Former MP Mike Bossio to run for Liberals in next federal election



Feb. 28, 2021

By Nate Smelle

Last Tuesday, Hastings-Lennox and Addington's former MP Mike Bossio announced that he would be running as the Liberal candidate in the federal election expected to take place sometime this year.

Having served as the riding's MP from 2015-2019, Bossio knows how challenging and rewarding the role can be. When Bossio first decided to enter politics in 2013, he said several of his friends and family advised him against it, cautioning that he would only become frustrated with the bureaucracy they thought would prevent him from "getting things done." After serving in the position for four years, he said his experience had shown him the exact opposite. Instead of feeling stifled as MP, Bossio said he was pleasantly surprised to see how much he and his team were able to accomplish while in office.

"We got more done in that one term than I thought we would get done in three," said Bossio."An example: when we started we had five New Horizons fundings, and two new accessibility fundings; by the end [of his term, 2015-2019] we had 27. That was just because my staff had done such a great job informing people that these opportunities exist. The same thing with the Canada Summer Jobs Program. Every year we see how we need more funding. The jobs are here but the youth are leaving because they can't get a job. We went from getting around $300,000 to almost $800,000 a year by the last year [2019]. We worked really hard at finding the solutions to get stuff done. And, those investments were making changes to every day lives from broadband connectivity, to

infrastructure, to economic development, to protecting the environment."

Acknowledging the unique difficulties arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, and his eagerness to be a part of solving the ongoing public health crisis, he said he is ready to reclaim his seat and get back to working for the people of Hastings-Lennox and Addington.

"It was so gratifying to have those experiences and to be able to make a difference in people's lives," Bossio said."Now, especially this year when you see how COVID-19 has made 2020 a very tough year, we see how we still have a long way to go before we are through it. I want to be a part of the team that is going to help us get through it, so when we are on the other side, we are on the path again to growth and to progress on many different fronts. Whether it's on affordable housing, on inequality, on the environment, on infrastructure, economic development, transitioning to the digital economy and green-clean growth economy - in all of these areas I want to be a part of helping to influence those plans so that our riding, and the lives of rural Canadians in general, benefit from it."

In compliment to his previous experience as MP, over the past year Bossio has been working as a senior political advisor to Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Maryam Monsef. Expressing his gratitude to Minister Monsef and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for the opportunity, he said it was extremely rewarding to be able to continue the work that he initiated as MP in the area on issues such as rural broadband connectivity, infrastructure, and economic development.As much as he appreciated the experience of working as an advisor to the minister, Bossio said he continued to feel the call to serve as MP.

"I have really missed serving the constituents of Hastings-Lennox and Addington," explained Bossio."Anyone who knows me, knows that I was a constituent-based MP. I travelled to every part of this riding to meet with our constituents, organizations, businesses, municipalities to discuss the issues that are most important to them; and, to work with them to find solutions. But, once you find those solutions, you have to do something about it? You have to be able to take those solutions to Ottawa, to be their champion, to be their voice, to advocate, but, you have to do that in a collaborative and diplomatic way. You have to work with others in government to find those pathways to success."

Although the date of the next federal election has yet to be announced, it is expected that Canadians will head back to the polls for sometime in June or September 2021. Bossio intends to remove and replace incumbent independent (former Conservative) MP Derek Sloan who defeated him by just 2,247 votes in 2019. Recognizing how Sloan's highly controversial and divisive antics while in office have shown his lack of ability to work with others who hold opposing views, Bossio vowed to bring a much different, more collaborative and inclusive approach to politics back to the table.Echoing the words of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in describing his reason for running, Bossio said "This is our chance to build a Canada that is healthier and safer, greener and more competitive; a Canada that is more welcoming and more fair. This is our moment to change the future for the better."

"That to me represents everything we have to do, moving forward," added Bossio. "Here, in Hastings-Lennox and Addington, better starts with better representation. One that values diversity and inclusion, one that is fair and responsible, one that puts the interests and the needs of constituents ahead of personal ambition and the pursuit of ideological constraints. We've seen what that does and there is no place for that in our riding, or in our country."

Understanding the immense geographical size of the riding, and the importance of connecting with as many people as possible, Bossio has already amassed a large team of volunteers eager to help put him back in office. He said anyone interested in joining their team and getting involved with his campaign can do so by contacting: mikebossioHLA@gmail.com.