



Factum

As Writ Drops on Ontario Election Campaign, Tories (40%) Remain Early Favourites Over NDP (29%), Liberals (26%)

Ontarians Split on whether they Prefer Majority (49%) or Minority Government (51%)

Minority Tory Government Supported by NDP Most Popular Minority Scenario

Toronto, Ontario, May 8, 2018 — As the Ontario election campaign officially gets underway this week with the dropping of the writ on Wednesday May 9th, a new Ipsos poll conducted exclusively for Global News finds that the PCs are the early favourites in the horserace that ends on June 7th.

If the election were held tomorrow, the Progressive Conservatives under Doug Ford would receive 40% of the decided popular vote, unchanged from an Ipsos poll conducted in early April. The NDP, led by Andrea Horwath, would receive 29% of the decided popular vote, up 1 point, while Premier Kathleen Wynne and the incumbent Liberals would receive 26% of the vote, down 1 point. Other parties, including the Green Party, would receive 5% of the vote, unchanged. Nearly two in ten Ontarians eligible to vote are either unsure (10%) of who they would vote for, or say they would not vote (8%).

The key to winning the election is to dominate in the most-populous regions of the province:

- In the **905** – the most important region of the campaign – the PCs (44%) have a commanding lead over the NDP (29%), Liberals (24%), and others (3%), and a strong showing in this growing and seat-rich region would likely have the Tories knocking on the door of a majority government.
- In the **416** – the Tories (35%) and Liberals (33%) are tied for support, with the NDP (26%) not far behind, while other parties (6%) trail.
- In **Southwest** Ontario, the PCs (43%) have a solid lead over the NDP (33%) and Liberals (17%), while other parties fall behind (7%).
- In **Central** Ontario, the Tories (41%) also hold a solid lead over the NDP (29%), Liberals (23%) and others (7%).
- In **Eastern** Ontario, the Liberals (36%) are ahead of the PCs (30%) and NDP (29%), with other parties (5%) behind.
- In **Northern** Ontario, the PCs (47%) lead the Liberals (27%), NDP (23%) and others (3%).

Not only do the Tories lead in most of the regions, but also among many of the other key demographic groups studied:

- Among **men**, the Tories (48%) have a commanding lead over the Liberals (25%), NDP (25%).
- Among **women**, the NDP (34%) and the PCs (33%) are tied for first, while the Liberals (27%) are further behind.

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- Among **Millennials aged 18-34**, a three-way race among the NDP (34%), PCs (30%) and Liberals (29%) emerges.
- Among **Gen Xers aged 35-54**, the Tories (44%) have a commanding lead over the NDP (27%) and Liberal (24%).
- Among **Boomers aged 55+**, the Tories (44%) are also significantly ahead of the NDP (28%) and Liberals (25%).
- The Tories also lead among every **income** group studied.

The Progressive Conservatives also appear to have the most committed voters: 58% of PC voters say they're absolutely certain about their vote choice, while only 34% of Liberal voters and 27% of NDP voters say the same. These results suggest there is still ample time for a shift in vote preferences, particularly among non-PC voters.

The NDP is the most popular 2nd choice for Ontario voters and as such has the most room to grow. Three in ten (30%) would pick the NDP as their second choice, while significantly fewer say the same about the Liberals (15%) or PCs (13%). Two in ten (20%) would choose some other party, while 22% don't know who they'd pick as their second choice.

The NDP's growth would primarily come from current Liberal voters: 55% of whom would choose the NDP as their second choice, compared to only 15% who would choose the PCs as their second choice. PC voters are also more likely to pick the NDP (35%) than the Liberals (15%) as their second choice, while NDP voters are equally as likely to pick the Liberals (31%) as the PCs (30%) as their second choice.

Three Quarters (74%) of Ontarians Want Change at Queen's Park

Three quarters (74%, down 3 points) of Ontarians believe that it is time for another provincial party to take over at Queen's Park, while just 23% (unchanged) believe the Wynne government has done a good job and deserves re-election.

Approval ratings are similarly depressed for the Liberals. Just three in ten (29%, down 1 point) approve (6% strongly/23% somewhat) of the performance of the Liberal Government of Ontario under Premier Kathleen Wynne, while most (70%, unchanged) Ontarians disapprove (44% strongly/25% somewhat), and 1% doesn't know.

Underscoring the main reason why the Tories are in the lead in this "change election", six in ten (64%, up 4 points) say that the PCs have the best chance of defeating Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals in the election. By comparison, only 22% (unchanged) think the NDP has the best chance, while 14% (down 4 points) insist that the Liberals will be re-elected. In fact, only 40% of NDP voters believe they pose the best chance of defeating the Liberals.

While the NDP is in 2nd place, they will likely only surge if a critical mass believes that they hold the best chance of stopping Doug Ford from becoming Premier. Currently, 41% believe the Liberals have the best chance of stopping a Ford government, while 25% think the NDP is the best bet. One in three (34%) insist that neither has a chance and the Conservatives will win the election. Presently, the anti-Ford vote has yet to consolidate around the NDP, and if the anti-Ford vote continues to split between the Grits and the Dippers, the PCs will win the election easily.

Ontarians Split on Preference for Majority or Minority

There is no clear consensus on what Ontarians want to see on June 7. Half (51%) believe the best outcome of the election would be a minority government, while the other half (49%) prefers a majority government.

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Among those who want a majority, they favour the Tories (50%) over the Liberals (26%) or NDP (24%). Among those who want a minority, they favour the NDP (49%) over the PCs (26%) and Liberals (25%).

The chart below displays the overall percent who prefer each type of government and who should lead it.

Government	% favour
Majority PC	24%
Majority NDP	12%
Majority Liberal	13%
Minority PC	13%
Minority NDP	25%
Minority Liberal	13%

Interestingly, aggregating the scores above suggests that a NDP-led government is just as preferred as a PC-led government, but there is a strong preference for that NDP government to be a minority, not a majority.

Testing various scenarios of minority government shows that only one scenario has the support of a majority of Ontarians: a **Conservative minority government supported by the NDP**. Interestingly, the top 4 scenarios all include the NDP, either leading or supporting a minority government. Ontarians, apparently, do not want the Liberals and Conservatives working together.

Minority Scenario	% support (strongly/somewhat)
Conservatives governing with support from NDP	56% (12%/44%)
NDP governing with support from the Liberals	49% (15%/34%)
NDP governing with support from the PCs	47% (9%/38%)
Liberals governing with support from the NDP	43% (14%/29%)
The Conservatives governing with support from the Liberals	34% (7%/27%)
The Liberals governing with support from the Conservatives	28% (6%/21%)

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*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between May 4 and 7, 2018, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,197 Ontario eligible voters was interviewed **online** (789 Ontarian eligible voters aged 18+ from Ipsos' online panel were interviewed online, supplemented by river-based sampling) and by **telephone** (408 Ontarian eligible voters aged 18+ via live-operator random-digit dialing, dual-frame cellphone and landline). 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 ± 3.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all eligible Ontario voters 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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