

# Top Tory organizer denies dirty tricks in last year's election

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A top Conservative organizer is denying any dirty tricks or black ops in the 2011 election, while acknowledging that allegedly fraudulent robo-calls in the riding of Guelph deserve to be investigated by Elections Canada.

Guy Giorno, the former chief of staff to Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservative campaign chair last year, said that he hopes that Elections Canada, with the aid of the RCMP, gets to the bottom of the Guelph controversy. Mr. Giorno said he is concerned by the events in that riding, while he cautioned the situation in Guelph cannot be extrapolated to the rest of the country.

“It looks like there is something worth investigating there and that's a concern to me, to you, to all Canadians because the right to vote is sacrosanct and anyone who wants to mess around with that right, interfere with that right is doing not just the Conservative Party, not just the people of Guelph, but all Canadians a disservice,” Mr. Giorno said on CTV's Question Period.

“I wish Godspeed to Elections Canada and the RCMP investigators. We want them to get to the bottom of this and let's hope the full weight of the law is applied to any and all,” he said.

According to evidence in court documents, a political operative used the alias of “Pierre Poutine” last year to purchase a disposable cell phone and launch robo-calls to direct non-Conservative voters in Guelph to the wrong polling station.

Mr. Giorno insisted the Conservative campaign used a series of legitimate tools, such as phone canvassing, to identify its supporters and get them to the voting station last year.

“When you're running a good campaign, you don't have time for any shenanigans outside those three core activities of identification, persuasion and mobilization [of voters],” he said.

He insisted that internal measures were in place in the Conservative campaign to ensure that his officials did not engage in dirty tricks.

“I'll simply say that our campaign was run with the same standards, the same structure, the same processes that any modern progressive company would use to ensure that its employees, and its agents operate ethically and in compliance with the law,” Mr. Giorno said.

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