



# Factum

## Despite Tumultuous Month, Ontario Tories (38%) Remain in Driver's Seat over Liberals (29%), NDP (26%)

### Patrick Brown's Favourability Ratings Eclipse Premier Wynne's; Brown Performs Slightly Better than Leadership Rivals in Hypothetical Election Matchups against Wynne and Horwath

**Toronto, Ontario, Feb 22, 2018** — Despite a tumultuous month for the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, a new Ipsos poll conducted exclusively for Global News reveals that the PCs remain in the driver's seat. If an election were held tomorrow, the Ontario PCs would receive 38% of the decided popular vote, up 2 points since December. The incumbent Liberals would receive 29% (up 1 point) and the NDP would receive 26% (down 2 points). Other parties, including the Green Party, would receive 7% of the vote (down 2 points). Seven percent (7%) say they'd spoil their ballot or would not vote, while 18% of Ontarians are unsure of how they'd mark their ballot. It is worth noting, given that the PCs have an *interim* leader at present, that in Ipsos' standard popular-vote question, the leader of each party is **not** prompted.

The key to winning the election is in the GTA – specifically the **905**. It is here where the Tories have opened up a sizeable lead, with 40% opting for the PCs compared to 26% for the Liberals, 27% for the NDP and 7% for some other party. Even in the **416**, the Tories are competitive, with the PCs (37%) statistically tied with the Grits (33%), and ahead of the NDP (25%) and others (5%).

While there has been a significant improvement (up 5 points) in the degree to which Ontarians approve of the performance of the Liberal government under Premier Kathleen Wynne (31% approve – 5% strongly/26% somewhat), the vast majority remain firm in their belief that it is time for another party to take over at Queen's Park (80%, down 1 point). Just two in ten (20%, up 1 point) believe that the Wynne government deserves re-election.

Looking at the alternatives, half (49%) of Ontarians believe that the PCs have the best chance of defeating Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal Party in the upcoming election. One quarter (24%) feel that the NDP has the best chance at doing this, while about the same proportion (27%) think that the Liberals will be re-elected.

As the Progressive Conservatives are in the midst of a leadership race, Ipsos polled Ontarians to gauge favourability towards some of the PC leadership candidates as well as other political figures in the province. The data reveal that Andrea Horwath has the highest favourability rating (at 30% very/somewhat favourable) out of anyone tested. Most of the PC leadership candidates are clustered quite close to each other and all of them outperform Premier Wynne on favourability. A random name – Jim Smith – was added to the poll as a test, to see how an unknown, no-name candidate would fare in the election, and to provide a point of comparison against some of the declared candidates. A few interesting conclusions:

- Patrick Brown's positive favourability rating is slightly higher to that of Premier Wynne's (at 18% for Brown vs. 16% for Wynne), but the Premier has a much higher percentage of unfavourable ratings (62% unfavourable for Wynne vs. 26% for Brown).

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- None of the PC candidates is standing out from the pack in terms of being more well liked than others. However, Doug Ford has significantly higher “unfavourable” ratings (38%).
- Andrea Horwath’s favourability ratings are stronger than anybody else tested.

### Impressions of each Individual

Person	% Favourable	% neutral	% unfavourable	% don’t know
Kathleen Wynne	16%	15%	62%	8%
Andrea Horwath	30%	30%	17%	24%
Doug Ford	23%	24%	38%	15%
Caroline Mulroney	21%	29%	11%	30%
Christine Elliott	21%	33%	10%	36%
Patrick Brown	18%	33%	26%	22%
Jim Smith	5%	29%	6%	60%

Further, at three quarters (77%) of Ontarians, a strong majority feel that Patrick Brown should be allowed to run for PC leadership should the allegations of sexual misconduct against him be proven false.

Ipsos tested how each of these potential leaders of the PC Party might fare in an election against Kathleen Wynne and Andrea Horwath. The results showed that a PC Party led by Christine Elliott, Caroline Mulroney, Doug Ford and even Patrick Brown would all defeat the Liberals and NDP. The only scenario tested which didn’t see the PCs winning was the one led by random-name Jim Smith – which resulted in victory for the NDP. In each scenario (which prompted the name of the Party leader), the Liberals fail to win the popular vote.

### % of Popular Vote among Decided Voters

With who as leader of Progressive Conservative Party?	% PC Vote	% Liberal Vote	% NDP Vote	% Other Party
Christine Elliott	37%	22%	30%	11%
Caroline Mulroney	38%	22%	30%	11%
Doug Ford	39%	24%	27%	10%
Jim Smith	29%	24%	35%	12%
Patrick Brown	40%	23%	27%	10%

There is very little differentiation in the result of the election based on which of the declared candidates is leading the PC Party, with Patrick Brown being marginally ahead (although not statistically significant). Interestingly, when party leader is prompted (both for the PCs and for other parties), the Liberals perform worse under Kathleen Wynne than when the party leader is not prompted (as is typically the case with Ipsos’ vote question), thus further reinforcing the relative unpopularity of the Premier.

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### About the Study

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between February 15 and 19, 2018, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 802 Ontarians aged 18+ from Ipsos' online panel was interviewed online, supplemented by river-based sampling. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within  $\pm 4.0$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Ontarian adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.*

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