

The Intelligencer

BELLEVILLE, ONTARIO • ESTABLISHED 1834

SES Research/Osprey Media

Sorbara has little effect on Liberals: poll

By James Wallace

OSPREY NEWS NETWORK

The recent resignation of Ontario finance minister Greg Sorbara over police fraud allegations has done little to sway voter impressions about the provincial Liberal government, an exclusive SES Research/Osprey Media poll has found.

Just four out of ten Ontario voters are paying attention to the controversy and only 38 per cent of those polled believed the resignation was indicative of broader problems within the Liberal government.

"At this point in time, the resignation is not a major blow to the government," said Nik Nanos, president of SES Research.

"What it means is the public opinion battle over this issue has just begun and it's wide open as to how this story will play out," Nanos said.

Conservative and NDP voters were more inclined to view the resignation as a problem with the Liberals, the poll showed.

Though half of all men, compared to 35 per cent of women voters, said they were paying close or fairly close attention to the story.

Sorbara, Premier Dalton McGuinty's chief lieutenant and political "mentor," resigned from cabinet earlier this month after being named a subject in an ongoing RCMP fraud investigation into Royal Group Technologies, where he had worked as a director.

Police executed a search warrant on Sorbara's family business, the Sorbara Group real estate development firm, alleging Sorbara and other Royal Group executives defrauded shareholders, in part through a series of questionable land dealings.

Sorbara and the other executives named in the warrant categorically deny wrongdoing and Sorbara told reporters he was both "dumbfounded" by the allegations and that "a devastating mistake has been made" by police.

The finance minister insisted he had no knowledge of the allegations or land dealings in question and had absented himself from any discussions between Royal Group and his family firm while a director.

Nevertheless, because Sorbara was named in the warrant and thereby embroiled in the RCMP investigation, the allegations were sufficiently serious to force his resignation from cabinet.

Sorbara's fall from political grace was widely viewed as a body blow to the Liberals. He played a key role in Liberal election success and, more importantly, has been the party's most successful fundraiser.

A cloud now hangs over one of McGuinty's most valuable political assets and it will be months, if not years, before police conclude their work and either clear or charge the former finance minister, who is currently sitting as a back-bencher in the Legislature.



CANADIAN PRESS PHOTO

M-Cpl. Yanick Fournier, left, from Val Belair, Que., and Cpl. Micheline Lafontaine, from St. Jean, Que., working with Canada's Disaster Assistance Response Team, bandage a young boy's head wound in the remote mountain village of Malsi Paheen in Pakistan Sunday. In addition to their clinic base camp roving medical teams are going into the remote areas to try and help people injured in the earthquake. See page 4 for story.

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The Intelligencer is published by:
Osprey Media Group Inc.
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Belleville, Ontario, K8N 5C7
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To run for party in federal election

Sahadat is The Green choice

By Michelle Thompson
THE INTELLIGENCER

For Joseph Sahadat, green is the new black. Last year, the reverend ran as an independent candidate during the federal election. It was then when he learned a lot about the Green Party and, specifically, realized "we were singing the same song."

"The Green Party is the place for me and there is nothing wrong with crossing the lawn."

Sahadat has crossed that lawn and will be Prince Edward-Hastings' Green Party candidate in the next federal election.

On Saturday he accompanied Green Party of Canada leader, Jim Harris, on visits to Bloomfield, Belleville and Centre Hastings.

"You have enlightened us," Sahadat told him following a speech in Bloomfield. "God bless you."

Harris had equally kind things to say about Sahadat, predicting: "He's going to be fantastic."

But for Sahadat, this isn't just an opportunity to be fantastic. It is a chance to educate his riding on the Green Party's fundamental principles.

During the upcoming election, which is expected to take place next spring, Sahadat intends to share his party's 10 key values with his constituents.

"We're talking about social justice. We're talking about non-violence. We're talking about ecological wisdom..." Sahadat said. "If the whole country needs it, then every region will benefit from it."

• See 'Sahadat' on page 4.



PHOTO BY MICHELLE THOMPSON

Green Party candidate Joseph Sahadat, left,
with party leader Jim Harris.

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