



Factum

Seven in Ten (71%) Ontarians Prefer Spending cuts to Deficits (17%) or Increased Taxes (12%)

Four in Ten (41%) Say Balancing the Books is a “Top Priority”; Doug Ford Seen as Best Candidate to Handle Ontario’s Finances

Toronto, ON, May 16, 2018 — To handle Ontario’s finances moving forward, seven in ten (71%) Ontarians would prefer that the provincial government cut spending to balance the budget, rather than continuing to run deficits (17%) or raise taxes (12%), according to an Ipsos poll conducted exclusively for Global News. Ontario’s debt now stands at over \$300 billion, and Ontarians appear to be looking for someone who can balance the province’s books.

Preference to cut spending is highest among residents of the Southwest and the 905. Conservative voters are significantly more likely to favour spending cuts than those supporting other parties (89% of PCs vs. 52% of Liberals vs. 59% of NDP), but a majority of every party’s supporters wants to rein in spending.

In fact, four in ten (41%) Ontarians say **balancing the budget** is a “top priority”, while a similar proportion (38%) believes that **paying down Ontario’s debt** is a “top priority”. In general, whether it’s balancing the budget, or paying down debt, Conservative voters are more likely to indicate these are *top priorities* for the province.

- **Balancing the budget** is a “top priority” for 59% of Conservative voters vs. 29% of NDP and 29% of Liberal voters;
- **Paying down Ontario’s debt** is a “top priority” for 53% of Conservative voters vs. 28% of NDP and 23% of Liberal voters.

One third (34%) of Ontarians believe Doug Ford would do the best job of managing Ontario’s finances. In comparison, 26% of Ontarians believe Andrea Horwath would do the best job, while only 13% believe the same of Wynne. Nearly three in ten (28%) have no faith in any of the candidates’ abilities to handle Ontario’s finances, indicating none of the candidates would do the best job.

But as candidates continue to lay out their financial strategy for the province, a majority of Ontarians are looking for solutions steering away from running deficits, increased spending and raising taxes. In fact, eight in ten (83%) Ontarians agree since we’re not in a recession, the province should be balancing the budget, and seven in ten (69%) agree reducing taxes to give more money to Ontarian families would do a better job stimulating the economy than spending on infrastructure projects. Six in ten (61%) agree that they would rather the government cut spending on services than run a larger budget deficit.

Asked if Ontarians are willing to put more skin in the game to avoid deficits, only a minority (27%) of Ontarians would rather the government raise taxes on people like me than run a larger budget deficit.

By contrast, less than half (45%) agree stimulating the economy through deficits and infrastructure spending is the right thing to do right now, and less than one in three (27%) believe running deficits in Ontario is no big deal.

Address: 160 Bloor Street East, Suite 300
Toronto, ON M4W 1B9
Tel: +1 416 324-2900

Contact: **Darrell Bricker, PhD**
CEO, Ipsos Global Public Affairs
Email: Darrell.Bricker@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 416 324-2001



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While there is strong agreement across all voters that the province should be balancing its budget, there is still significant variance across parties. Conservatives agree with reducing taxes and spending cuts, while Liberal voters are content with running deficits, and NDP supporters are most likely to advocate for tax increases.

	Conservative voters % agree	Liberal voters % agree	NDP voters % agree
Since we're not in a recession, the province should be balancing the budget.	88%	76%	82%
Reducing taxes to give more money to Ontarian families would do a better job stimulating the economy than spending on infrastructure projects.	79%	65%	62%
I would rather the government cut spending on services than run a larger budget deficit.	80%	54%	50%
Stimulating the economy through deficits and infrastructure spending is the right thing to do right now.	30%	67%	57%
Running deficits in Ontario is no big deal.	16%	46%	33%
I would rather the government raise taxes on people like me than run a larger budget deficit.	24%	33%	36%

Knowledge of Ontario's Debt

While tackling debt is a top priority for many Ontarians, only one third (32%) could correctly indicate that the Ontario debt is more than \$300 billion. Most (40%) admitted that they have no idea how large Ontario's debt is, and one in three (28%) answered incorrectly, indicating it was either \$200 - \$299 billion (11%), \$100-\$200 billion (11%), or less than \$100 billion (6%).

Conservative voters were most likely to be aware that the Ontario debt is more than \$300 billion. Liberal, NDP and other party voters were more likely to say they had no idea the size of Ontario's debt.

About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between May 11 to 14, 2018, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1000 Ontarians eligible to vote and 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 ± 3.5 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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Tel: +1 416 324-2001



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For more information on this news release, please contact:

Darrell Bricker, CEO
Ipsos Global Public Affairs
+1 416 324 2001
Darrell.Bricker@ipsos.com

Sean Simpson, Vice President
Ipsos Public Affairs, Canada
+1 416 324 2002
Sean.Simpson@ipsos.com

Address: 160 Bloor Street East, Suite 300
Toronto, ON M4W 1B9
Tel: +1 416 324-2900

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