

# **TORIES (38%) AND LIBERALS (37%) REMAIN ESSENTIALLY TIED IN THE POLLS IN ONTARIO**

*But When It Comes To Momentum John Tory And The PCs Lead  
With Positive Impressions As Liberal Voters Appear Malleable*



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## TORIES (38%) AND LIBERALS (37%) REMAIN ESSENTIALLY TIED IN THE POLLS IN ONTARIO

*But When It Comes To Momentum John Tory And The PCs Lead With  
Positive Impressions As Liberal Voters Appear Malleable*

**Toronto, ON** – With Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals preparing for their government's second Speech from the Throne today and the return of the provincial legislature, a new Ipsos Reid survey conducted for CanWest/Global and CFRB indicates that Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals (37%, -1 point from July 2005) and the John Tory led Progressive Conservatives (38%, unchanged) are essentially tied in the polls. Meanwhile, Howard Hampton and the NDP (17%, -1 point) and Frank de Jong and the Green Party (7%, +1 point) trail the front-running parties distantly.

This poll marks the mid-way point of the four year term that the government has until its designated election date of October 2007.

But while the two leading parties are tied when it comes to decided voter support, it would appear that the Progressive Conservatives have a good degree of positive momentum among the public while the governing Liberals have strongly negative momentum, specifically:

- 21% say that over the past few months their opinion of John Tory and the Progressive Conservatives has “improved” vs. 12% that say it has “worsened” (a gap momentum score of **+9 points**);<sup>1</sup> compared to
- 11% who say their opinion of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals has “improved” vs. 36% who say it has “worsened” (a gap momentum score of **-25 points**).



Howard Hampton and the NDP (+6 points) also have positive momentum, while Frank de Jong and the Green Party (+1 point) are relatively flat.

Further analysis by voter intention reveals a dynamic within the electorate that suggests that while Progressive Conservative party supporters are steadfast in their negative opinions of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals, many Liberal supporters are more likely to find John Tory and the Progressive Conservative party palatable. This indicates that Liberal voter support may be more malleable than that of the Progressive Conservative Party at the halfway point in the Liberal mandate. Thus the governing Liberals have two years to turn Mr. Tory into a leader that would not be acceptable whatsoever to Liberal voters.

Ontarians are split when it comes to the question of whether or not they approve or disapprove of the job the provincial government of Dalton McGuinty is doing governing Ontario, with half (48%, -1 point) saying they approve and half saying they disapprove (48%, +1 point).

*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted for CanWest/Global and CFRB from September 27<sup>th</sup> to October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 771 adult residents of Ontario were interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.5$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population of Ontario 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 population of Ontario according to the 2001 Census data.*

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<sup>1</sup> Gap momentum scores are calculated by subtracting the percentage who say their opinion has "worsened" from the percentage who say their opinion has "improved"

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***Liberals (37%, -1 Point) And Conservatives (38%, Unchanged) Are Essentially Tied Atop The Polls – NDP (17%, -1 Point) And Green Party (7%, +1 Point) ...***

If a provincial election in Ontario were held today, the Liberals (37%, 11 point since July 2005) and the Conservatives (38%, unchanged) would be essentially tied in total decided voter support, while the NDP (17%, -1 point) and the Green Party (7%, +1 point) trail.

Among all Ontarians, 10% are undecided or refused to say whom they would vote for if a provincial election were held.

- Conservative Party support is highest in Eastern Ontario (46%, +5 points) and lowest in Northern Ontario (32%, +3 points).
- Liberal Party support is highest in the GTA (40%, -1 point) and lowest in Eastern Ontario (28%, -14 points).
- NDP support is highest in Northern Ontario (30%, +2 points) and lowest in Central Ontario (12%, -5 points).

***But When It Comes To Momentum, John Tory And The PCs Are Positive (+9 Points) While Premier Dalton McGuinty And The Liberals Are Strongly Negative (-25 Points)...***

As part of the survey respondents were asked about each of the major provincial parties and their leaders and whether their opinion of them over the past few months had improved, worsened, or stayed the same.

- 21% of Ontarians say their opinion of John Tory and the Progressive Conservatives has “improved”, 55% say it has “stayed the same”, and 12% say it has “worsened” (gap momentum score of +9 points).



- 11% of Ontarians say their opinion of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals has “improved”, 49% say it has “stayed the same”, and 36% say it has “worsened” (**gap momentum score of -25 points**).
- 15% of Ontarians say their opinion of Howard Hampton and the NDP has “improved”, 64% say it has “stayed the same”, and 9% say it has “worsened” (**gap momentum score of +6 points**).
- 6% of Ontarians say their opinion of Frank de Jong and the Green Party has “improved”, 53% say it has “stayed the same”, and 5% say it has “worsened” (**gap momentum score of +1 point**).

Further analysis by voter intention reveals a dynamic within the electorate that suggests that while Progressive Conservative party supporters are steadfast in their negative opinions of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals (as indicated by the very strong negative momentum score that Premier McGuinty receives from this voter group, -50 points), many Liberal supporters are more likely to find John Tory and the Progressive Conservative party palatable (as these voters assign Mr. Tory a much smaller negative momentum score of -9 points). This indicates that Liberal voter support may be more malleable than that of the Progressive Conservative Party.

A full break down of gap scores by vote intention:

- John Tory and the Progressives: +43 points among PC supporters, -9 points among Liberal supporters, and -20 points among NDP supporters.
- Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals: -50 points among PC supporters, +12 points among Liberal supporters, and -38 points among NDP supporters.



- Howard Hampton and the NDP: Even among PC supporters, -1 point among Liberal supporters, and +37 points among NDP supporters.

***Ontarians Split When It Comes To Approval Of McGuinty Government: Half Approve (48%, -1 Point) And Half Disapprove (48%, +1 Point)...***

When Ontarians are asked whether they approve or disapprove of the job the provincial government of Premier Dalton McGuinty is doing governing Ontario, half (48%, -1 point from January 2005) say they approve (8% strongly approve), and half (48%, +1 point) say they disapprove (25% strongly disapprove). Four percent “don’t know” if they approve or disapprove.

- Approval is highest in the GTA (54%) and among women (53% vs. 43% among men).

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