

Whitby Chamber of Commerce Political Engagement Protocol
In effect outside of federal, provincial or municipal election periods

Overview:

The Whitby Chamber of Commerce always takes a non-partisan approach to political engagement, preferring to focus its efforts on sharing information with Chamber members and fostering deep discussion about topics of importance so members can make informed choices and decisions.

We will also support opportunities for our members to share feedback and input with policy makers in order to inform policy and foster a thriving business environment.

In an effort to ensure fairness and maintain neutrality, the following protocol has been developed by the Chamber for general use outside of federal, provincial and municipal election periods. An election period is defined as the day of a writ being issued provincially or federally, and municipally/regionally from the time candidates can begin registering in a given year.

Our intent is to foster meaningful dialogue between those elected officials that influence the business environment and our members.

Criteria for Chamber political engagement:

The Chamber will support opportunities to engage with our membership with the following groups, on a best effort basis:

- The leader of any registered federal political party which holds seats in the House of Commons
- The leader of any registered provincial political party which holds seats in the Ontario Legislature
- Federal or provincial ministers of the Crown*
- Federal or provincial Parliamentary Assistants or Parliamentary Secretaries*
- Opposition Critics from the second or third party, federally or provincially *
- The Chairman of the Region of Durham
- The Mayor of Whitby

*Assuming the Chamber feels their Ministerial, Secretary or Critic role is relevant to Chamber members.

General principles for political engagement:

The Chamber will make best efforts to do the following:

- Foster access to policy makers which we feel have a direct and relevant impact on the business environment which our members operate
- Initiate and host lunches, round-tables, and Q&A sessions as appropriate
- Entertain requests from individuals, or their offices, to have the Chamber host an event as long as they meet the criteria above and accept the following:
 - Any events will be hosted and run by the Chamber for the direct benefit of its membership whose interests will always be held at the forefront
 - The Chamber will control the format and nature of the events and ensure a focus on the needs of its members is the primary concern with relevant topics and opportunities to interact
 - Any introductions will be provided by a representative of the Chamber

The Chamber will not:

- Allow any direct canvassing or distribution of partisan materials at Chamber events, activities or through communication materials
- Endorse or appear to endorse any candidate for election