

Wendy Yuan's Policy Emptiness is Bad for Vancouver-Kingsway

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Monday, October 13, 2008

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A vote for the NDP and Don Davies is a vote for progress, humanity and real political representation in Vancouver-Kingsway.

A vote for the Liberals and Wendy Yuan is a vote for the federal Liberal party "brand", elitist and pro-corporate policies and the Paul Martin-David Emerson gang.

Worst of all, NOT voting is a vote for Wendy Yuan. Here's why:

As far as I can tell, Wendy Yuan seems like a nice person: earnest, believing in the importance of a prosperous future for Canada [she owns a small business so you do the math] and somewhat down to earth.

But in the context of who we want representing us in parliament, she's an empty vessel and fully uninspiring on the issues.

Don Davies has actually lived and volunteered in the riding for years, works for human rights and social and economic justice, and is interested in his fellow citizens in the riding and our concerns as opposed to pro-corporate issues or concerns of people who own big homes in Richmond like Wendy Yuan.

And without going into Wendy Yuan's foibles which you can read about elsewhere:

- the tragic optics of the apartment she rented last fall in Collingwood to go along with her house in Richmond
- her probably good work with SUCCESS, the Richmond Economic Advisory Committee and SFU in Surrey [as opposed to any real work in Vancouver-Kingsway]
- whether she was involved in nomination meeting voter shenanigans, racially-divisive advertising, or supporting or failing to oppose China's practice of murdering Falong Gong members for lucrative organs,

on what she actually brings to the table, she is a disastrous pick for MP.

You can review it for yourselves in a few places. [Her YouTube site](#) has a few vignettes of true policy emptiness that reflect her party's abject refusal to address issues of real people. Its three features are so free of issues that we hear our anthem, see some pictures of her showing up at public events and trust-based service pledges. Empty otherwise.

She also seemed quite useless at [the all-candidates meeting](#) on October 7, 2008. While these videos may have neglected her best moments, what we do see is cringe-inducing.

Here are a few of the highlights:

- She lacks irony as she proudly claims to being the first democratically elected candidate, presumably in this round of elections, while for 2004 she stepped aside to help her colleague Paul Martin parachute the toxic David Emerson into this riding as the Liberal candidate. Whoops. But then we don't really expect business people to demonstrate much facility with political, moral or social philosophy...and I should know, having been a business major when I first went to university.
- She totally dodged, but not even as "deftly" as Sarah Palin [whoops], a question on the SPP, claiming that among his criticisms, Don Davies' facts may be wrong and that she would have to research them, so she wouldn't comment on them. One of the facts was that Paul Martin was one of the original 3 Amigos who signed the deal: hard for her not to be aware of earlier this decade as she was ["appointed as Leader's Representative to the Liberal Party of Canada \(BC\) by then Prime Minister Paul Martin in 2004."](#)
- She continually talks about how she understands the issues of constituents, but living in Richmond, that is hard to believe, and given an opportunity to explain what the constituents care about, she shows little knowledge of anything beyond what immigrants and small business owners want [she is both]...oh yes, that and a desire to serve. But the problem is that she evidently wants to serve her party [remember the David Emerson connection] more than the largely poor and working class community of a riding she doesn't live in.

In short, she is a master of cliché and substance-free "apparent" responses and comments in the all-candidates meeting and her own video vignettes. And she is quite a poor public speaker, with real difficulty framing ideas of any real substance beyond clichés and empty platitudes.

So how will this riding go tomorrow?

Reform/Conservative candidate [in name only] Salomon Rayek will not win. He didn't even bother to show up at the all-candidates meeting. This was smart and the best option compared to actually being there and suffering the focus of how much everyone hates David Emerson. Showing up would actually end up costing the party votes and tax funding. And judging from the emptiness that Wendy Yuan showed in actual content breadth at the meeting, she should have thought about skipping the meeting too.

Rayek also will not win because his job is just to get out the Reform/Conservative vote. His flyer in the mail the other day also highlights his commitment to his party--instead of our constituents--and its boogeyman crime and punishment initiatives and tax cuts, he's a blood donor[!], his children once attended schools in the riding and the best part: he's the "president of a local Electoral District Association for the Conservative Party" which happens to be Delta-Richmond East. So he actually may live as far away from our riding as Wendy Yuan.

Since the Reform/Conservative party will not win Vancouver-Kingsway strategic voting to keep Harper out is irrelevant. A vote for Don Davies does just as much to reduce the Reform/Conservative representation as a vote for the policy-vacant Wendy Yuan.

Green party Doug Warkentin also won't win. He's a late entry candidate who admitted to not fully knowing his party's platform at the all-candidates meeting and showed a distinct lack of breadth of

knowledge of federal issues, but he sure sounded like an earnest, caring man. Just like Wendy Yuan. So she earned no more support than he did based on her performance.

No one from the small parties will get much of a vote either.

So that leaves NDP candidate Don Davies as the candidate that should win. During the all-candidates meeting he showed a fantastic breadth of knowledge of issues, with far more policy knowledge than Wendy Yuan. He was articulate, thoughtful and spoke of real people's concerns, fears and hopes.

But winning means getting the vote out. Democracy in Canada is largely sub-contracted. People haven't typically been directly engaged or even committed as members of parties. They vote sporadically and let professional political parties, lobbyists and activists do their business, however corrupt and deceitful it can be at times. This is why Wendy Yuan's little YouTube ads don't really say anything of substance. It's all about the party brand, not about mobilized human beings.

And the Liberal Party is no more populist than it was with the sponsorship scandal kneecapped them.

So when we look for how the Obama bump affects Canada we see that individual voter disenchantment with big party politics that has become a social movement after initially crystalizing around Obama in the USA, has moved into Canada raising bazillions of dollars for the NDP, increasing their poll standing and reflecting the reality that the NDP has been the official opposition for two and a half years while over 40 times the federal Liberals abstained on votes in the last parliament, giving the Harper Reform/Conservatives a de facto majority. Why did they abstain? They weren't confident of being able to win at least a minority government if they opposed the government on a confidence motion.

And why are we voting tomorrow? Because Harper himself crashed his own parliament since the Liberals wouldn't. If I were Wendy Yuan, I'd be afraid of that too.

And while Harper called this election for many reasons, two of them underscore why Don Davies should win tomorrow:

1. Harper, being a US-Republican American Idol, cannot be re-elected to anything if Obama wins the presidential election. A shift to the populist "left" in the USA will remove his cover of having a more radical soft fascist in the White House. Even though the Democrats are Republicans-Lite, an Obama election is a rejection of the fear-mongering conservatism that has ruled North America this decade. Bad for Wendy Yuan is that Paul Martin's co-creation of the SPP and the North American Union puts that stink on her, and would have even if she weren't close to him personally. So Harper has shot for re-election before the US election and the Liberals are no more ready to govern than they have been for the last 30 months.
2. The global economic meltdown hurts everyone with conservative fiscal policies. Even the director of the anti-human International Monetary Fund has characterized this "event" as dire. So who pays for this? Harper's Reform/Conservative party and the Liberals, whose fiscal platform is so identical to the Harper gang that after David Emerson crossed the floor he justified himself grandly by telling the truth that the parties were essentially the same to him. And Paul Martin spent years making Canada the envy of the world [as Wendy Yuan was eager to keep repeating at the all-candidates meeting] because of the balanced budgets and surpluses created by gutting

Canada's social programs. So Saloman Rayek was wise to skip the all-candidates meeting, but Wendy Yuan didn't figure that out: the Liberals' de-regulated fiscal free trade policies are just as much responsible for the economic disaster we're in now as the Harper government.

So it's time to vote tomorrow and it's time to tell everyone you know in Vancouver-Kingsway to get out and vote for Don Davies, unless they are committed to solid, corporate-friendly, 20th century politics that ignores real people and real issues. And if that's the case, they're part of the problem.