

LIBERAL JUGGERNAUT APPEARS HEADED TOWARDS MAJORITY GOVERNMENT . . .

**WITH LIBERALS (48%) LEADING CONSERVATIVES
(31%) AND NDP (15%) IN DECIDED VOTER SUPPORT
IN POST-DEBATE POLL**

*Majority (52%) of Liberal Supporters Give Party Mandate On
Platform . . . Not Just Throwing Tories Out (36%)*

*If Finances Worse Than Expected, Six in Ten (59%) Say Liberals
Should Make Their Platform Promises Work Within Current
Provincial Revenue, not Through Increased Taxes (18%) or
Increased Deficit (11%)*

Public Release Date: Saturday, September 27th, 2003 - 6:00 a.m. (EDT)



Ipsos-Reid is Canada's leading marketing research and public affairs company, both in size and reputation. It operates in seven cities and employs more than 300 researchers and support staff in Canada. Ipsos-Reid has the biggest network of telephone call centres, as well as the largest prerecruited household and online panels in Canada. Its Canadian marketing research and public affairs practices are staffed with seasoned research consultants with extensive industry-specific backgrounds offering the premier suite of research vehicles in Canada, including the Ipsos Trend Report, the leading source of public opinion in the country. Ipsos-Reid is a member of the Ipsos Group, the second largest survey-based marketing research company in the world.

Visit www.ipsos-reid.com

For copies of other news releases, please visit

http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/PRE_REL.cfm

© Ipsos-Reid

*Washington • New York • Minneapolis • San Francisco
Vancouver • Edmonton • Calgary • Winnipeg • Toronto • Ottawa • Montreal*



LIBERAL JUGGERNAUT APPEARS HEADED TOWARDS MAJORITY GOVERNMENT . . .

WITH LIBERALS (48%) LEADING CONSERVATIVES (31%) AND NDP (15%) IN DECIDED VOTER SUPPORT IN POST- DEBATE POLL

*Majority (52%) of Liberal Supporters Give Party Mandate On
Platform . . . Not Just Throwing Tories Out (36%)*

*If Finances Worse Than Expected, Six in Ten (59%) Say Liberals
Should Make Their Platform Promises Work Within Current
Provincial Revenue, not Through Increased Taxes (18%) or Increased
Deficit (11%)*

Toronto, ONTARIO – Just after the leaders debate and with just the final week of the election campaign to go, Dalton McGuinty’s provincial Liberals appear likely to be headed towards a majority government on October 2nd, according to the latest Ipsos-Reid poll conducted on behalf of CFTO, Newstalk 1010 CFRB, and The Globe and Mail and released today.

The Liberals (48%, down 2 points from the pre-debate Ipsos-Reid poll released on Monday, September 22) continue to hold a 17-point lead over Ernie Eves and the Progressive Conservatives (31%, down 2 points), while Howard Hampton and the NDP (15%, up 3 points) and Frank de Jong and the Green Party (3%, down 1 point) remain far behind and out of the race. One in eight (13%, down 2 points) Ontarians are undecided as to which party they plan on supporting, while one percent say they will not vote.



A seat projection model*, provided exclusively by G.P. Murray Research Limited, a government relations and information services company located in Toronto, indicates that if these polling numbers hold to election day, the seat distribution in the Ontario Legislature could translate into Liberals 72, Progressive Conservatives 22 and the NDP 9.

As for why people are voting Liberal, of the 48% who express support for the Liberals, a majority (52%) say they are planning to vote for the Liberals more 'because they personally support the Liberal platform and what the Liberals are promising', than they are voting Liberal 'not so much for what the Liberals stand for, but because they just want to vote the Conservatives out of office' (36%). One in ten (9%) say that it is actually due to 'both reasons'.

History has shown that debates can be the defining point in an election campaign. The 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debate, the 1984 Turner-Mulroney debate and the 1999 Ontario debate with Howard Hampton, Dalton McGuinty and former Premier Mike Harris are just some examples. This past Tuesday, four in ten (42%) of the Ontario electorate, report watching all or some of the leader's debate in which Dalton McGuinty, Howard Hampton and debate newcomer Ernie Eves squared off against each other for 90 minutes. According to Ontarians who actually watched the debate, the verdict is split, with 25% feeling that Mr. Hampton was the winner, 24% identifying Mr. McGuinty as the victor, and 22% saying the winner was Mr. Eves. Twenty-three percent of viewers say that no leader won the debate.

However, when Ontarians who did not watch the debate, but may have been influenced by the news coverage in the days following, are added in with those that did watch, and based on what they have seen, read or heard of the debate, a different view emerges. One in four (25%) Ontarians in total say that none of the leaders emerged as the winner of the face-off. Just as many however, feel that Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty (23%), in fact, won the



debate. Of the other two leaders, an equal number believe that NDP leader, Howard Hampton (16%) or Progressive Conservative leader, Ernie Eves (16%) was the winner of the debate.

When asked which of the three main party leaders would make the 'best Premier' of Ontario, the incumbent, Mr. Eves (33%, down 4 points from the pre-debate poll) continues to lead Mr. McGuinty (28%, down 2 points), while Mr. Hampton (16%, up 3 points) remains in third spot on this measure. One in four (24%, up 5 points) say they 'don't know' which leader would make the 'best Premier'.

And finally, asked if Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals are elected on October 2nd, and they discover that the province's finances are in worse shape than they expected, how they should proceed with their election promises, six in ten (59%) feel they "should not increase taxes or the deficit and should find additional savings within the system of current government services in order to fulfill their campaign promises". This compares to one in five (18%) that would approve a Liberal government increasing taxes to fulfill their campaign promises and one in ten (11%) who feel a Liberal government should not increase taxes, but increase the provincial deficit, in order to fulfill their campaign promises if they find that the provincial finances are in worse shape than previously thought.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/CFTO/CFRB/Globe and Mail poll conducted between Wednesday, September 24th and Thursday, September 25th, 2003. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,001 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 were statistically weighted to ensure the



sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Ontario population according to the 2001 Census data.

**The seat projection formula was developed by Alan Hall, an experienced electoral statistician, for the G.P. Murray Research Ontario Election Almanac 2003 and provided exclusively to Ipsos-Reid for this latest poll. The model does not attempt to project actual results on a regional or individual riding basis, but projects strictly on the basis of published province-wide polling results. The model has been customized to take into account of Ontario's three-party system and comparative historical vote efficiency strengths of each of the parties.*

The Liberals (48%, down 2 points from the pre-debate Ipsos-Reid poll released on Monday, September 22) continue to hold a 17-point lead over Ernie Eves and the Progressive Conservatives (31%, down 2 points), while Howard Hampton and the NDP (15%, up 3 point) and Frank de Jong and the Green Party (3%, down 1 point) remain far behind and out of the race. Two percent indicate they will vote for some other party. One in eight (13%, down 2 points) Ontarians are undecided as to which party they plan on supporting, while one percent say they will not vote.

- Regionally, the Liberals are the top choice in all regions of the province, with support ranging from 51% in the City of Toronto, to 45% in the Hamilton/Niagara region and in Eastern Ontario (45%). The Liberals are also more likely to receive support from young adults (55% versus 42% of older Ontarians) and women (53% versus 44% of men).
- Regionally, the Conservatives trail the Liberals by between 9 points (Eastern Ontario) and 27 points (Northern Ontario). Conservative support is highest in the '905' Belt (38%) and in Eastern Ontario (36%), while it is lowest in the City of Toronto (25%) and Northern Ontario (21%). Among socio-economic groups, the Tories are more likely to be supported by those in upper income households (38% versus 26% in middle income households and



20% in lower income households), by those 35 years of age and older (36% versus 24% of 18 to 34 year olds) and by men (36% versus 27% of women).

- The NDP, regionally, are stronger in the Northern Ontario (26%), the City of Toronto (22%), and Hamilton/Niagara (20%), and weaker in the Southwest (13%), the '905' Belt (10%) and Eastern Ontario (6%). Ontarians in lower (22%) and middle (19%) income households are more likely to be supporting the NDP than are those in upper income households (10%).
- Support for the Green Party is strongest in Eastern Ontario (8%) and weakest in Northern Ontario (1%). Voters between 18 and 34 years of age (5%) are more likely to support the Green Party than are those 55 and older (2%), and those in middle income households (6%) are more likely than those in lower (2%) or upper (2%) income households to say they will vote for the Green Party on October 2nd.
- Residents of Eastern Ontario (5%), Northern Ontario (4%), the Southwest (3%) and Hamilton/Niagara (3%) are more likely than are residents of the GTA (0%) to indicate they plan on voting for other parties.
- When looking at just the 79% of Ontarians who say they are absolutely certain (60%) or very likely (19%) to actually go out and vote on Election Day, the standings remain approximately the same (Liberal 48%, Conservative 33%, NDP 15%, Green 3%).
- Of those who are voting Liberal, three-quarters (74%) feel that Dalton McGuinty won the debate, while 66% of Conservative supporters feel that Ernie Eves won, and 36% of NDP supporters feel that Howard Hampton emerged the winner in Tuesday's debate.



- Looking at the current support levels of the 59% of voters who recall who they voted for in 1999 shows some interesting changes in support. While the Liberals retain 78% of their support from 1999, the Conservatives hold on to 75% of their 1999 voters and the NDP just 62%. As for movement in support, 18% of 1999 Conservative supporters now say they will vote for the Liberals, while the opposite movement (1999 Liberal voters to the Conservatives) is just 8%. In terms of swing movement away from the NDP, 26% of 1999 NDP supporters now say they will vote Liberal this time. Moving in the opposite direction, 11% of 1999 Liberal voters say they will vote for the NDP this time around.

Of the 48% who express support for the Liberals, a majority (52%) say they are planning to vote for the Liberals more 'because they personally support the Liberal platform and what the Liberals are promising', than they are voting Liberal 'not so much for what the Liberals stand for, but because they just want to vote the Conservatives out of office' (36%). One in ten (9%) say that it is actually both reasons.

- There is no statistical difference between regional or socio-economic groups on this subject, with the exception that significantly more Liberal supporters with a high school or less education (41%) and those with a university degree (40%) are saying they just want to vote the Conservatives out of office than do those with a post-secondary education/some university (26%).
- As for the swing vote to the Liberals, of those who say they voted for the Conservatives in the 1999 election and are now planning on voting Liberal, the verdict is split with half (49%) saying it is because they support the Liberal platform with just as many (46%) saying it is because they just want to vote the Conservatives out of office. Among Liberal supporters who voted NDP in 1999, 48% say their choice to vote Liberals is more to



remove the Conservatives than that they support the Liberal platform and promises (36%).

This past Tuesday four in ten (42%) of the electorate report watching all or some of the debate in which Dalton McGuinty, Ernie Eves and Howard Hampton squared off against each other.

- Residents of the '905' Belt (52%) are the most likely to have watched the debate, followed by residents of the City of Toronto (44%), Hamilton/Niagara (39%), Eastern Ontario (39%), the Southwest (38%) and Northern Ontario (35%).
- As well, the audience for the debate was more likely to consist of older Ontarians (57% versus 43% of middle-aged and 30% of young adults), university graduates (53% versus 37% of lower levels of education) and those in upper income households (48% versus 36% in middle income households).
- Decided Conservative (53%) and NDP (52%) voters were more likely to be watching than decided Liberal (41%) voters.
- As well, those who say they are absolutely certain/very likely to cast a ballot on October 2nd (48%) were more likely to be viewing than those who say they are not very or not at all likely to vote in the election (27%).

Among those who actually watched the debate, the verdict is split, with 25% feeling that Mr. Hampton was the winner, 24% identifying Mr. McGuinty as the victor, and 22% saying the winner was Mr. Eves. Twenty-three percent of viewers say that no leader won the debate.

- University graduates (29%) who watched the debate are significantly more likely than those with a high school education or less (17%) who watched the debate to feel that Dalton McGuinty was the debate's winner.



- As for the view that Ernie Eves won the debate, this view is significantly more likely to be held by debate viewers from upper income households (28%) than their counterparts in middle-income households (14%).
- Among decided voters who watched the debate, 63% of NDP supporters feel that Mr. Hampton won the debate, while 50% of Conservative voters believe that the winner was Mr. Eves and 44% of Liberal supporters who watched, believe that Mr. McGuinty came out on top in the debate.

When those who watched the debate are included into the overall results, based on what they have seen, read or heard, one in four (25%) Ontarians say that none of the leaders emerged as the winner of the face-off. Just as many however, feel that Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty (23%) in fact won the debate. Of the other two leaders, an equal number feel that NDP leader, Howard Hampton (16%) or Progressive Conservative leader, Ernie Eves (16%) was the winner of the debate. One in five (19%) say they 'don't know'.

- Regionally, residents of Northern Ontario (27%) are the most likely to feel that Dalton McGuinty was the winner of the debate, while residents in Southwestern Ontario (30%), Eastern Ontario (29%) and Hamilton/Niagara (26%) lead the list as to who feel that none of the leaders won the debate on Tuesday. In the City of Toronto just as many feel that none (24%) of the leaders won as say that the victor was Dalton McGuinty (24%). In the '905' Belt there is a split on this question (McGuinty 23%, Eves 20%, Hampton 18%, none 21%).
- University graduates (28%) are significantly more likely than are those with a high school or less education (19%) to feel that Dalton McGuinty won the debate.



- Men (20%) are significantly more likely than women (13%) to feel that Ernie Eves came out on top in the debate. Ontarians in upper income households (20%) are significantly more likely to feel that Mr. Eves won compared to those in middle-income households (13%).
- Ontarians from middle-income households (21%) are significantly more likely than those from upper (14%) income households to feel that Mr. Hampton won on Tuesday.
- Among decided voters, 45% of NDP voters feel their leader, Howard Hampton, won the debate, while 41% of Liberal voters say their leader, Dalton McGuinty, won, and 39% of Conservative voters feel that Premier Eves was the winner.

When asked which of the leaders would make the ‘best Premier’ of Ontario, the incumbent, Mr. Eves (33%, down 4 points from the pre-debate poll) continues to lead Mr. McGuinty (28%, down 2 points), while Mr. Hampton (16%, up 3 points) remains in third spot on this measure. One in four (24%, up 5 points) say they ‘don’t know’ which leader would make the ‘best Premier’.

- Regionally, Ernie Eves tops the list in Eastern Ontario (Eves 38%, McGuinty 26%, Hampton 8%), the ‘905’ Belt (Eves 37%, McGuinty 28%, Hampton 14%) and in Southwestern Ontario (Eves 34%, McGuinty 25%, Hampton 13%). Dalton McGuinty comes out on top in the City of Toronto (McGuinty 34%, Eves 27%, Hampton 23%). The choice is more split in Hamilton/Niagara (McGuinty 29%, Eves 28%, Hampton 20%) and in Northern Ontario (Eves 26%, McGuinty 23%, Hampton 20%).
- Ernie Eves is more likely to be chosen as the ‘best Premier’ candidate by those in the highest income households (38% versus 25% in the lowest income households), by middle-aged (37% versus 28% of young adult) Ontarians and by men (36% versus 29% of



women). Meanwhile, Dalton McGuinty is more likely to be selected as the ‘best Premier’ candidate by those between 18 and 34 years of age (34% versus 25% of those 35 years of age and older). There are no statistical differences between age, gender, education or household income groups regarding the selection of Howard Hampton as ‘best Premier’.

- Among decided voters, Ernie Eves is viewed by 87% of Conservative voters to be the ‘best Premier’. This compares to just 60% of Liberal supporters who feel that Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty would make the ‘best Premier’ and 57% of NDP supporters who choose their leader, Howard Hampton, as the ‘best Premier’ candidate among the three leaders.
- Looking at outcome of the debate, 72% of those who feel that Mr. Eves is the ‘best Premier’ believe that he won the debate, while 62% who feel the title of ‘best Premier’ belongs to Mr. McGuinty feel that he won the debate and 53% of those who say that the ‘best Premier’ would be Mr. Hampton, say that he won the debate on Tuesday.

And finally, asked if Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals are elected on October 2nd, and they discover that the province’s finances are in worse shape than they expected, how they should proceed with their election promises, six in ten (59%) feel a Liberal government “should not increase taxes or the deficit and should find additional savings within the system of current government services in order to fulfill their campaign promises”. This compares to one in five (18%) who would approve a Liberal government increasing taxes to fulfill their campaign promises and one in ten (11%) who feel a Liberal government should not increase taxes, but increase the provincial deficit in order to fulfill their campaign promises.

- Regionally, residents of the Eastern Ontario (23%) and the City of Toronto (22%) are significantly more likely to say that they would approve of the Liberals raising taxes if need to, in order to fulfill their campaign promises than are those in Hamilton/Niagara



(13%) and Northern Ontario (8%). There are no other statistical differences between regions regarding these options.

- Middle aged (63%) Ontarians are significantly more likely to say that a Liberal government should try to fulfill their campaign promises within current government revenues than older (53%) Ontarians. This position is also more likely to be held by those in middle (63%) and upper (62%) income households than by those in lower income households (51%).
- University graduates (22%) are significantly more likely than those with a high school or less education (15%) to say they would approve a Liberal government increasing taxes to fulfill their campaign promises.
- Decided Liberal (25%) and NDP (25%) supporters are significantly more likely to say they would approve a Liberal government increasing taxes to pay for their election promises than are decided Conservative supporters (10%). On the other hand, decided Conservative (72%) voters are significantly more likely than Liberal (56%) or NDP (50%) voters to say that a Liberal government should not increase taxes or the deficit, but find additional savings with in current services to pay for campaign promises.

-30-

For more information on this news release, please contact:

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

For full tabular results, please visit our website at www.ipsos-reid.com. News Releases are available at http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/PRE_REL.cfm

© Ipsos-Reid