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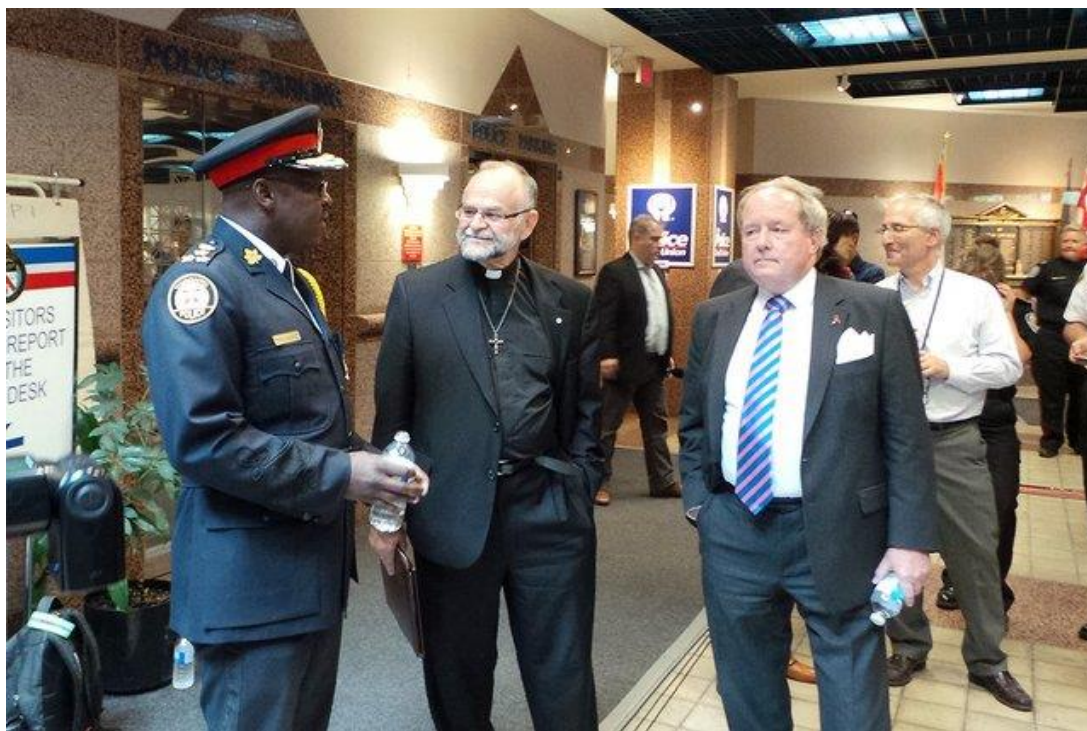
HOME NEWS

POLICE BOARD CHAIR RAISING FUNDS FOR CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP CANDIDATE WHO WANTS TO SCREEN IMMIGRANTS FOR "CANADIAN VALUES"

Civil rights advocates call Andy Pringle's involvement with the Kellie Leitch campaign "dismaying" and "unnerving"

BY JONATHAN GOLDSBIE

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Jonathan Goldsbie Police board chair Andy Pringle, right, with Chief Mark Saunders and Rev. Brent Hawkes, at the chief's 2016 Pride reception on June 22.

Kellie Leitch has been an orthopedic surgeon since 2001. She has been Simcoe-Grey's member of Parliament since 2011. And she has been **the frontrunner** for the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada since the middle of last month, propelled to the head of the pack largely as a result of her proposal to screen potential immigrants **for "Canadian values."** Apparently inspired by a **similar Donald Trump plank**, Leitch is responsible for the most racially charged federal leadership campaign in recent Canadian history.

Andrew Pringle has been the chair of the Toronto Police Services Board since 2015 and a member since 2011. During that period, the group of civilians that oversees and develops policy for the Toronto force has had to navigate — and continues to navigate — many issues concerning the policing of racialized communities, most visibly and notably that of carding. The board has yet to adopt **new provincial regulations** intended to restrain the practise, and it has often been viewed as tone-deaf in appreciating and meaningfully addressing the various forms of marginalization to which police actively contribute.

Pringle is a fundraiser for Leitch's campaign.

Prior to Leitch launching her leadership bid in the spring, **Toronto Star** and **Maclean's** reports even stated that he would be her "chief fundraiser."

"I don't know there's a 'chief fundraiser,' but I'm certainly involved," Pringle tells NOW in an interview. He declines to speak to her policies or whether they complicate his role on the police board, stating that as a matter of principle he doesn't weigh in on the policies of candidates for whom he does fundraising.

But he does publicly back her, if only in a general sense.

"Certainly, I'm supporting the candidate," he says. "I've known her for years."

Pringle is a longtime friend and ally of Mayor John Tory, and served as his chief of staff when Tory was the leader of the Progressive Conservatives at Queen's Park. In addition to his role on the police board, for which he is entitled to annual remuneration of \$90,963, he chairs the boards of the Shaw Festival and Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research, and serves as a partner at RP Investment Advisors.

Anthony Morgan, a Toronto-based civil rights lawyer **with experience advocating** at the police board on matters concerning Black communities, says "there is a dismay, disappointment" that Pringle "wouldn't at least exercise better judgment" in being involved with Leitch's campaign.

“I think the average civilian would see it as contributing to the crisis in confidence that we have in policing within our city,” he says, “because the way in which the public reads this ‘Canadian values’ campaign is as a thinly veiled white supremacist campaign.”

If Pringle, Morgan continues, is “going to be responsible for making very critical decisions on issues of carding, how we police Indigenous communities, [and] how we serve the diverse population that is Toronto, but is comfortable being publicly associated with such a campaign, many...would feel justified in questioning how those kinds of ‘Canadian values’ ideas are being filtered through" the board's decisions.

He points out that Toronto’s Black community is beginning to draw the connection between policing and mass incarceration, such that the issue is no longer just one of being harassed and targeted by officers but the broader, longer-lasting consequences of that approach — one that the police board has a direct role in shaping.

This is the argument. 100%. This is what Kellie Leitch has been talking about. #cdnpoli <https://twitter.com/TheRebelTV/status/777196819923152897> ...
11:16 PM - 18 Sep 2016

Leitch campaign manager Nick Kouvalis — who helped elect both Rob Ford and John Tory to the mayor's office — links to a Rebel segment in which the hosts bemoan the fact that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau didn't use a recent visit to a mosque as an opportunity to lecture Muslims on the appropriateness of gender-separated worship. They do not weigh in on whether similar chiding would be warranted during his next visit to an Orthodox synagogue.

For **Akwasi Owusu-Bempah**, a University of Toronto sociology professor who researches the intersections of race and policing in Toronto, Pringle’s decision to wear both hats is, at best, unwise.

“If you’ve got the person overseeing the police who’s also supporting the campaign of someone who clearly has controversial views about immigrants and about immigration,” he says, “then I don’t see how we can’t make a link between those kinds of views.”

Owusu-Bempah says it raises questions about Pringle’s — and by extension the board’s — ability to develop policies that deal with matters of inclusivity,

diversity, and justice. The dual roles don't surprise him, given the current state of politics more generally, but he does "find it unnerving."

"I think it's probably something that [Pringle] should give serious thought to," says city councillor and police board member Shelley Carroll, whose view of Leitch was informed by the MP's response to questions about childcare at the 2015 conference of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. She recalls that Leitch, then the minister of labour and the status of women, was "visibly temperamental and angry" when the Conservatives' record was challenged during the Q&A following her speech.

"The chair himself has a very public position," Carroll says, "and so if [the Leitch campaign is] looking at a politics of division and that cheap and easy route to gaining a lot of supporters, it may very well be a problem for him. We have our own tensions in the police services board and the police service with the community."