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***Seven In Ten Ontarians (71%) Believe Budget Is Bad News***

***But Half (49%) Prefer Premiums And Higher Taxes To Turning Back Clock To Mike Harris Era***

***Because Of McGuinty Budget Three In Ten (28%) Are Punishing Federal Liberals By Not Voting For Them***



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**Toronto, ON:** According to a new Ipsos-Reid/CFRB/CFTO/Globe and Mail survey released today, the Dalton McGuinty led Ontario Provincial Liberals are being punished in the polls for introducing an overwhelmingly unpopular fiscal budget.

The questionnaire provided to respondents was very carefully written so that it was emphasized that these questions related to provincial politics and not the current federal election. Ipsos-Reid is satisfied that every precaution has been taken to ensure that there is no contamination of these results.

According to this poll, if a vote were held tomorrow, 32% of decided voters in Ontario would cast their ballot for the Dalton McGuinty led Liberals – a plummet of 13 points from the 45% decided vote support the provincial Liberals recorded in an Ipsos-Reid survey released April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004. As Liberal support has dropped during this time period support for the Ernie Eves led Conservatives has risen 9 points from 30% decided voter support to 39% support today.

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Meanwhile, one-quarter (23%, up 4 points from 19%) of decided voters in Ontario would support Howard Hampton and the New Democratic Party, 6% would vote for Frank de Jong and the Green Party (up 1 point from 5%), and 1% would vote for some “other” party.

This drop in vote support may be largely related to voter backlash over the McGuinty government’s first provincial budget, as seven in ten Ontarians (71%) think the budget is “bad news” for people like them. And the majority (61%) say bringing back healthcare premiums was the “wrong thing to do”.

But in the end, half of Ontarians (49%) prefer to have the “premiums and higher taxes under this Provincial Liberal McGuinty government than go back to the Conservative Mike Harris days of tax breaks and what they said were necessary cutbacks in government”.

However, three in ten Ontarians (28%) agree with the statement “I am so angry with the Provincial Liberal McGuinty Government specifically because of their recent provincial budget, I am going to punish the Federal Liberals by not voting for them, even though they had nothing to do with the recent provincial budget”.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between May 28<sup>th</sup> and June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004. For the telephone survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1000 adult Ontarians was interviewed. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Ontarian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2001 Census data.*



***Liberal Support Drops (32%, Down 13 Points) While Conservative Support Climbs (39%, Up 9 Points), NDP (23%, Up 4 Points), Green (6%, Up 1 Point) ...***

If a vote were held tomorrow, 32% of decided voters in Ontario would cast their ballot for Dalton McGuinty's Liberals (down 13 points). In comparison, 39% of decided voters would support Ernie Eves's Conservative Party (up 9 points), 23% would support Howard Hampton and the New Democratic Party (up 4 points from 19%), 6% would vote for Frank de Jong and the Green Party (up 1 point from 5%), and 1% would vote for some "other" party.

Among all Ontarians, 3% would not vote or would be undecided if a provincial election were held tomorrow.

- Liberal vote support is fairly consistent throughout all regions of Ontario, with support being highest in Northern Ontario (36%), followed closely by the GTA (34%), Southwestern Ontario (32%), Eastern Ontario (31%), and Central Ontario (29%).
- Conservative vote support is highest in Central Ontario (42%), the GTA (41%), and Eastern Ontario (38%), with Southwestern Ontario (35%) and Northern Ontario (34%) trailing.
- The NDP attracts the support of approximately one-quarter of decided voters in Eastern Ontario (26%), Northern Ontario (26%), and Central Ontario (24%), with slightly less support in Southwestern Ontario (22%), and the GTA (20%).
- Green party decided vote support is highest in Southwestern Ontario (10%), followed by Eastern Ontario (6%), Central Ontario (5%), and the GTA (5%), while barely registering on the radar screen in Northern Ontario (2%).



- The Conservative Party has significantly higher levels of support among those aged 35 and over than those aged 18-34 (43% vs. 31%).

### ***As Seven In Ten Ontarians (71%) Believe Budget Is Bad News...***

When Ontarians consider the first provincial budget of the McGuinty Government that was introduced earlier this month, seven in ten (71%) believe that based on what they've seen, read, or heard, the budget is "bad news" for people like them. Only 16% of Ontarians believe that this budget is "good news" for them, and 9% believe that it is "neither good news or bad news". The remaining 4% of Ontarians "don't know" whether this budget is good news or bad news for them.

- Across the province agreement that the provincial budget is "bad news" is very high, with the highest agreement coming in Eastern Ontario (75%), followed by Southwestern Ontario (72%), and Northern Ontario (70%), Central Ontario (70%), and the GTA (70%).
- Agreement that the budget is "good news" is highest in the GTA (18%), followed closely by Southwestern Ontario (16%), Central Ontario (15%), Eastern Ontario (14%) and Northern Ontario (14%).
- Residents of Ontario with an annual household income of \$30,000 or greater are more likely than those with an annual household income of less than \$30,000 to believe this budget is "bad news" for them (73% vs. 64%).

### ***And Majority Believe Healthcare Premiums Was The Wrong Thing To Do...***

After being reminded that the McGuinty Liberals re-introduced healthcare premiums for citizens earning more than \$20,000 a year, that the maximum premiums would be \$900 a year

for a person earning \$100,00 or more, and that the government says these premiums will be used to repair and improve Ontario's healthcare system, Ontarians were asked whether bringing back these premiums was the right thing to do or the wrong thing to do.

The majority (61%) of Ontarians believe that bringing healthcare premiums was the "wrong thing to do"; while 35% believe that this was the "right thing to do". The remaining 4% of Ontarians "don't know".

- Agreement that bringing back healthcare premiums was the "wrong thing to do" is highest in Central Ontario (65%), followed by North Ontario (62%), Southwestern Ontario (61%), and Eastern Ontario (59%).
- Agreement that bringing back healthcare premiums was the "right thing to do" is highest in the GTA (37%) and Eastern Ontario (37%), followed by Southwestern Ontario (35%), Northern Ontario (34%), and Central Ontario (31%).
- Those Ontarians aged 35 and over are significantly more likely than those aged 18-34 to believe that bringing back the healthcare premiums was the "wrong thing to do" (64% vs. 55%).

***And, If Federal Health Money Comes From Paul Martin's Re-Election, Most (64%) Believe Healthcare Premiums Should Be Eliminated...***

When asked to consider the new provincial healthcare premiums in the context of the Federal Liberals' promise to pledge an additional \$4 billion dollars to the provinces for healthcare if re-elected, the majority (64%) of Ontarians believe that if the Federal Liberals are re-elected and Ontario gets this new money for healthcare Premier McGuinty should "eliminate the healthcare premiums he's just announced". This compares to 31% who believe he should

“keep the healthcare premiums in place as they are still necessary”. The remaining 5% of Ontarians do not know.

- Agreement that Premier McGuinty should eliminate the healthcare premiums if Ontario gets this new money is highest in Central Ontario (68%), followed very closely by Southwestern Ontario (67%), the GTA (64%), Northern Ontario (60%), and Eastern Ontario (59%).
- Agreement that Premier McGuinty should keep the healthcare premiums in place as they are necessary is highest in Eastern Ontario (36%), followed very closely by Northern Ontario (35%), the GTA (30%), Central Ontario (29%) and Southwestern Ontario (29%).

***But, Half Of Ontarians (49%) Would Rather Have Health Premiums And Higher Taxes Than Turn Back Clock To Harris Era...***

Half of Ontarians (49%) agree with the statement “I’d rather have premiums and higher taxes under this Provincial Liberal McGuinty government than go back to the Conservative Mike Harris days of tax breaks and what they said were necessary cutbacks in government” (25% “somewhat agree”, 24% “strongly agree”). In comparison, 46% of Ontarians disagree with this statement (19% “somewhat disagree”, 27% “strongly disagree”). The remaining 5% of Canadians “don’t know” if they agree or disagree.

- Agreement with this statement is highest in Northern Ontario (53%), followed by the GTA (51%), Southwestern Ontario (50%), Eastern Ontario (47%), and Central Ontario (45%).



- Disagreement with this statement is highest in Southwestern Ontario (48%), followed by Central Ontario (47%), Eastern Ontario (46%), the GTA (46%), and Northern Ontario (39%).

***Because Of McGuinty Budget Three In Ten Ontarians (28%) Are Punishing Federal Liberals By Not Voting For Them...***

Three in ten Ontarians (28%) agree with the statement “I am so angry with the Provincial Liberal McGuinty Government specifically because of their recent provincial budget, I am going to punish the Federal Liberals by not voting for them, even though they had nothing to do with the recent provincial budget” (12% “somewhat agree”, 16% “strongly agree”). Meanwhile, seven in ten (68%) disagree with this statement (24% “somewhat disagree”, 44% “strongly disagree”). The remaining 4% of Ontarians “don’t know” if they agree or disagree.

- Agreement with this statement is essentially equal throughout the province, with directionally strongest agreement in Central Ontario (31%), followed very closely by the GTA (29%), Southwestern Ontario (29%), Eastern Ontario (25%), and Northern Ontario (23%).
- Disagreement with this statement is essentially equal throughout the province, with directionally strongest disagreement in Eastern Ontario (72%), followed very closely by Northern Ontario (71%), the GTA (68%) and Southwestern Ontario (68%), and Central Ontario (64%).

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