



## FACTUM

# Healthcare and Affordability Increasingly Top of Mind for Voters While COVID-19 Takes a Back Seat Entering Home Stretch of Campaign

### NDP Leads on Healthcare, while Tories Cling to Narrow Lead on Affordability

**Toronto, ON, May 30, 2022** – High inflation, rising interest rates and dipping financial markets are weighing on the minds of Ontarians as a new Ipsos poll conducted exclusively for Global News shows a consolidation of the top issues driving vote-choice: healthcare and helping households weather the inflation storm. As candidates are redoubling efforts to keep turnout energized and to convince the remaining undecideds, Ontarians have locked in on the issues that matter most to them as they cast their ballot.

Four in 10 (38%, +7 pts since last month) Ontarians say that healthcare is the most important issue determining their vote choice, while almost a third (32%, +10 pts since last month) believe that help with cost of day-to-day needs (like groceries and gas) is the issue that will determine which party they will vote for.

Furthermore, the economy and jobs (21%, +4), help to make housing more affordable for the middle class and families (23%, +2), and economic recovery from the pandemic (10%, +4) are all issues which have become more important. This suggests that voters are clearly prioritizing the management of healthcare and providing relief for economic hardships as they cast their ballots. In turn, the management of the COVID-19 pandemic seems to have taken a back seat. Indeed, the ‘handling of COVID-19’ (13%, -12) and ‘dealing with the health backlogs from the pandemic’ (8%, -3) have both dropped in priority over the last month.

These trends reinforce that affordability has become the key issue of the campaign as over 7 in 10 (71%) agree that they will vote for the party that has the best plan for helping to make things more affordable for the middle class. This proportion is 10 percentage points higher among households with kids (78% vs. 68% among households without kids). Moreover, well over half of Ontarians (54%) believe it’s hard for someone like them to get ahead, underscoring the belief that many feel that they’re being left behind.

| Issue  | % Choosing as Top-Three Issue | Change since April |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Healthcare   | 38%                           | +7                 |
| Help with cost of day-to-day needs (like groceries and gas)            | 32%                           | +10                |
| Lower taxes  | 23%                           | -1                 |
| Help to make housing more affordable for the middle class and families | 23%                           | +2                 |
| Economy and jobs   | 21%                           | +4                 |
| Tackling climate change  | 16%                           | +1                 |
| Lower energy costs   | 14%                           | -                  |
| Creation of more low-cost/affordable housing for the poor and homeless | 14%                           | +1                 |

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| Handling of COVID-19                             | 13% | -12 |
| Social assistance programs                       | 11% | +2  |
| Economic recovery from the pandemic              | 10% | +4  |
| Education  | 10% | --  |
| Debt repayment and balanced budget               | 9%  | +2  |
| Dealing with health backlogs from the pandemic   | 8%  | -3  |
| Crime and public safety                          | 8%  | +1  |
| Integrity in government and its leaders          | 7%  | -   |
| Indigenous issues                                | 6%  | +1  |
| Dealing with hate crimes and systemic racism     | 5%  | -   |
| Investing in public transit                      | 4%  | -1  |
| Issues important to small-town and rural Ontario | 4%  | +1  |
| Some other issue                                 | 4%  | -3  |

Although voters have signaled their priorities, only half (50%) of Ontarians believe that party leaders are talking about the issues that are important to them. This misalignment between voters and candidates seems to be feeding cynicism that any of the parties is best-suited to deal with the issues at hand. Compared to last month, when asked which party is best to deal with top issues, those who responded 'none of them – they are all the same' has increased for all but two issues ('handling of Covid-19': 26%, -2; 'social assistance programs': 20%, -13). Most notably, the proportion of Ontarians who write off all major parties has increased by 10 percentage points for 'healthcare' (31%) as well as 9 points each for 'tackling climate change' (18%), 'economic recovery from the pandemic' (24%) and 'creation of more low-cost or affordable housing for the poor and homeless' (31%).

These evolving voter attitudes have resulted in other shifts for major parties:

- For the **Liberal Party**, voters' confidence has eroded over their ability to deal with climate change (22%, -14) and the creation of affordable or low-cost housing for the poor and homeless (11%, -11). Although less severe, this is also the case for dealing with the economy and jobs (17%, -5) and helping to make housing more affordable for the middle class (16%, -6).
- The **NDP** has similarly lost ground in voters' minds for tackling climate change (14%, -10) and lowering energy costs (9%, -9). However, the NDP has gained momentum in terms of managing the economy and jobs (19%, +7), and making housing more affordable for the middle class (30%, +5) as well as for the poor and homeless (39%, +5).
- For the **Progressive-Conservative Party**, significant ground has been lost on the subject of the economy and jobs (34%, -12) and the economic recovery from the pandemic (38%, -14). However, the PCs still have a firm hold in voters' minds regarding their ability to lower taxes (39%) and energy costs (35%, +3), and have convinced some voters about their management of COVID-19 (24%, +7).
- The most significant change for the **Green Party** has been convincing voters of their ability to tackle climate change (42%, +17), mostly to the detriment of the Liberals (22%, -14) and the NDP (14%, -10).

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Among the top 10 issues of the campaign, the Progressive Conservatives lead the other parties on four issues (help with cost of day-to-day needs, lower taxes, economy and jobs, and lower energy costs), the NDP leads on four issues (healthcare, help to make housing more affordable, creation of low-cost/affordable housing, and social assistance programs), the Liberals lead on one issue (handling of COVID-19) and the Green Party leads on one issue (tackling climate change). Despite the relative improvement of the NDP on the issues compared to last month, it does not appear to be having a positive impact on their share of the popular vote.

### Which Party is Best to Deal With Top 10 Issues

| Issue  | Liberals           | NDP                 | PCs                 | Green               | None of them – they're all the same |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Healthcare   | 21%<br>(-)         | <b>25%</b><br>(-5)  | 19%<br>(-6)         | 4%<br>(+1)          | 31%<br>(+10)                        |
| Help with cost of day-to-day needs (like groceries and gas)                    | 13%<br>(-2)        | 23%<br>(+5)         | <b>27%</b><br>(-4)  | 4%<br>(+1)          | 33%<br>(+2)                         |
| Lower taxes  | 16%<br>(+3)        | 7%<br>(-4)          | <b>39%</b><br>(-)   | 5%<br>(-)           | 33%<br>(+1)                         |
| Help to make housing more affordable for the middle class and working families | 16%<br>(-6)        | <b>30%</b><br>(+5)  | 18%<br>(-)          | 2%<br>(-)           | 34%<br>(+1)                         |
| Economy and jobs   | 17%<br>(-5)        | 19%<br>(+7)         | <b>34%</b><br>(-12) | 5%<br>(+3)          | 24%<br>(+6)                         |
| Tackling climate change  | 22%<br>(-14)       | 14%<br>(-10)        | 4%<br>(-2)          | <b>42%</b><br>(+17) | 18%<br>(+9)                         |
| Lower energy costs   | 14%<br>(+3)        | 9%<br>(-9)          | <b>35%</b><br>(+3)  | 9%<br>(+1)          | 33%<br>(+2)                         |
| Creation of more low-cost/affordable housing for the poor and homeless         | 11%<br>(-11)       | <b>39%</b><br>(+5)  | 12%<br>(-7)         | 8%<br>(+5)          | 31%<br>(+9)                         |
| Handling of COVID-19   | <b>30%</b><br>(-1) | 15%<br>(-5)         | 24%<br>(+7)         | 5%<br>(+1)          | 26%<br>(-2)                         |
| Social assistance programs   | 16%<br>(-3)        | <b>44%</b><br>(+14) | 11%<br>(+1)         | 9%<br>(-)           | 20%<br>(-13)                        |



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### About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between May 17 and 19, 2022, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of n = 1501 Ontarians aged 18+ was interviewed online (n = 1001 through the Ipsos I-Say panel and non panel sources) and by live-operator telephone interview (n = 500 through landline and cellphones). Online respondents earn a nominal incentive for their participation. Quotas and weighting were 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 polls which include non-probability sampling is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within  $\pm 2.9$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Ontarians 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. Ipsos abides by the disclosure standards established by the CRIC, found here:

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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](mailto:Darrell.Bricker@ipsos.com)

Sean Simpson  
Senior Vice President, Ipsos Public Affairs Canada  
+1 416 324 2002  
[Sean.Simpson@ipsos.com](mailto:Sean.Simpson@ipsos.com)





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