

-
- **ONTARIO TORIES GET BUDGET BOUNCE** -
 - GRITS AND TORIES IN DEAD HEAT AS HOUSE RISES -
 - PREMIER'S POPULARITY ON THE RISE -
-



© Angus Reid Group, Inc.
Public Release Date: Thursday, June 25, 1998

This CFRB/Globe and Mail/Angus Reid Poll was conducted by telephone between June 5th and 11th, 1998 among a representative cross-section of 1,000 Ontarians.

These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Ontario population according to the 1996 Census data.

With an Ontario-wide sample of 1,000, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within +/-3.2 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Ontario population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

- ONTARIO TORIES GET BUDGET BOUNCE -
- GRITS AND TORIES IN DEAD HEAT AS HOUSE RISES -
- PREMIER'S POPULARITY ON THE RISE -

As the parliament of Ontario rises for its summer holidays during the third year of the Harris Government's mandate, the latest sounding of public opinion shows the Tories and Liberals in a dead heat for electoral favour – with all indications that the recent budget has given a bounce to the government's popularity.

As well, indicators point to a recent rise in the popularity of Premier Mike Harris, with his approval rating up a full seven points – likely, in part, due to his intervention on the Hepatitis C issue, positive announcements on hospitals and health care, and the government's throne speech and budget which were released prior to this survey.

While health care remains the dominant issue on the policy landscape with 56% of the public indicating that it is the issue of greatest concern to them (was 55% in April), concern about education at 48% has diminished (down 6 points from 54% in April), and concern about jobs and unemployment is relatively static at 30% (up 2 points since April).

Politically, the Tories are at 41% of decided voters – up 3 percentage points since the last Angus Reid Group sounding in April – with the Liberals at 41% as well – down 2 points. The NDP sits at 12% – down 1 point since April. The rise in PC support can be accounted for by a dramatic increase in support among Ontarians aged 55 and older (up from 41% in April to 54% this month). Tory support has also increased slightly among women (up from 29% to 33%) and residents of Northern Ontario (up from 21% to 32%).

Further, the Premier's own approval rating is on the rise since the last time it was tested in February – up a full 7 points from 49% to 56%. Comparatively, Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty has an approval rating of 38% (down one point since February) and NDP leader Howard Hampton has an approval rating of 27% (up two points since February). Harris' approval rating is highest among his traditional supporters – men (67%) and the more affluent (64% of those with an annual household income of more than \$60K).

Two other critical benchmark numbers to watch as the backstretch of the mandate opens onto an election horizon over the next year and a half: 59% -- up a full 8 points since last tested in February -- approve of the overall performance of the PC government and 48% say they deserve to be re-elected. (Traditionally, any party capturing approximately 40% of the vote in any provincial election has formed a majority government.) PC party approval is highest among those aged 55 and older (63%), men (67%) and the more affluent (67%).

In reflecting on the recent Ontario Budget, by a margin of two to one, 50% of Ontarians said that it was “good news for the province” and 45% said it was “good news for themselves”, versus 22% who said it was bad news for the province and 24% for themselves. The remainder said “don’t know”.

- 30 -

For further information, please contact

John Wright
Senior Vice-President, The Angus Reid Group
(416) 324-2900

Visit our website at: **www.angusreid.com**