



**Richard Ciano**

**Candidate for President, Ontario PC Party**

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**CIANO**   
**TIME TO WIN**

Richard Ciano's Plan to Engage our Membership, Strengthen our Riding Associations, and Prepare to Win the Next Election

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# Message from Richard



The members of the Ontario PC Party were right to be optimistic about the 2011 election. The public was turning its back on Dalton McGuinty and his dishonest, high-tax, big-spending government, and was ready to support Tim Hudak and the PC Party. So it was especially disappointing that, although we made gains, we ultimately fell short of winning.

What happened? The Leader performed well on the campaign trail and in the debates. As a first-time leader against a seasoned opponent in Dalton McGuinty, Tim Hudak did admirably.

However, most Party volunteers and supporters (not to mention media pundits) agreed that our platform lacked the details that voters wanted,

failed to inspire, and did not distinguish our proposed policies from those of our opponents. To make matters worse, many candidates were hamstrung by a lack of resources (volunteers and funds) and by a rigid central campaign that did not allow them to adapt their campaigns to meet their local needs.

Unfortunately, since our last victory nearly 13 years ago, our Party has drifted away from the traditional local strengths that lifted us to back-to-back majority governments in 1995 and 1999: meaningful and principled member-developed policy, engaged and enthusiastic volunteers, and teams working in harmony with the leader in ridings across the province.

**We have become an increasingly centrally controlled top-down regime, tone-deaf to our members and supporter base, and blind to our shortcomings.**

Many members are disengaged, don't participate, and have stopped contributing their ideas and valued efforts. Many are not renewing their memberships because they feel they have been ignored and disrespected. When our members and supporter base are not emotionally invested in the Party's prospects, we are in trouble.

The unintended consequence of central control is that Party members and supporters are frustrated, disillusioned, and really, really angry.

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To win elections we need strong riding associations, engaged members, and enthusiastic volunteers who buy into, and are proud of, the central campaign because it's their campaign. It reflects their principles and included their participation.

Strong leadership from Tim Hudak is only part of the winning equation. We also need a strong ground game from local campaigns, working from the same script as the Leader, and supported – not ignored or dictated to – by the central campaign.

After three straight election losses, each one with an increasingly disengaged membership and volunteer base, it's time for us to bring our Party back to its local roots.

**It's time to win – and winning starts with strong riding associations.**

Strong riding associations that are organized, well funded, plugged in to our policy development process, respected, appreciated, and listened to. Strong riding associations that will help win a majority government in the next election and make Tim Hudak our next Premier.

This plan describes the work that I would do as Party President – with the help of the new Party Executive – to bring respect, accountability, and winning best practices back to our Party, and to prepare our riding associations for success in the next election.



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Richard Ciano  
Candidate for President  
Ontario PC Party

# I. Build a Member Service Culture in the Party

To re-engage our members, we must remember why people join our political party and become active volunteers. No one spends \$10 on a Party membership just to get generic e-mails, endless fundraising calls, and marching orders at election time.

**People are members because they want to make a difference.**

They want to be involved. Some members are interested in policy and want to contribute their ideas. Others want to proudly promote the Party and its principles or to play a role in electing an MPP. A few even dream of being elected to represent their community, and they want a fair, democratic shot at winning the nomination.

Like any member-based organization, if we want more members to be engaged and active, we need our Party to recognize and encourage participation in every way people wish to contribute. When we ask riding associations to put a lot of time, effort, and resources into fundraising, local events, recruitment, and other volunteer activities, they must have a voice in how our Party is run.

Our members and riding associations have good ideas and thoughtful opinions. Our members have personal experiences and convictions that, combined with our shared principles, are what make us a Party. The Ontario PC Party exists only because of its members.

The central operations of the Party serve the important and necessary functions of supporting the Leader and the Party as a whole – but they must not overlook their equally important responsibility to individual members and riding associations.

**We must change the attitude of the Party Executive, Headquarters, and campaign team to recognize and place emphasis on member service.**

As President, Richard Ciano will foster a culture of member service, supported by the Party Executive, that will permeate throughout the central operations of the Party.

Member service means that when you ask a question, you will get a reasonable answer in a timely fashion. Opinions and suggestions will be treated in the spirit of goodwill in which they are offered. The Party will do better at serving the riding associations and their members. If the Party expects 100 per cent from you, then you should have its attention and respect in return.

If we can re-engage and respect our members for their strengths and their efforts, we will have a strong membership and more volunteers working towards winning the next election.

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## How Richard Ciano will build a member service culture in the Party:

- **Member satisfaction surveys**

There will be periodic “member satisfaction surveys” to get evaluations of the Party Executive, Headquarters, and the campaign team. These surveys will ensure that the Party has an honest view of how our members feel about our service to them and about how our Party is performing more generally.

Most importantly, member satisfaction surveys will remind Party staff and the Executive of the importance of member service because their performance will be measured.

- **Opportunities for all Party members to share their concerns and ideas**

Party members, activists, and volunteers will be provided a forum to offer novel and innovative ideas about the operations of the Party – what’s working and what isn’t. We need regular opportunities to hear from our members and we need to act on their suggestions.

- There will be full-membership telephone town hall meetings, every six months, for all members to hear updates, ask questions, and offer suggestions
- There will be regional roundtable meetings, promoted and open to all members of the Party, for meaningful discussions. These meetings will be held every six months (staggered three months from the telephone town hall meetings)

Each meeting will include a review of questions raised at past meetings and how these concerns have been addressed. Meetings will be attended by the Party President, other representatives from the Party Executive, Headquarters, Caucus, and the central campaign team.

- **Publishing the Executive meeting minutes, survey conclusions, and other reports**

The Party’s constitution (Articles 10.4 and 10.5) requires the Party to provide certain reports to its members to ensure accountability of the Party Executive and Headquarters. As a member, you have the right to

- minutes of all Party Executive meetings, committee reports, and financial updates. These will be provided to all riding presidents for discussion within their associations
- conclusions of the member satisfaction surveys, and any recommendations
- reports on Party activities, as well as updates from the Leader and Caucus

- **Accountability of the Party President**

The Party President’s job is to ensure that all constitutional requirements are upheld (Article 10.1). To re-engage members and respect our riding associations, Richard Ciano will place added emphasis on this most important requirement.

In addition, Richard will

- publish a quarterly report to all members
- keep this platform online, available for members to measure Richard’s performance against his promises
- be a subject of the regular member satisfaction surveys

## II. Fair, Open, and Competitive Candidate Nominations

We had many strong local candidates in 2011. But a fundamental aspect of being a member of a political party is having a say in who gets to be your local candidate. We need to respect members by protecting your right to choose candidates in fair, open, and competitive candidate nomination meetings.

We need an open and transparent candidate selection process to help us recruit new members and volunteers to the Party, generate interest in local riding associations, and test potential candidates and local campaign teams by putting them through the rigours of a competitive nomination process. The “seasoning” that candidates go through when they mount a nomination campaign is an important step in getting them ready for the upcoming election. In some cases, it is the only political experience they will have before the election.

When the Party imposes a centrally appointed candidate or prevents others from running, the resulting candidate often comes with no team and no local volunteer support. Rather than having a healthy nomination battle that builds candidates’ teams and engages volunteers and new members, imposing these centrally appointed candidates alienates long-time volunteers and members and leaves the campaign with just a skeleton of local organization. This must change.

### **Ontario PC Party Constitution**

*6.3 Every candidate nomination convention shall be open, public and democratic.*

Riding associations must be able to hold their nomination meetings when it is best for them. We must give them the respect they deserve so that they can run their nomination processes in the way that attracts the best candidates. The Party needs to work with riding associations, not against them.

If we want to win, we need strong local candidates who are supported by their riding associations’ volunteer teams – the people who come out each election to support their candidate and do the hard work at the doors, on the phones, and at the polls.

### **How Richard Ciano will ensure fair, open, and competitive candidate nominations:**

- **Create a uniform certification process for nomination candidates**

The Party must establish a clear, consistent process for potential candidates to obtain a certification, or “green light,” to run for a PC nomination. This process will allow the Party to do its due diligence based on reasonable background checks, such as for criminal history or other egregious factors. Upon passing these checks and the criteria determined by the Party, the candidate will receive the go-ahead to run.

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This process would be separate and apart from the question of where the candidate wishes to run. Whether a candidate has the appropriate local credentials is a choice only local members should make. **As far as the Party should be concerned, the person is either suitable to be a candidate or is not.** The answer to this question must be provided within a defined time frame from when the candidate submits his or her materials.

Candidates offering to put their name on the ballot to carry the PC torch make enormous personal sacrifices. They deserve to know, in a timely fashion, whether they can run for our Party or not. Once a candidate has received the green light he or she must not, barring significant new information, be required to end his or her campaign by anyone in the Party or the riding association. The interest of another potential candidate in running in a riding does not constitute new information against a previously certified nomination candidate.

- **Make candidate nominations a riding-driven process**

The Party Executive's role is to ensure that the rules ensure a fair, open, and competitive nomination process in every riding. As part of a partnership based on respect between riding associations and the Party, the riding associations need to have most of the authority to determine logistics and timelines for local candidate nomination meetings.

While early nominations are preferred, and should be promoted to provide candidates and campaign teams more time to meet with voters and to build support, we must not put this ahead of a proper candidate-search process, the opportunity for an open nomination battle, and the preparation of each riding association.

The Party must set out clear, achievable requirements (such as membership recruitment, fundraising targets, and candidate search) for riding associations to meet. Upon meeting those requirements, riding associations must be allowed to proceed with their nomination meetings. **The Party must not prevent a riding association from holding their nomination meeting once the association has met the requirements.**

The Party should continue to reach out to potential candidates and connect them with ridings where they could run – working in partnership with the riding associations. However, the Party must not use its preferred candidate as a lever to engineer the timing or the result of the nomination process.

*"The nomination process must attract, not drive away, the members and volunteers who do the real work in riding associations across the province." – Richard Ciano*



## III. Meaningful Policy and Platform Development

Our policies can be bold, thoughtful, common sense, well researched, and imaginative, but above all they must be *principled*. Policies based on our constitution's Statement of Principles and developed by our members will be meaningful, consistent, and form the foundation of a coherent message for the next campaign – one that Party members can proudly support and promote.

To win, we must have clear policies that differentiate our Party from our opponents, that motivate and inspire our members, volunteers, donors, and supporters, and that are rooted in the ideas and principles of our membership.

The policy development process in the last three election cycles has been neither meaningful nor effective because our Party's platforms did not reflect what was proposed. That's a shame, since so many of our members and volunteers have spent countless hours developing creative, innovative, and principled policy for our Party.

The failure to integrate the policies proposed by the membership or the Policy Advisory Councils (PACs) was acknowledged after the election losses of 2003 and 2007, and both times the Party promised to not repeat the mistake. Now in 2011 we have witnessed the third electoral failure in a row for that very same reason.

In contrast, when we followed our constitutionally defined process in 1995 and 1999, we won.

### Ontario PC Party Constitution

*3.1 (d) To provide a forum for the membership of the Party to participate in political discussion and to advise with respect to Party policy.*

We need to recognize that PAC participants – and others who contribute to the grassroots policy process – are some of the most hard-working, intelligent, and passionate members of our Party. Unfortunately, many of these people have given up on the policy process because their thoughtful, researched, and principled proposals have been brushed aside, minimized, or replaced by "experts" at election time.

Richard Ciano knows better than most that focus groups and market research can help refine and position party policies. But they should never replace adherence to principle, or gaining perspective from the members of our party.

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We must return to our grassroots policy development process, continue the valued work of the policy councils, and ensure a meaningful link between their principled proposals and the next Party platform.

## How Richard Ciano will ensure meaningful policy and platform development:

- **Renewed adherence to Articles 18 and 19 of the Party Constitution**

The process of developing policy is spelled out, articulately and in detail, in the Party constitution. Unfortunately, rather than carrying out this process as defined, the Party has paid lip service to it, ignored certain provisions, and taken the easy way out.

We must return to the process that worked for the 1995 and 1999 elections – a process driven by members rather than by Caucus or the central campaign. We must continue the PAC process, propose resolutions at annual conferences, and – most importantly – establish the Policy Committee of the Party, where the PAC and Policy Conference proposals are discussed by the Leader, PAC co-chairs, campaign chair, and other key decision-makers.

### **Ontario PC Party Constitution**

*19.6 There shall be a Policy Committee of the Party, chaired by the Policy Chair and including the Leader, the President, the co-chairs of each Policy Advisory Council, the Provincial Campaign Chair(s) and Manager(s) of the Party (if any), the Executive Director of the Party (if any), two representatives of the Caucus, and one representative each of the Youth Association, Campus Association and Women's Association.*

*19.7 The Policy Committee of the Party shall ensure that the Party's policy development process is maintained as a meaningful and effective instrument for the development of policy consistent with the principles of the Party.*

- **Add accountability to the policy and platform development process**

There must be an accountability measure in place that requires the central campaign team to explain the inclusion or exclusion of member-developed policy proposals from the Party platform.

Out of respect for the Party members who participate in the process, the central campaign team should be asked to explain and defend, to the Policy Committee, their decisions on policy recommendations they used, changed, or ignored for the Party platform.

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With such a measure in place, and with the Policy Committee working as specified in the constitution, central campaign officials will be clearly aware of member policy proposals and the need to include the principled ideas of our membership.

- **Follow Richard's proposed plan to jumpstart and complete the policy process in 2012**

Policy Advisory Councils have spent years holding outreach events with members and stakeholders, canvassing supporters and communities, involving riding associations, and, most recently, encouraging feedback through the Internet.

Reports have been written, summaries have been produced, and priorities have been suggested. These reports still exist.

To be battle-ready for an election that could come at any time, we must jumpstart the policy development process, starting from the good work that has already been done. We have to take the most recent PAC reports and conclusions and, through a properly constituted Policy Committee, continue from there. We don't need to start from scratch.

Richard's proposal to complete the policy process respects the hard work that our members and volunteers have been doing for years, and it gives the Party a great deal of principled policy recommendations we can put towards a platform in 2012.

Read Richard's plan to complete the policy process at [www.timetowin.ca/policyprocess](http://www.timetowin.ca/policyprocess).

- **Develop member-driven policy for urban and Northern Ontario**

The electoral math makes one thing very clear: we can no longer write off parts of the province as unwinnable. Not only is that ultimately destructive for our ability to form a government, it discourages our members from these regions.

In addition to our prescribed policy process, we must consider creating an additional PAC or task force to examine policies that appeal to urban voters (in particular, Toronto) and to the North. These may be original policies the Policy Committee can then cross-validate with the relevant PACs, or they could be recommendations from other PACs that are examined through an urban or Northern lens.

Our goals would be to develop policy recommendations that have urban or Northern appeal, and to ensure that our platform does not inadvertently alienate or ignore voters from these important geographic regions. It would also help identify and mitigate any policy recommendations that might hurt our candidates in certain areas of the province.

## IV. Training, Development, and Outreach

The most important support that the Party can provide for members and riding associations is training. Our members need to know about the most up-to-date campaign techniques, member recruitment, fundraising, outreach, and other important local functions if we want strong local teams to win campaigns.

Ongoing training for all Party members also develops teamwork, encourages loyalty among members, gives members life skills they can use in other aspects of their personal lives, and keeps them engaged.

**Strong local teams are critical to winning the next election – and training will be the key to that success.**

The Party provided several opportunities for campaign training in the leadup to the 2011 election, and it was a good start. We must go farther than just campaign training, by providing year-round permanent training for all riding association and volunteer roles.

As the National Vice President of the Conservative Party of Canada from 2005 to 2008, Richard Ciano founded and ran the Conservative Campaign University, an in-person and online resource for members, riding presidents, and campaign managers to learn the best practices of riding associations and local campaigns. **Our Party needs an ongoing training program.**

Training and development must include a focus on youth as well as a significant emphasis on outreach.

**How Richard Ciano will ensure that our Party implements meaningful training, development, and outreach:**

- **Develop and run an ongoing training program for riding associations, Party members, and campaign teams**

Our members need a training program that will teach the latest and most useful campaign skills, as well as riding association management and local activism. Consistent and regular training programs will be run to keep members engaged and to develop skills between elections. It's time to take our volunteers and activists beyond the basic "Campaign 101" training.

Richard Ciano's training plan includes programs for board members, campaign managers, campaign teams, candidates, campus activists, community activists, and official agents. It includes a proposed training calendar for 2012 and 2013.

Training will be available live and on demand over the Internet, on the road in cities across Ontario, and on university campuses.

Read Richard's training plan at [www.timetowin.ca/trainingplan](http://www.timetowin.ca/trainingplan).

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- **Develop a comprehensive outreach plan**

Going to events in the community is not meaningful outreach.

We must recognize the needs and aspirations of those communities where we wish to earn support. This means reminding ourselves (just as with long-time Party members) why people join political parties. People join parties to have a voice and share their ideas, to have their concerns heard, to run as candidates, or to make a difference in their communities. Ethnic communities and other groups are no different. They need to be involved.

Only when we integrate members of these communities and groups into our executive boards, committees, events, deliberations, and policy-making process will we earn their support.

We also need to talk about how our Party principles are in line with their beliefs and why they would be better served by a PC government. We need to understand more about these diverse communities and groups, their traditions, and their goals. We must demonstrate this understanding when we meet with them and attend their functions, and when we conduct Party events.

We must write a plan for meaningful outreach at the Party level, and then work with riding associations and candidates to carry out the same effort locally. For this plan to be a success, we need everyone working together, sharing knowledge and on the same page.

- **Provide tools and expertise to assist member recruitment and fundraising efforts**

Member recruitment and fundraising are the two most difficult tasks of our riding associations. The Party will provide tools, materials, and expertise to help volunteers and activists increase membership, and to build war chests for the next election.

Vice Presidents and regional organizers are a key part of this effort. We must help riding associations learn from one another about recruitment and fundraising techniques, event ideas, and more – discussing both what has worked and what hasn't.

- **Renewed emphasis on youth development**

Our Party's youth are energetic, capable, and enthusiastic, with time to devote and an eagerness to learn. Youth members have told us that they want to participate and know they can play a role in our success. The future of our Party depends on our youth, so training them and developing their skills is one of our most important tasks. This emphasis should include

- training segments devoted to youth activism, including campus activities
- increasing mentorship and internship opportunities
- helping youth organizations engage and recruit young people to our cause
- setting aside a defined budget for youth activities and programs and helping our youth organizations to have meaningful ways to use their funds

As part of the emphasis on youth, we must embrace the contributions that our young PC members have made in developing policy proposals designed to engage young Ontarians and address their needs. These efforts must be formalized as a Youth PAC and their proposals must be welcomed into the Party's PAC process through the Policy Committee for discussion and potential inclusion in Party policies and platforms.

## V. Supports that Work in Ridings

We all know that one size does not fit all. Different ridings have different local needs. While a central message and campaign theme is always paramount, we sometimes need to deliver that message a little bit differently, depending on where we are. Our local campaigns know their strengths and weaknesses, and the local details better than the central campaign team.

Whether it's pre-writ efforts or the election period, local campaigns need to be carried out based on the strategic factors that are only truly understood on the ground. We cannot impose on every riding a single campaign plan with exactly uniform materials and strategy. A one-size-fits-all, cookie-cutter approach does not work.

**Local control of local campaigns and riding associations is crucial to winning.**

Between elections, the Party should provide templates and other materials to riding associations so that they can promote the Party message, hold events, and reach out to communities. These materials and templates must be usable and adaptable for all ridings.

Local campaigns and riding associations must be allowed to make appropriate changes to Party materials, within the central message and Party policy, to suit local issues and their candidates. With ongoing training and respect for local riding associations comes trust that local volunteers will make fair and wise decisions about what's best in their communities.

This approach will carry through to the election campaign. Although the Party Executive is not responsible for producing writ-period campaign materials, the Party President and Executive must use their elected authority to advocate for local campaigns having the flexibility to cater to their unique circumstances without going offside of the central message.

### How Richard Ciano will provide supports that work in ridings:

- **Provide usable sample materials**

Materials provided to riding associations and local campaigns should be in a format that can be edited as they see fit. Riding associations and local campaigns will thrive when their relationship with Party Headquarters and the central campaign team is built on mutual trust and respect, rather than orders and directives. While local teams must adhere to central messaging and the Party platform, the exact photos, graphics, and nuanced text might need to be different in some ridings.

- **Make expertise available to riding associations and local campaigns**

We will ensure riding associations and local campaigns have professional-quality materials, without ordering one-size-fits-all pre-packaged products to be used, by providing local teams with access to resources such as central graphic designers, writers, and the advice of marketing and campaign experts.

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- **Make a member service commitment**

Riding associations and local campaigns need support from the Party Executive and Headquarters on a regular basis to answer questions, to assist with issues, and to help them with their local efforts. When members and volunteers look to the Party Executive or Headquarters for help, the calls and e-mails should be returned promptly and given full attention. More specifically, riding associations and local campaigns that cannot get a satisfactory answer – whether it be during ongoing riding activities, the nomination process, pre-writ efforts, or the election period – must have access to the Party President, who can take their concern to whatever level is required to resolve it.

Richard Ciano makes this commitment and will be your voice in ensuring that your opinions are heard, your issues and questions are given appropriate attention, and that all members and volunteers are respected.



[www.timetowin.ca](http://www.timetowin.ca)