

It's not easy being a high profile politician

Mark Pavilons



Three groups spend other people's money: children, thieves, politicians. All three need supervision.
Dick Armev

Politicians fascinate because they constitute such a paradox; they are an elite that accomplishes mediocrity for the public good.
George Will

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, during his stop in King last week, said "... there is no higher calling than that of raising a child, and no greater reward."

He is quite right. And as a parent, he understands those very intricacies.

He announced greater funding and less red tape for the thousands of adoptive parents in this country. He also lent his support to one of the local candidates and fielded questions from the media.

He must be getting tired of commenting on the actions of his staff and senators and scandals they're involved in. Sure, it makes for some great sound bites, but really folks, aren't much more pressing issues facing Canadians today?

Fortunately, MP Peter Van Loan noted that Canada's off middle class, as noted in a U.S. survey, is ranked the best in the world.

We have a lot to be proud of in this country of ours and we should never be shy about trumpeting our national pride.

Regardless of what you think of political rallies and snippets during election campaigns, I find such things exhilarating and quite exciting. At events like Harper's brief visit, dozens of supporters, their friends and family, show up and proudly display their support and faith in the system and our political leaders. That's what democracy is all about. It's about working together as part of a team, a process, to better ourselves and our country as a whole.

Politicians get the brunt of it most times. And our Prime Minister is facing the critics now more than ever. That comes with the territory.

To borrow from our American neighbours, there are a few "unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

It takes thousands of politicians, bureaucrats and civil servants to make this happen. Our Prime Minister has tens of thousands of "employees" entrusted to carry out the business of the day, set laws, create rules and regulations and enforce them, to provide that aforementioned "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness."

Whenever thousands of people are involved, there are bound to be mistakes, accidents and yes, corruption. We are human beings after all.

When politicians go astray, public trust in them and the system suffers. But I find it strange that we are so critical of one of the most important 'jobs' in our democratic system -- that of public representative. It is thankless at times, but oh, so important.

Few of us can imagine the life of a high-profile politician, let alone that of the Prime Minister.

My wise, 17-year-old daughter said his life must be so hectic, that he doesn't get to be a typical dad. He likely has missed many soccer games and school concerts. Even a vacation or night out at the movies becomes a major event, surrounded by an army of security forces.

The security, at the rural property in King, was quite noticeable. I suppose it's typical and required in this day and age, but my daughter again mentioned that the lives of these law enforcement professionals must be similarly hectic and stressful.

Again, we're all human beings contributing to the bigger picture, trying to make a difference.

Perhaps we should take that into consideration before we jump down a politician's throat, or complain about our taxes, or the traffic in the GTA.

I shouldn't have to remind people what it took to get us here today. The last remaining war veterans are dwindling fast, and we must remember their sacrifices, commitments and dedication to our most cherished commodity -- our freedom.

The result? Canada ranks sixth overall for its level of human freedom while the United States ranks 20th in the Human Freedom Index, released today by the Fraser Institute and a network of international public-policy think-tanks. The index -- which uses 76 indicators of personal, civil and economic freedoms to rank 152 countries around the world -- is the most comprehensive freedom index so far created for a globally meaningful set of countries.

According to the data, Canada has better scores on security and safety, the rule of law and economic freedom which is based on personal choice, trade openness, freedom to compete, security of private property and judicial independence.

Some of this is due to the hard work of our politicians and bureaucrats.

We place our trust in them to toil on our behalf and in our best interests. Sure, sometimes things go wrong and certain laws may miss the mark. But it's not for a lack of trying.

The same can be said of politicians and staff at the municipal level. We're quick to judge and criticize, but they are dedicated to our well being and providing the quality of life that we enjoy.

That has to earn them a certain amount of respect and appreciation.

So for those paying attention to the current election campaign, I say pay attention, be involved and be proud.