

IMPRESSIONS OF SENIOR ONTARIO CABINET MINISTERS

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Six Current Cabinet Ministers Who Could Eventually be in the
Running are Rated in Terms of Their Positive/Negative
Impressions***

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Environment Minister Elizabeth Witmer Most Positive
Impression Ratings, Decided PC Voters Choose Education
Minister Janet Ecker and Health Minister Tony Clement Tops***

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While Premier Harris Says He'll Stay on for the Next Election, Six Current Cabinet Ministers Who Could Eventually be in the Running are Rated in Terms of Their Positive/Negative Impressions

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Toronto, ON — Even though Premier Mike Harris has recently commented that he will stay on to fight the next provincial election, likely in 2003, a poll released today assesses the impressions that both the public and decided PC voters have of six (6) of his Cabinet Ministers who are touted as being potential successors.

As a backdrop, the latest Ipsos-Reid poll on political popularity in the province released last week shows the Harris Tories (34%) trailing the provincial Liberals (52%). The NDP sit at 13%. Further, 60% of decided voters say that it's time for a change in the government with 36% saying that the Harris Tories deserve re-election.

This poll asked respondents and decided voters whether they had an overall positive or negative impression of particular cabinet ministers. The net scores were achieved by calculating the positive impression minus the negative impression, with "no opinion" factored out. It is also important to note that the names of the ministers were read to respondents *without* portfolio attribution.

The results show that from a public perspective, Deputy Premier and Finance Minister Jim Flaherty and Environment Minister Elizabeth Witmer have the best overall impressions

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among the six tested. However, when decided PC voters were asked the same question, the two top cabinet ministers to emerge out of the six in terms of most positive impressions were Education Minister Janet Ecker followed by Health Minister Tony Clement.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CFTO/CFRB poll conducted between August 21 and August 23, 2001. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Ontarians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Ontario population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. The sample also included 299 decided PC voters which carries a margin of error of $\pm 5.8\%$ These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Ontario population according to the 1996 Census data.

The results are as follows:

Name	Positive	Negative	No Opinion	Net
Deputy Premier & Finance Minister James Flaherty	21%	13%	66%	+8%
Environment Minister Elizabeth Witmer	23%	15%	62%	+8%
Health Minister Tony Clement	23%	16%	61%	+7%
Minister of Labour Chris Stockwell	23%	20%	57%	+3%
Municipal Affairs Minister Chris Hodgson	11%	9%	80%	+2%
Education Minister Janet Ecker	26%	26%	48%	$\pm 0\%$

Within the sample of 1,000 respondents, there were 299 who identified themselves as PC decided voters (margin of error $\pm 5.8\%$). When the data is analyzed within this cohort, the following results are identified:

Name	Positive	Negative	No Opinion	Net
Education Minister Janet Ecker	49%	13%	38%	+36%
Health Minister Tony Clement	39%	9%	52%	+30%
Labour Minister Chris Stockwell	36%	7%	57%	+29%
Deputy Premier & Finance Minister James Flaherty	33%	6%	61%	+27%
Environment Minister Elizabeth Witmer	33%	8%	59%	+25%
Municipal Affairs Minister Chris Hodgson	19%	3%	78%	+16%

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