
WHILE TORIES AND LIBERALS IN “DEAD HEAT” VOTE SPLIT, TORIES’ “RIGHT TRACK” APPROVAL CLIMBS TO 64%



CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
THE GLOBE AND MAIL

CFRB•AM•IOIO
News Talk Radio

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Public Release Date: Monday August 31, 1998
2:30AM (EST)

This Angus Reid/Globe and Mail Poll/CFRB was conducted by telephone between August 5th and 13th, 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.

WHILE TORIES AND LIBERALS IN “DEAD HEAT” VOTE SPLIT, TORIES’ “RIGHT TRACK” APPROVAL CLIMBS TO 64%

This most recent CFRB/Globe and Mail/Angus Reid Group poll was conducted by telephone between August 5th and 13th 1998 among a representative cross-section of 1,000 Ontarians.

While the Tories and Liberals continue to split the vote, the Tories’ “right track” approval rating is on the rise and half of the electorate indicates that they deserve re-election. Taken in concert, both the Tories’ “right track” approval and the electorates’ belief that they deserve re-election indicate that they have both the room and the capacity to grow. In other words, there is a reservoir of potential votes that can be tapped and translated into potential support for the Progressive Conservative Party.

This latest sounding of public opinion in Ontario yielded the following results:

- If an election were held tomorrow, the Liberals and the Tories would split the vote (each garnering 41% of popular support); the NDP would capture 13 percent.
- Six in ten (64%) indicate that the government is on the “right-track” and 49% believe the Tories have “accomplished a lot of good in the province” and that they deserve to be re-elected.
- Ontarians place healthcare (49%) and education (40%) on the top of the public agenda as the two most important issues facing the province.

Liberals and Tories continue to split the vote

If an election were held tomorrow, the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives would each capture 41 percent of the vote. The NDP would garner 13 percent.

After bottoming out at 33 percent earlier this year (February 1998), the Tories appear to have regained their losses and have maintained the 41 percent of popular support that they captured in Angus Reid Group’s sounding of public opinion in June 1998. Conversely after climbing to 46 percent in February, the Liberals’ support subsequently softened but has held at the 41 percent that it reached in June. While suffering great losses compared to its standing in the June 1995 provincial election, the NDP’s support has been quite consistent since the beginning of the year.

Half (49%) indicate Tories deserve re-election

Ontarians were presented with two position statements about the Tories' record and asked to indicate which is closest to their own perspective. They were told that "some people say that the Harris government has accomplished a lot of good in the province – they have stayed true to their word and deserve to be re-elected" while "other people say that the Harris government has done all it can do and it is time for another provincial political party to take over and run the province". Forty-nine percent sides with those who believe that the Harris government deserves re-election while 45 percent indicate that it's time for another party to take over.

Two-thirds (64%) consider Tories on the "right-track"

Ontarians were also asked to indicate whether they believe the provincial government of Mike Harris and the Progressive Conservatives has Ontario on the "right track" or the "wrong track". Two-thirds (64%) of Ontarians believe that the government is on the "right track". One-third (34%) indicates that the provincial government is on the "wrong track". (After softening earlier in the year, this rating is improving (60% in April, 1998)).

Healthcare and education top Ontarians' concerns

This poll included the Angus Reid Group's on-going monitor of Ontarians' public policy priorities by asking Ontarians to name, 'top-of-mind', the two most important issues facing Ontario today. This analysis is based on the total number of mentions that each issue received (consequently, totals exceed 100%).

While healthcare/medicare (49%) and education (40%) remain the most important matters on the public agenda, they have diminished in importance over the course of the summer (healthcare was mentioned by 56% of Ontarians in June and education was mentioned by 48%).

Last August, jobs/unemployment was the number one concern among Ontario voters. Today, it receives the third highest number of mentions. In this survey, it is mentioned by 26 percent of the electorate compared to 44 percent last year.

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