

AMIDST LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN, ONTARIO TORIES HAVE ONE-THIRD (33%) VOTER SUPPORT AS DALTON MCGUINITY AND LIBERALS (51%) CONTINUE TO LEAD

*Even Highly Touted Frontrunner Eves Doesn't Defeat Liberals in
Head to Head Battle: McGuinity Liberals (49%) versus Eves
Conservatives (35%), with 16% Choosing 'Neither' (10%) or
'Don't Know' (6%) If Vote was Tomorrow*



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Toronto, ONTARIO – While the governing Ontario Conservatives (33%) continue to fight among themselves in the leadership debates and campaign, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals (51%) remain the most popular party in the province among decided voters according to an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CFRB/CFTO poll released today. The NDP remain in third place with 15% support.

The picture does not appear to improve much for the Tories even with highly touted leadership candidate, former Deputy Premier and Finance Minister, Ernie Eves in charge. In the absence of an actual province wide election campaign, a head to head battle involving Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals (49%) still defeat an Ernie Eves led Conservative party (35%). One-in-ten (10%) said they would not support either candidate, and 6% 'don't know', which correlates roughly with NDP voter support.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CFRB/CFTO poll conducted between February 7th and 17th, 2002. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Ontarians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, 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. These data

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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.

Amidst Leadership Campaign, Ontario Tories Have One-Third (33%) Voter Support As Dalton McGuinty and Liberals (51%) Continue to Lead

Dalton McGuinty and the provincial Liberals continue to maintain support of half (51%) of decided voters in the province. This level of support is unchanged from December 2001. The Liberals lead among all demographic groups and all regions in the province, with the exception of the '905' Belt.

- Regionally, the Liberal party is strongest among residents in the City of Toronto (57%), but are weakest with those in the surrounding '905' Belt (44%). In fact, the '905' Belt is the only region in the province where the Liberals do not lead – but not by much (- 2 points).
- Liberal support is stronger with voters in the lowest (55%) and middle (54%) household income groups than with those in the highest household income group (46%).
- Voters between 18 and 34 years of age (56%) are more likely to support the Liberals than those 35 years of age or older (48%).
- Women (56%) are more likely to support the Liberals than men (45%).

With the governing Conservatives continuing to fight among themselves during the leadership debates and campaign, they remain the choice of only one-third (33%, up 1 point from December 2001) of decided voters in the province.



- Regionally, the Tories are strongest in the '905' Belt (46%) where they lead the Grits by two points, but are weakest with residents of the City of Toronto (26%) and Northern Ontario (25%).
- Support for the Conservatives is stronger among voters in the highest household income group (39%) than those in the middle (31%) or lowest (20%) household income group.
- Older (39%) and middle aged (38%) voters are more likely than their younger (22%) counterparts to express support for the PC's.
- In contrast to the Liberals, men (38%) are more likely than women (28%) to express support for the Tories.

The NDP remain in third place with 15% support, up one point from December 2001.

- NDP support is strongest in Northern Ontario (21%), and weakest in the Conservative heartland of the '905' Belt (10%).
- The NDP is strongest with voters in the lowest household income group (23%), and with those between 18 and 34 years of age (21%).

Even Highly Touted Frontrunner Eves Doesn't Defeat Liberals in Head to Head Battle: McGuinty Liberals (49%) versus Eves Conservatives (35%), with 16% Choosing 'Neither' (10%) or 'Don't Know' (6%) If Vote was Tomorrow

The picture does not appear to improve much for the Tories with former Deputy Premier and Finance Minister Ernie Eves at the helm, if an election were held tomorrow. Clearly, in an actual province-wide election campaign these numbers could change. However, when asked in a head to head choice between Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals or an Ernie Eves led



Conservative party at the present time, Ontarians choose the Liberals (49%) over the Conservatives (35%). One-in-ten (10%) would not support either candidate and 6% did not know, correlating roughly (16%) with the current NDP voter choice of 15%.

- Regionally, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals defeat Ernie Eves and the Conservatives in all regions, except the '905' Belt where the Tories (43%) and Liberals (42%) are in a virtual tie. The Liberals biggest margin of victory is in the City of Toronto (Liberals 55% versus PC's 27%) and in Northern Ontario (Liberals 59% versus PC's 31%).
- Demographically, support for Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals is strongest with those in the lowest household income group (56% compared to 25% support for the PC's), younger voters (54% versus 28% support for the PC's) and women (50% versus 31% support for the PC's).
- Ernie Eves and the Conservative receive their strongest support from middle aged (40% versus 46% support for the Liberals) Ontarians, men (40% versus 47% support for the Liberals) and those from the highest household income groups (40% versus 47% support for the Liberals).

As noted previously, an election campaign could change the dynamics of this indicator -- however, it shows that regardless of who leads the Tories they have their work cut out for them.



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For more information on this news release, please contact:

*John Wright
Senior Vice-President
Public Affairs
Ipsos-Reid
(416) 324-2900*

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