

# Tony Gunn

He/Him • Saint John Harbour • PANB

Candidate #06

## **1. Why are you running in this election?**

I'm running basically because I grew up in my area. I grew up in the South End, born and raised my whole life. And basically I spent the last four decades hoping for some change for Saint John and then really have just never seen it happen. So I just thought I would maybe push it myself. Maybe just try to get in there and maybe make the really final push that Saint John really needs from an MLA.

## **2. Describe how the time living in your riding has informed your qualifications as a candidate.**

Well, I've lived there my whole entire life. I grew up in the South End. I grew up through poverty. I made it out of it. I worked myself out of it and I think I know what people who still live there are dealing with, you know, they're dealing with poverty every day. They're dealing with homelessness, they're dealing with no job security, and I think I could maybe help them figure a way to get out of that.

## **3. Describe how your time living in New Brunswick has informed your qualifications as a candidate.**

New Brunswick is one of the best places I've ever been. I've traveled a little bit now. I'm not a world traveller or anything, but I've traveled to the US and places like New Brunswick is one of the most friendly, inviting places you would ever want to go to. I find that the only problem is, we seem to be fighting against each other rather than fighting with each other. And I would just like to maybe be the middle ground for these groups that are always fighting with each other, maybe make them understand that, maybe we can't give you all of this, but we can give you most of it. If you give us some of this, I find that there's not enough. There's not enough give and take in our province at the moment. And I think I could provide that middle ground.

## **4. How does your experience (ie. education, lived experience, workplace) contribute to your qualifications as a candidate?**

I worked myself through poverty. Our family was dealing with it when we were growing up. And then once I got out of high school, I dealt with it on a more personal level because I really didn't know what other options were out there. You know, I didn't know how much more of a benefit that education would give a person. And now I do, after going to community college and then finishing my university degree, I realized how much more of a benefit that will be for the rest of my life. And I don't know if anyone in the neighborhoods in our riding still understand that. I think they're of the nature that, okay, school is not for me, you know, I'll just work through it, but they

don't realize that in their lifetime, an education, a formal education, almost doubles their lifetime earnings. And that's what I think I could help with.

### **5. If elected, what will be your top 5 priorities for your riding?**

Number one obviously would be poverty reduction because like I said, that that's what I've dealt with my whole life. And that's what I think the area needs the most. You know, the Saint John Harbor riding specifically has five of the poorest neighborhoods in New Brunswick and generational poverty is especially tough to deal with. And I think that would be my main focus, would be trying to deal with that and trying to get people out of that. And obviously second would be a Saint John development like into the harbourfront development, anything that would bring development into our areas, new commercial development, obviously because that increases your tax base. And then that goes into the third item, which would be tax reform, either municipal tax reform allowing municipalities like Saint John to keep our tax base, to keep our industrial taxes that are paid in, but sent to Fredericton. And then on the other option would be the property tax assessment issue.

### **6. LGBTQ+ and reproductive healthcare**

Okay. Now that is not something I'm overly familiar with being a single male. But definitely I'm in favor of full support of whatever my constituents would benefit from. I'm very open to having clinics that provide that service for healthcare and for mental health services. You know, I think that's what we need more of in New Brunswick, is outside of the general hospital issue is more walk-in clinics that provide that type of service. And I think that would benefit that community, especially as well as the poverty community.

### **7. Access to mental health and/or addictions services**

That kind of falls under the first option, is obviously being in the Saint John area and our riding specifically have a much higher suicide rate, addiction rates, mental health issues, than the rest of the province because of the poverty issue and the urban nature of our area. So again, the walk-in clinics, obviously those clinics would have to have mental health services, as well as physical services, you know, like a general practitioner and things like that. And as well as, there should be those within our school system, there should be mental health professionals involved there all the way through and not just at certain levels.

### **8. Glyphosate use in New Brunswick**

Our party is already on record as wanting to ban that on crown lands. We were able to work with the minority PCs to get it reduced by 30%. But obviously if we were elected, we would push for that to be eliminated completely.

### **9. Access to affordable housing in Saint John**

Falls under that poverty is now our issue, is that we have a very transient base in the South End and in the other communities where families are living in one building and rents go up. So they have to move into another one. So they have to, you know, continuously move so they don't really have a sense of belonging to any one area. They're just always on the move and with

affordable housing that would allow them to have a more permanent address and provide a more stable environment for children. And just a better state of mental health for the individuals who would normally have to move every three or four months. So affordable housing would obviously be key. You also kind of have to look at the double tax issue. The double tax issue is an investment killer. So if you don't have outside investment into these rental apartments, that basically takes away that, you know, the rents become too high. Whereas if you eliminated that double tax, the owners would be able to keep the rents as low as possible for the ones who can't afford the, you know, the Germain Street condos and that sort of thing.

#### **10. Police funding in Saint John**

I'm not really up to date on the cost. I know our police force is the only, I believe, it's the only municipal police force in New Brunswick. I believe the other ones are all RCMP and I have to look that up, but no, I'm for funding for the police department within the guidelines that they need it for. I know, as far as a per capita basis, I believe Saint John is pretty much in the middle. I'm not sure if we're, you know, if we pay higher rates per capita or lower rates per capita, but I'm pretty sure we're in the middle of it. And I don't really know if that's an issue right now, but obviously it could be down the line. Again, that would be something I would have to look for more information on.

#### **11. Reporting and investigations of sexual assaults**

100%, I'd be in favor of whatever was the concern of the person who is making the complaint. You know, it's one of those issues where the investigation should take place no matter who makes the complaint. It's one of those issues where it's such a touchy subject, it's such a thing we have where we have to protect those individuals as much as possible and make sure that they have no fear to come forward, make sure that they have a safe place to go. And make sure that there's no repercussions on making a formal charge and that sort of thing. And that's kind of where you need to be. And I don't think we're there yet, but I think we're on the right path for sure, with the agencies that are working within our communities.

#### **12. Municipal and Industrial Tax reform**

Oh, that's a big one for me being an accountant. Yeah, no, I definitely think there is room for major improvement in both municipal with the way the municipal tax calculations are done. I think it hamstrings Saint John specifically because of our large industrial tax break base. I mean, we have more industrial property in Saint John than the rest of New Brunswick combined, yet we see no tax benefit from it. All that money goes to Fredericton, or at least a large portion of it. And if our party was elected or was in a power to make that happen, that is one of our main platform issues is changing that specifically for the benefit of the many municipalities that deal with the heavy industry.

#### **13. Access to public transit in Saint John**

It's been a long, long time since I used public transit, but I know there's a lot of issues with availability in certain areas, routes that were once very popular that are no longer in service because of cuts. And obviously when there's federal money available, that obviously our

province should have accepted that or, you know, been part of that. And when our leaders decide on their own that money is not necessary, I think that's a big issue for me, you know, that if there's money available for one specific thing and in our area, it's definitely needed to either keep the cost of ridership low or to include those areas that didn't have service anymore.

#### **14. Access to affordable childcare in Saint John**

That falls under the larger poverty issue. Childcare should be right up there with healthcare as a charter. For parents, especially working parents, it should be provided. For now, I'm not sure what is offered now, not having a child of my own. I know a lot of families do struggle with the high cost of private childcare. Now, I would hope that all governments, whoever gets elected, should be looking at providing that with no additional service under the Horizon Health Network or the Vitalité Health Network. I think it should be one of those things that's included in our major healthcare.

#### **15. Media Ownership in New Brunswick**

No. Well, I mean, as far as we all know that the ownership of the media is pretty much under one umbrella. And so therefore there's not always an open discussion on things. It's more of an opinion based media rather than a fact based media. Now, I'm new to this, so I don't know 100% sure on one way or the other how it falls, but from what the things I read, it feels more that there's a bigger slant towards certain issues that are important to those that own the media, rather than being a more open discussion across the public area, the way it should be, the way a newspaper and media should be.