

Stefan Warner

He/Him • Portland Simonds • Green Party

Candidate #08

1. Why are you running in this election?

So I originally ran for the [party name hidden] in 2010 when I was 20 years old. And I was just doing that out of pure excitement to be part of the electoral process, just because I think politics is super important and really exciting in a weird, geeky way. This time around I'm running just out of frustration and kind of anger. I'm an educator and with a 28 day campaign cycle it kinda worked out that I was actually able to run again because as a government employee, I'm actually able to take an unpaid leave and this way I would only miss out on a kind of two weeks and three days of students. So I didn't think I was going to be able to run in this provincial election, but you know, 28 day election cycles seems criminal to me, but it kind of worked out, whereas I can be a part of the process and I just really want, I loved sitting at the table and being part of the debates and bringing up social issues and having people directly answer to me. So yeah, that's kind of the main reason I'm running. I just want to be part of the conversation and bring up some important issues.

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

Well, I am a lifelong Saint Johner. I absolutely love this town. I grew up in Millidgeville and I went to a city high school and I also graduated from UNB. So I know Saint John-Portland. I know this community. I am currently living just outside the riding because of gerrymandering and kind of switching the lines. So I am actually voting in Saint John Harbour, but I very much care about the North End and Millidgeville. And one thing I love about the [party name hidden] is you're not whipped in any way for any votes. And I am Saint John first, always.

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

Well, my mother was born in Edmundston and I grew up in Saint John. So I am a Francophone and I kind of understand New Brunswick in terms of the divide that's happening there because I'm a Francophone in Saint John. And that we're a small but mighty population here. I love this province. My sister, father, a bunch of my friends, they all left the province the second they could and I decided to stick around because I really believe in this place and I want other people to come back. I think there's an opportunity here and I just want to help us move forward because this archaic red party blue party thing that we got going on is not serving the province very well.

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

So, one thing that kind of made me more interested in helping Saint John was that during

COVID, I helped Bee Me Kids organize and run a mobile food bank. And while doing that, I really saw the systematic poverty that everybody knows is there. And it's a seedy underbelly of Saint John and, you know, people talk about, but I was knocking on people's doors and seeing the conditions that people are living in. So ever since I've done that, it kinda opened my eyes. So for 20 weeks, I was, you know, helping people out, delivering food and building those relationships. And the thing is, like people in Saint John are so lovely and want to succeed. It's not the case that everybody wants to just sit on pogie and do nothing. It's like people want opportunities and I want to help people find those

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

For my riding? Okay, well, number one, the [party name hidden] there, I think everything needs to go back to environmentalism and having that in the back of our mind, but we can't really do that without concentrating on poverty issues. People aren't going to worry about recycling or buying local food. They're worried about getting food on the table for their kids. So systematic poverty is definitely number one. I, as an educator, I would say education reform and just kind of switching the way we do things, making it safer for students and teachers. Re-Imagining the way a classroom can operate is very important to me. So that'd be number two. Bringing back a lot of social issues that the Higgs government has cut would be number three. I love Saint John. I think it's beautiful. I'm currently sitting in uptown Saint John looking at the waterfront while we do this conversation.

And I think tourism is so important. If you develop tourism, you can do so much more. It creates opportunities, creates jobs, and it's actually a nice town. I want everybody to come and see this. And number five, I would say, just helping the people that need it most with addiction, the mental health issues and addiction issues. It's not 'let's create a task force to fight meth'. People are still gonna have those addiction issues. No one wants to be addicted to meth. We need to help those people instead of trying to prosecute the people. Yes, you gotta prosecute them, but we need to help the people on the ground.

6. LGBTQ+ and reproductive healthcare

I was recently at the rally in Rothesay for a Clinic 554. Yeah. The Higgs government is currently against the Canadian Health Act. And I think it's what they're doing is illegal. It's literally illegal. So I am very much in favor of everybody having the healthcare they deserve. And we can definitely start with Clinic 554.

7. Access to mental health and/or addictions services

Yeah, that is a huge issue. I think people have addiction issues because of mental health, because of systemic poverty and all these things that are all intertwined in an awful type of pretzel. And we need to fund that because if you fund that for children at a young age, it just, it saves money down the road. It's just seems so obvious that if you help those programs, you save money on incarceration and on all sorts of things. So it's just, if you fund mental health and addiction issues, you save so much down the road. If you know Higgs, everyone wants balanced books. Well, look at it for a 20 year plan. It's just obvious.

8. Glyphosate use in New Brunswick

There's other ways we can spray our crops that are not carcinogenic. So, you know, you use the best technologies we have. It's not that one. Let's be better.

9. Access to affordable housing in Saint John

Well, it's pretty clear that gentrification is a big issue in Saint John, someone moved out of an apartment and they renovated with a coat of paint. And all of a sudden that apartment is \$500 more. There needs to be some regulations put in place to protect the renters because Saint John is being bought up by outside forces. And the market is going up at a crazy rate that is just costing the average teenage out here way too much money, where we're sending people out of the uptown core, they're finding themselves and the lower North End in Crescent Valley in the parts of my riding and the housing there is obvious, and there's a lot of red tape around fixing these buildings. And anytime we have a new building, we need to have it so everybody has a word. You know we need to make sure that any new building is available for every walks of life.

10. Police funding in Saint John

Well, I believe it is \$26 million for a city of about 80,000 people or less. And that just seems absolutely ridiculous. I've never seen a department with such new vehicles consistently. I wouldn't use the term defund, but I think restructure would be a very important thing for the city of Saint John to consider. Maybe it's, you know, you have your paramedics, you have your firefighters, you have your police department, and you have the social team. You know, you have people that go out when there's a mental health issue, not with guns drawn.

11. Reporting and investigations of sexual assaults

We need to make it easier for people to do that anonymously and not go back into the situation they were in. We need to help these women and children that are having a hard time with that, especially during COVID where during lockdown, you don't have an opportunity as a teacher. You don't have the opportunity to see kids and kind of monitor their health and stuff. And there needs to be more social progress programs in place to help these women that are experiencing difficulty. And, you know, maybe that's not just a big room with all these families that are struggling together. Maybe it's putting them up in housing immediately and other opportunities.

12. Municipal and Industrial Tax reform

That is one of my biggest things that I believe Saint John and if New Brunswick redefines that Saint John will thrive. I believe the facts are the regional hospital pays \$4.5 million in taxes every year. And the refinery, the big refinery, the biggest refinery in Canada pays 2.6 million. That seems ridiculous. So we need to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are based in The Bahamas, and we need to tax them clearly so that we don't have to look at private businesses to support schools and pretend that it's like a big winning thing. Oh, wow. They do so much for the community. Now, if they paid their taxes, then we would actually be in a much better place. And it wouldn't be the population supporting the businesses. It would be the other way around.

13. Access to public transit in Saint John

Well Higgs walked away from the table because he didn't understand what was going on there. So he's left somewhere between, you know, \$1.5 and \$2.5 million for transit on the table from the Trudeau government. So everybody should have access to going where they need to go. New Brunswick's the only province that doesn't subsidize transit. And there's some people that have mobility issues. They can't afford a vehicle. What have you that need to get around? And we need to give people the basic things they need to survive on. And transportation is one of those.

14. Access to affordable childcare in Saint John

I talk to people that have children and it, it's a mortgage, it's a mortgage to have your child go to daycare. And when people finally get their kids in kindergarten, it's like winning the lottery because you start saving 800, a thousand dollars a month. It's absolutely crazy how much we need to spend for that. And, you know, Ontario now has like a pre pre-K type situation. So I don't know if it's like it goes into public schools or it's just another department of that, but we need to make it more affordable to live here for the people that are struggling. And the living wage in Saint John was just said to be \$19.55. Minimum wage is \$11.70. There's a huge gap there, especially when mortgage or rent rates are going up at an insane cost. Childcare is a very clear way to cut a huge expense for a lot of people.

15. Media Ownership in New Brunswick

I have two degrees. I have a degree in Education and then a degree in Communication. And I remember when we were learning about all this stuff, there was international books that we were using in class that used New Brunswick's media ownership as a terrible example for what that can look like. It's atrocious. It should not be that way. There's laws on monopolies and they have never been enforcing New Brunswick that blows my mind. Everything keeps getting bought up from 'Here Magazine' to 'Huddle', to any little newspaper that you know. Brunswick News thinks as an opportunity and some of them are continued. Some of them are just dropped immediately because they don't like the content. There needs to be oversight into this, and we need to divide that and make it not all owned by one mega enterprise.