am supporting Alnoor Gova to be the next federal NDP candidate in Burnaby-Douglas, and that riding's next MP.

Seven-year NDP MP Bill Siksay announced in December that he will not run in the next election, which could be called as early as this spring.

So the [Burnaby-Douglas NDP](#) is having a nomination convention on February 25 to find a replacement.

The party has approved three candidates to compete for the right to maintain the NDP legacy in that riding: [Alnoor Gova](#), [Sam Schechter](#) and [Kennedy Stewart](#).

Here are the reasons why I am endorsing Alnoor Gova and helping his campaign win the nomination and the general election.

1. **Alnoor's creativity, insight and policy depth are compelling.** Though I have known about Alnoor for quite some time in the COOP Radio circle and through progressive politics around town, I only met him in person last Thursday night at the "[Canadian Occupation from Here to Haiti and Afghanistan](#)" event he helped produce. I found him to have a keen mind. He also has a creative way of engaging in policy issues linking idealism and philosophy to practical ways of addressing national security, citizenship and immigration and basic human rights like universal public healthcare.
2. **Alnoor's analysis of the political realm is rich.** It's one thing to support the NDP and be appalled with Stephen Harper and quite put off by Michael Ignatieff, but I heartily agree with Alnoor's sense of how the federal Conservatives and Liberals are working in a de facto coalition to pursue regressive goals that work against the interests of the poorest 95% of Canadians.
3. **Alnoor is a 21st century politician.** Despite it actually being the 21st century, not all candidates seem to understand that the post-9/11 world is profoundly different from the 20th century. The highest profile endorser for each of his opponents is a provincial NDP cabinet minister/leader whose greatest political successes were in the 1990s. Today's world is global, with permeable, dotted-line borders and multi-faceted citizenship. The Burnaby-Douglas riding is emblematic of Canada. It is ethnically diverse with recent immigrants and children and grandchildren of immigrants, of whom many consider Canada to be but one of their homes. People come from all over. They relate to more than one place. They have global sensibilities. Despite this cosmopolitan reality, Canada is becoming a more closed place through divisive policies. Alnoor understands this. He understands what is dangerous about these policies and he will be a powerful voice for opening up Canada to the 21st century world to recover our global reputation as a progressive nation.
4. **Alnoor personally understands the necessity of universal healthcare.** A topic dear to my heart is the corporate attack on universal healthcare, and the gaping policy hole from the absence of a

national pharmacare and seniors' care component of medicare. Canadians are being gouged and bankrupted because they have to pay Big Pharma for medicine and cynical real estate speculators for elder care. With our aging population, we cannot abide this attack. Alnoor's personal commitment to be a part of his parents' healthcare reflects how he honours our elders. At a time when we are increasingly reminded of the path our elders have carved for us, more of us need to recognize our multi-generational commitments.

5. **Kennedy Stewart's campaign is not compelling.** Not only is [his campaign website](#) free of any federal policy priorities, the most compelling argument he seems to be making about why he should be the NDP's candidate in Burnaby-Douglas is that he was asked to run by the riding executive. His campaign material also states that he will work hard and that he has big shoes to fill. That's fine, but I can't see what he would bring to the federal political arena. He also has a healthy body of academic work on municipal politics, but that makes me wonder why he isn't running to be a municipal politician since that is his academic specialty.
6. **Sam Schechter's lacks experience in federal political issues.** Also a candidate from a municipal background, he was a city councillor in North Vancouver before he moved to Burnaby, while Alnoor has lived in Burnaby for 25 years. And while Sam Schechter does a reasonable job reviewing some key [federal NDP party platform ideas](#) on [his website](#), he does not offer much in terms of his own insight into how he would address these federal policy issues.

I have lived in Burnaby-Douglas twice in the last 20 years, having only left several months ago. I found the community to be warm, richly personal, compassionate and progressive. That is much of the reason the NDP has held that seat federally for so long. Another reason has been the high quality of MPs who have served the community so well.

I also know the riding needs a vibrant, passionate advocate for issues that resonate with the people of the riding and all Canadians.

[Members of the Burnaby-Douglas NDP](#) will receive candidate information this week and have a chance to see the three candidates at a meeting on February 22 before voting on February 25. I strongly recommend members visit the three candidates' websites above to learn about what they have to offer and how they plan to be a public servant in the tradition the riding is used to.

Alnoor Gova impresses me most, so I am supporting his campaign and I encourage you to [become informed](#) and support him as well.