

# MPP, MP back Christine Elliott for PC leadership bid

By FRANCIS BAKER  
Special to the IFP

Progressive Conservative leadership hopeful Christine Elliott has garnered the support of two prominent local Conservatives.

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott and his federal counterpart Michael Chong both endorsed Elliott for the party leadership at a special event last Friday afternoon at Fraberts Fresh Food in Fergus.

Chong, Arnott and Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones introduced Elliott, who made a short

speech and stayed to talk to about 50 staff, friends and supporters who filled the store.

"We really need to build the big blue tent," she said, rather than focus on being rigid ideologues. The party needs to reach out to people with "what it means to be a Progressive Conservative." That means going beyond the fiscal conservative policies that are the core of the party's message and reaching out to the less fortunate, helping those who are disadvantaged, creating services for those dealing with mental illness or developmental difficulties—and



Wellington-Halton Hills MP Michael Chong with PC leadership hopeful Whitby-Oshawa MPP Christine Elliott.

reaching out to young people and women, she said.

Others trying for the leadership are MPPs Lisa MacLeod, Monte

McNaughton and Vic Fedeli, and MP Patrick Brown—and Elliott is considered the frontrunner of the group in recent polls.

Elliott's vision for the PC party would take it back to its roots and make it the inclusive party of the past, MP Chong said. The party that was the first to appoint a female federal cabinet minister and elect the first Jewish party leader, for example.

"Christine is the only leader who can get the province back on track" as the economic engine of the country that it once was, he said. "Sadly,

today that's no longer the case ... Under the Liberal gov't. Ontario has become a have-not province."

Arnott, who supported Elliott in her 2009 leadership bid, also said she would be the best premier of Ontario. "And while she is a resolute defender of conservative principles, including the need to balance the budget and ensure a competitive business climate, she is not a rigid ideologue," Arnott said. "In the Legislature, she has always been prepared to reach across party lines, if that's what it takes to get the job done."

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