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OMSSA Ontario Provincial Attitudinal Poll: Executive Summary of Key Findings

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Poll Methodology

The OMSSA Ontario Provincial Attitudinal Poll was conducted via IVR Telephone methodology from May 23-26, 2014.

N=1,137 interviews were conducted. After data cleaning for speeders and outliers the final sample size for the data set was N=1,106.

The estimated margin of error (MoE) for this sample size is +/- 3% at a confidence interval of 95%. The MoE for subsamples is larger than the main sample. This report highlights the aggregate (total) findings

Key Findings

Social Service Usage Findings

- Overall, 51% of those polled indicated that they, or someone in their family, have made use of Social Services. Social Service Usage was found to be significantly lower among those aged 65+ when compared to other age groups (35%).

Responsibility Attitudes

- Over half of those polled think the government should take full responsibility to ensure the population is provided for (54%). This sentiment was significantly stronger among those who indicated that they, or their families, had used Social Services (61%, compared to 47% who did not). When it came to provincial party preference those who would vote Conservative were significantly less likely to share this sentiment (37%).

Most Serious Community Issues

- The most serious community issues according to respondents were 'peopling living in poverty' (28%), followed by 'affordable housing' (25%), and 'youth unemployment' (20%).
- Those who think the government should take responsibility for ensuring the population is provided for were significantly more likely to be concerned with people living in poverty (33%, compared to 19% who think people should take care of themselves).
- Affordable housing was of significantly more concern to those who have used social services compared to those who have not (29%, compared to 20%), and among those aged



25-34 when compared to older residents (40%). This issue was also of significant concern to those living in the Northeast (49%), and Toronto (31%) when compared to those living in other regions.

Economic Development Priorities

- When it came to priorities surrounding economic development a sizeable portion of the population ranked all provided items as high priority. Respondents were most likely to rate encouraging the development of existing businesses and labour markets as a high priority (54%), followed by the development of new industries for youth employment (48%), and planning for their local communities' economic future (42%).
- Those who think the government should take full responsibility to ensure the population is provided for were significantly more likely than those who think people should provide for themselves to rate involving more citizens in planning for the local community's economic future as a high priority (51%, compared to 30%).

Social Assistance Statement Agreement

- Respondents were asked about their agreement levels with a series of statements regarding Social Assistance. It was found that agreement was highest for the statement 'housing subsidies help people in difficult times' (77% top 2 box), followed somewhat distantly by 'social assistance enables low income parents to stay home and be available to meet their children's needs (58%). Agreement levels were considerably lower for the statements 'housing subsidies create dependency' (51%), and 'single parent households are a direct result of the way Social Assistance is set up' (34%).

Social Service Funding

- When asked which statement was closest to their opinion regarding Social Service Funding the majority of Ontarians selected 'believe people should receive social services if they are having difficult times through no fault of their own' (56%), followed by 'believe social services should be paid for by everyone through taxes' (28%). Considerably less chose options 'believe those who use social services should pay for them through user fees' (10%).



Government Handling of Community Issues

Government on Right Track

- When asked which track Ontarians felt the government was on regarding community issues, few overall said the government was on the 'right track'. The issues that Ontarians were most likely to indicate were on the 'right track' were child care (34%), needs of seniors (31%), and social assistance or welfare (26%).

Government on Wrong Track

- The core community issues that were seen as being on the 'wrong track' were employment (54%), affordable housing (53%), and social assistance or welfare (50%).

Unsure whether on Right or Wrong Track

- Important to note is the relatively high level of unawareness regarding which track the government is on with a wide variety of community issues. Of particular note was settlement services for newcomers (39%), needs of aboriginal communities (37%), and the needs of youth (35%).

Level of Quality of Services in Community

- Overall, relatively few Ontarians rated the level of quality of services in their community as 'excellent' or 'good'. The highest rated services were services for people with disabilities (32% top 2 box), services for immigrants (31%), and child care (30%). It should be noted that a significant number of Ontarians indicated they 'don't know' enough to rate the services. This was especially true of aboriginal services (39%), services for immigrants (33%), and addiction services (29%).

Quality of Services Movement (Past 2 Years)

- Overall, only 1 in 10 Ontarians think the quality of services in their community has improved in the past 2 years (10%). Just over 4 in 10 think it has stayed the same (41%), with 1 in 5 thinking it has worsened (20%). Just shy of 1 in 3 said they were unsure (29%).
- Those living in the West region were significantly more likely to indicate quality has worsened (32%, compared to 20% average), as were current provincial NDP party supporters (32%).