

Aron Seal

2020 Leadership Candidate / Candidat à la chefferie 2020
Conservative Party of Canada / Parti conservateur du Canada



Dear Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) members,

Can a depression sufferer and medicinal cannabis user become Prime Minister?

This, my friends, will be the ballot question in the 2020 Conservative Party of Canada leadership race.

You probably don't know who I am. I'm running for leader despite never having held public office. We have lots of time to get to know each other. For now, on the occasion of Bell Let's Talk Day, let's talk about depression. (Trigger warning: Self-harm, suicide, PTSD.)

I should not have survived my five-year depression. I didn't want to survive. I tried to escape the confines of my mental state many times. My worst attempt left me in a six-day coma at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. I continue to get PTSD flashbacks to the coma dreams. I've been hospitalized at multiple facilities. I've received every kind of psychotherapy imaginable. I've seen Canadian health care at its finest. I've also seen the horrors.

If you'd met me 18 months ago, when I was at my absolute worst, you'd never see me as a candidate for public office. I had no strength and nothing to which to look forward.

Medicinal cannabis brought me back to life.

I'd never touched the stuff before legalization. I was as anti-pot as they come. I only tried it out of depression desperation. I'd already cycled through everything health care has to offer. Cannabis was all there was left. Within a few weeks of starting medicinal cannabis use last year, I was out of bed, moving and thinking. Within months, I was plotting out a business venture, Cfusion Inc. By the fall, I had returned to political activism.

There's no "high", unless I want there to be. It's the opposite. My baseline is "low". I need the help to get to normal. As I rebuild strength, I find myself using less and less with every passing day.

I recovered. Cannabis helped. I could have suffered the fate of Ken Chan, Adam Maier-Clayton or so many others. I was right on the edge. Now that I'm back, with a stronger body and a clear voice, I feel compelled to act.

We, as a country, are not treating mental health care well. We often hear "let's talk", but is anyone listening?

We need to have a hard conversation, together, about the state of mental health care in this country. Despite money pouring into systems from governments of all stripes, wait list lengths and suicide rates continue to rise. What hope are we giving to ourselves and those around us? How can we better help those who struggle to get out of bed like I did? How can we ease the pain of those suffering? These questions matter to me.

I am mentally fit to govern. I am no longer a depression sufferer. I have recovered. I medicate to stay that way. Depression stole five years of my life. It will define me no longer. It's time to change the world.

Best wishes,



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