Polling

From: "Ghiassi, Ali (MOF)" <"/o=govon/ou=exchange administrative group (fydibohf23spdlt)/cn=recipients/cn=ghiassi, ali (mof)0ef">
To: "Jackson, Kelly (MOF)" <kelly.jackson2@ontario.ca>, "Clarke, David (MOF)" <david.clarke@ontario.ca>, "Mendes, Elizabeth (MOF)" <elizabeth.mendes@ontario.ca>, "Ingram, Kelsey (MOF)" <kelsey.ingram@ontario.ca>, "Martin, Jessica (MOF)" <jessica.martin@ontario.ca>
Date: Fri, 17 Mar 2017 17:42:25 -0400
Attachments: Ontario spring fiscal survey Gandalf March 2017 TC.pptx (502.1 kB); Ontario Finance Focus Group Research Detailed Findings March 17 2017 TC.doc (92.16 kB)

Happy reading.

Ali Ghiassi
Chief of Staff
Minister of Finance
416.314.7479

-----Original Message-----
From: Ghiassi, Ali (MOF)
Sent: March-17-17 5:40 PM
To: Bevan, Andrew (OPO); Rowe, Mary (OPO); Mksyartinian, Jacob (OPO); McEachern, Gillian (OPO); MacKenzie, Rebecca (OPO)
Subject: Polling

Hi folks,

Please see attached preliminary polling and memo from Gandalf on behalf of Ministry of Finance.

A few things to note in addition to Alex's thorough analysis, as attached in memo:

1. We really need to do drive home the message on the path to balance. It is to date not believable primarily because people do not have an appreciation of the path that we have taken and are unaware of the government's efforts in this regard given the many years of deficit spending. Once the path to balance is properly articulated, believability increases as does the opportunity to take political credit (see sub-bullet one on page 3). It is important that we provide proof points.

2. People make a connection between deficits and lack of government investment and weak economy. I draw your attention to slide 16 where you will see that when prompted, people equate deficits with (a) high taxes and high fees (b) less money to invest in health care and public services and (c) a weak economy. From a comms perspective, it is incumbent on us to draw not only a connection between economic growth and a balanced budget (ie we didn't cut our way to balance) but also to be able clearly say what a balanced budget now means for Ontarians (ie. more money to spend on priorities that are important to them particularly in health care and education). This goes to the Minister's point, made during the cabinet retreat, that the balanced budget gives us the political standing to then set out the plan for future investments with increased political credibility. As a corollary, a balanced budget will also make it easier for us to convince Ontarians that indeed we are leaders in economic growth.

3. You will see that the top 3 priorities in terms of investments are in line with our budget focus: (a) reducing electricity (b) investing in health care (c) investing in skills (which includes tuition). On this last point, it would seem that there is little differentiation between youth and adult education in terms of preference (slide 19). Nonetheless, given the limited resources in the HSW envelope, it is understandable that we will be putting more emphasis on the former over the latter, at least for now.

4. There is substantial support for increase in PIT for those making over $200K, but not so much for increasing corporate taxes (slide 21). With respect to corporate taxes, people connect any increase to resulting job losses. There seems to be little to no interest in lowering corporate taxes. I'm trying to get the numbers for this.

-A

Ali Ghiassi
Chief of Staff
Minister of Finance
416.314.7479