

July 2023

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## NEW STAFF IN LABOUR MINISTER'S OFFICE

It's been reported that Minister of Labour Immigration Training and Skills Development, Monte McNaughton, has made some additions to his political staff:

- Giancarlo Da-Re signed onto the Minister's political staff in May according to Da-Re's LinkedIn page, after earning a BSc at McMaster (2020) and completing an MA at the UofT (2023)
- Caitlyn Drexler (BA, Wilfred Laurier University, 2020, MA Wilfred Laurier University 2021) also joined the Minister's team in May after a two-year stint with the Tourism Industry Association of Canada
- Noah Hughes (BA UofT 2023) who previously served in the Minister's Office as a policy intern is now the Minister's executive assistant
- Former EA, Amber Aber, is now policy, public appointments and agencies advisor

### Rumours and More Rumours About Career Moves

It's also rumoured that Philip Power, currently senior advisor, stakeholder relations, will be leaving the Minister's Office in the fall to attend law school.

It's also believed but not confirmed that the affable Brandon Crandall has left the Ministers Office to succeed Walid Abou-Hamde in the VP corporate affairs and partnerships role at Skilled Trades Ontario.

Abou-Hamde, a former McNaughton political staffer who was shifted over to STO to keep tabs on the new agency for the Minister, is rumoured to have taken a job with the Ontario Road Builders Association (ORBA) succeeding Andrew Hurd.

Not a rumour but a fact, Andrew Hurd is now the executive director of the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies-Ontario Three More Mobile Classrooms to Promote Skilled Trades Careers

## NDP MPP RESIGNS SEAT

As she had signalled earlier this year, NDP MPP Laura Mae Lindo officially resigned her seat in the Ontario legislature on July 13th. She represented the Kitchener Centre riding and was first elected in 2018, defeating the incumbent Liberal and then re-elected in 2022. The mother of three children, Lindo had struggled with the lack of childcare for legislators as she commuted weekly between her riding and Queen's Park. She has taken a job at the University of Waterloo. The Premier has six months to set the date for a by-election in the riding.

## THREE MORE MOBILE CLASSROOMS TO PROMOTE SKILLED TRADES CAREERS

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Skills Ontario will receive \$5.4 million from the Ontario government to purchase three more mobile classrooms to travel across the province and let young people try their hand at various skilled trades careers. Skills Ontario already has one mobile classroom purchased more than a year ago which has been a prominent and popular attraction at career fairs, construction trade shows and high schools across the province.

If you haven't been aboard, it's a mobile unit full of exciting and fun experiential learning with activities and simulators that allow youth to explore skilled trades in a unique and hands-on way. The truck has activities and modules in the following fields:

- Virtual Paint
- Electrical Wall
- Pneumatics
- Tires and Breaks
- Heavy Machinery Simulator
- Hybrid Planetary Gearset
- Welding
- Tool Exploration
- Try on a Trade
- Walk a Trade
- Fire Alarm Systems
- Rotating Activities Station

The new units, yet to be designed (likely to be an updated, more flexible design), built and delivered, will multiply Skills Ontario's reach and cement the organization's position as the pre-eminent promoter of skilled trades careers in Canada. Many thanks to the Government of Ontario for making this important investment and congratulations to Ian Howcroft and his team at Skills Ontario for everything they do for skilled trades careers.

To take a virtual tour of Skills Ontario's mobile classroom, click on the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfOtRgcci94>

## PC SUPPORT EDGES AHEAD DESPITE DISAPPROVAL ON KEY ISSUES – RECENT POLL

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Abacus Data conducted a poll of 1,000 Ontario adults prior to the July 27th by elections. Here are the highlights:

- If a provincial election was held at the time of the survey, 41% of respondents said they would vote PC (up 5% from Abacus' June poll), 24% said they would vote Liberal (down 3%), 23% NDP (down 3%), 7% Green (up 1%), and 5% other (up 1%)
- Tory support is spread evenly across the province except for the North; 36% of respondents in Toronto favour the PCs, 44% in the GTHA, 44% in southwest Ontario, 42% in eastern Ontario but only 25% in the North
- In terms of overall approval or disapproval of Premier Ford and his government, 35% of respondents said they approve while 43 % disapprove
- When asked if Premier Ford and his government are genuinely focused and working hard on 11 key issues, responses ranged from 70% saying not enough focus on housing affordability to 43% saying not enough focus on improving public transit; the government was underwater on all 11 issues
- Respondents were asked to grade the government's performance between 1 to 10 on the same 11 key issues and the average responses on each issue ranged from 3.3 on "making life more affordable for you" to 4.5 for "improving public transit".
- 54% of respondents said the decisions made by Premier Ford and his government have been made primarily for what's in the best interest of his friends and supporters while 27% said decisions have been made for the best interest of people living in Ontario

The complete survey is available by clicking on the following link:

<https://abacusdata.ca/fords-ontario-pcs-lead-by-17/>

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## ARBITRATOR AWARDS INCREASE TO HOSPITAL NURSES & HEALTHCARE WORKERS

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An arbitrator awarded nurses and healthcare workers in Ontario hospitals with an average 11% wage increase over two years. Bill 124, which became law on November 7, 2019, limited broader public sector wage increases to 1% per year for three years and the arbitrator's award was the first labour settlement since the Bill's expiration period.

The courts found Bill 124 to be unconstitutional, a decision being appealed by the government. If Bill 124 is overturned, additional increases could be due across the affected workforce.

## LIBERALS SWEEP ONTARIO'S TWO BY-ELECTIONS

The Liberal Party of Ontario won both Ontario by-elections held yesterday.

In Kanata-Carleton, a riding that former PC MPP and cabinet minister, Merrilee Fullerton won handily with more than 43% of the vote in 2018 and 2022, former Liberal MP Karen McCrimmon narrowly defeated Tory candidate Sean Webster with 35.35% of the vote to Webster's 32.33% or a little more than 600 votes.

The Tories campaigned hard for Webster in an attempt to keep the riding in the blue column but those with their thumbs on the pulse of the riding believe that Ford's inaction during the truckers' occupation of the nation's capital during the pandemic and local healthcare issues turned the tide.

In Scarborough-Guildwood, a solid Grit riding, Liberal flagbearer Andrea Hazell bested the Tory candidate Gary Crawford 36.55% to 29.57% with NDP nominee Thadsha Navaneethan close behind with 26.19%.

Once the new members are sworn in, the standings in the 124 seat legislature will be:

PC – 81 seats

NDP – 29 seats

Liberal – 9 seats

Green – 1

Independents – 3

Vacant - 1



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