



Factum

Tory Lead Continues with New Leader Doug Ford, Opponents Prefer Liberals to Stop Him

**PCs (39%, +1) still Lead over Liberals (32%, +3) while
NDP (25%, -1) and Others Trail (3%, -4)**

Toronto, Ontario, March 15, 2018 — Despite the high drama associated with the selection of Doug Ford as the new leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, little has changed in terms of Party support. The PCs maintain their lead with 39% (+1 point), the Liberals are in solid second at 32% (+3 points), with the NDP in third at 25% (-1 point). Most importantly though, the PCs maintain a 7-point lead in the seat-rich 905, where Ontario's elections are decided. Other parties, including the Green Party, would receive 3% of the vote (-4 points) provincially. Nearly two in ten Ontarians are either undecided (11%) or say they wouldn't vote (5%), according to the Ipsos poll conducted exclusively for Global News.

With support for the PCs relatively unchanged, it is explained by the fact that a large majority of PC voters are pleased with the outcome of the leadership contest: eight in ten (79%) PC voters agree (38% strongly/41% somewhat) that they're happy that Doug Ford is now in the race to become Ontario's next Premier, and a similar proportion (82%) agrees (37% strongly/45% somewhat) that Doug Ford is exactly the type of leader that Ontario needs at this point. However, Ontarians overall aren't as enthused: only 46% agree (16% strongly/30% somewhat) that they're happy that Doug Ford is in the race, and only 44% agree (16% strongly/28% somewhat) that Doug Ford is exactly the type of leader that Ontario needs. In short, his presence motivates his Tory base, while further alienating his detractors. In fact, fully one half (52%) of non-PC voters agree (25% strongly/27% somewhat) that they were considering voting for the PC Party in this next election, but they "just can't vote for a Party led by Doug Ford".

As anti-Ford voters look for their best opportunity to keep Doug Ford out of office, it appears that they are beginning to consolidate under the Liberal banner. Moreover, now having a clearer picture of the alternatives, opinions about Premier Kathleen Wynne and her government are improving:

- One quarter (26%) now believe that the Wynne government has done a good job and deserves re-election, up 6 points since February 20th. Conversely, 74% believe it's time for another party to take over (down 6 points).
- Nearly four in ten (36%) approve (7% strongly/28% somewhat) of the performance of the Liberal government in Ontario under the leadership of Premier Wynne, up 5 points. Conversely, two in three (64%) 'disapprove' (40% strongly/24% somewhat), down 5 points.

Even with these improved figures, clearly there are still headwinds against the Liberal government's path to re-election, although they're not quite as strong as they were just a few weeks ago. Chief among their challenges is that relatively few believe that Wynne would continue to make the best Premier of Ontario: NDP Leader Andrea Horwath (41%) comes out as the preferred choice of Ontarians, followed by PC Leader Doug Ford (36%) and then Liberal Leader and current Premier Kathleen Wynne (23%). Even among current Liberal voters, 30% don't pick Wynne as the party leader who would make the best Premier, with 20% siding with Horwath,

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and 10% Doug Ford. By comparison, 84% of PC voters believe Ford would make the best Premier and 92% of NDP voters believe Horwath would make the best Premier.

Another challenge for Premier Kathleen Wynne is her favourability ratings. Just 23% of Ontarians view her favourably, well behind the proportion who view Doug Ford (33%) or Andrea Horwath (39%) favourably – all of whom are behind the 45% of Ontarians who view Justin Trudeau favourably. On the other end of the spectrum, 60% view Kathleen Wynne unfavourably, significantly ahead of the 41% who say the same about Doug Ford, Justin Trudeau (37%) or Andrea Horwath (14%).

Expectations of how the vote will fall out on E-day could be impacting Ontarians' current vote preferences. Looking ahead to June 7th...

- Half (49%) believe the Tories will win, whether it be a majority (24%) or minority (24%) government.
- One in three (35%) believe the Liberals will be re-elected, with more believing it would be a minority (20%) than a majority (15%).
- Two in ten (17%) see the NDP being victorious, with more believing it will be a minority (10%) government than a majority (6%).

What this means is that Ontarians are actually more likely to expect a minority (55%) government than a majority (45%).

Thinking about which party they believe poses the best chance of defeating Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals, the balance tips decidedly in the favour of the PCS (53%) over the NDP (23%), which in part explains the NDP's lagging popular support, despite the popularity of its leader, Andrea Horwath.

About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between March 12 and 14, 2018, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 803 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 ± 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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