

# The Dog Days of Summer May Portend Election Dogfight

*As Ontario Legislature Soon Draws to a Close and Campaign  
Starts in Earnest for Fall Vote, Tory's Conservatives are in the Hunt*

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**Ipsos Reid**

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## The Dog Days of Summer May Portend Election Dogfight

*As Ontario Legislature Soon Draws to a Close and Campaign Starts in  
Ernest for Fall Vote, Tory's Conservatives are in the Hunt*

**Toronto, ON** – As the dog days of summer approach, the political environment promises to heat up with vigorous campaigning which may portend an election dog fight. With the Ontario legislature drawing closer to its summer break, provincial politicians will be shifting their focus from question period to the campaign trail in preparation for the election set for October 10. The results of a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for CanWest News Service and Global Television reveal that Ontario could be in minority government territory, with support for the provincial Liberals and the Conservatives only 4 points off each other. The Liberals, at 41% support, are hovering in an around where they have been for the past while; the Tories at 37% support are in the hunt, maintaining their close proximity to the Liberal government, which surely provides an interesting context for the campaign as it heats up over the summer. The New Democratic Party, led by Howard Hampton, has the support of 15% of Ontario voters, while the Green Party, led by Frank de Jong, currently has the support of 6% of voters in Ontario.

A majority of Ontarians (51%) say that they either 'strongly approve' (8%) or 'somewhat approve' (43%) of the job that the provincial government of Premier Dalton McGuinty is doing governing Ontario. Conversely, less than half (44%) say that they 'somewhat

disapprove (26%) or 'strongly disapprove' (19%) of the performance of the current provincial government.

Despite the majority (51%) of Ontarians approving of the McGuinty government's performance, only four in ten (39%) agree that his government 'deserves re-election'. Perhaps taking into account the recent controversies over the provincial lottery system and a highly questionable government funding program for multicultural groups, 55% of Ontarians maintain that it is 'time for another provincial political party to take over'. Interestingly, one in ten (11%) Ontarians appear to have contradictory views of the Liberal government, saying that they approve of the performance of the McGuinty government, but agreeing that it is time for another party to take over.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for CanWest Global from May 15 to May 24, 2007. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 801 adults living in Ontario was 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 living in 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 that the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.*

### ***Election Could be a Dogfight...***

With the provincial Liberals receiving 41% support and the Ontario Tories maintaining their close proximity at 37% support, the provincial election scheduled for October could be a dogfight. Rounding out the major parties in Ontario, support for the New Democratic Party remains stagnant at 15%, while support for the Green party has doubled from 3% to

a current level of 6%. However, support for these parties is not uniform across the province:

- Residents of Northern and Eastern Ontario are most likely to support the Liberals with 44% of individuals from those regions supporting the McGuinty government.
- Interestingly, the Tories also have the support of 44% of residents in Eastern Ontario. This is possible due to the disproportionately small level of support being given to the NDP in this region (8%). The Tories are tied with the NDP at 25% in Northern Ontario.
- One in ten (10%) Ontarians in South-western Ontario indicate that, if an election were held today, they would support the Green party.
- Older Ontarians, aged 55 and over, are more likely to vote for the Tories, with one half (49%) indicating that they would vote for the Progressive Conservatives if a provincial election were held today.
- Younger Ontarians, aged 18 to 34, are more likely to vote for the Liberals, with 47% indicating that they would support the Liberal Party.

### ***Majority (51%) Approve of Government's Performance***

Despite a rocky road as of late for the Liberal government, a majority of Ontarians (51%) approve of the government's performance. Although this level of approval appears to be very favourable for the current government, only one in ten (8%) say that they 'strongly approve', while nearly half (43%) have a more tepid approval of the government, indicating that they 'somewhat approve'. Conversely, 44% disapprove of the performance of the

McGuinty government, with one quarter (26%) indicating that they ‘somewhat approve’, and two in ten (19%) indicating that they ‘strongly disapprove’.

- Residents of the Greater Toronto Area are more likely than Ontarians living in other regions to approve of the government’s performance with 55% indicating that they either ‘strongly approve’ (9%) or ‘somewhat approve’ (46%).
- Six in ten (61%) younger Ontarians, aged 18 to 34, indicate that they either ‘strongly approve’ (8%) or ‘somewhat approve’ (53%) of the government’s performance.
- Women (54%) are five points more likely to approve of the government’s performance than men (49%).
- Nearly six in ten (58%) Ontarians with a university degree approve of the government’s performance, compared to only 43% of individuals who do not have formal post-secondary education.

### ***Contradictory Views on McGuinty and Liberal Government...***

Despite a soft endorsement of the performance of the McGuinty government, only four in ten (39%) say that the ‘McGuinty government has done a good job and deserves re-election.’ In fact, a majority (55%) of Ontarians believe that it is ‘time for another provincial party to take over’. Interestingly, the data reveals that, while 51% approve of the McGuinty government’s performance, only 39% say that the government deserves ‘re-election’. This means that 11% of Ontarians approve of the performance of the McGuinty government, yet say that another party should take over. These findings suggest that, since they possess contradictory views of the government, these individuals might be the most susceptible to being swayed during the campaign period.

- Younger Canadians (18-34) are ten points more likely than older Canadians (55 and up) to say that the Government deserves re-election (44% vs 34%).
- Northern Ontarians are most likely of all demographic groups studied to say that it is time for a new party to take over, with nearly two thirds (62%) indicating that it's time for another party to run the province.
- While 11% is the province-wide rate of those who approve of the performance of the government, yet still say that another party needs to take over, 15% of GTA residents approve of the government's performance, yet say that it is time for another party to take over.

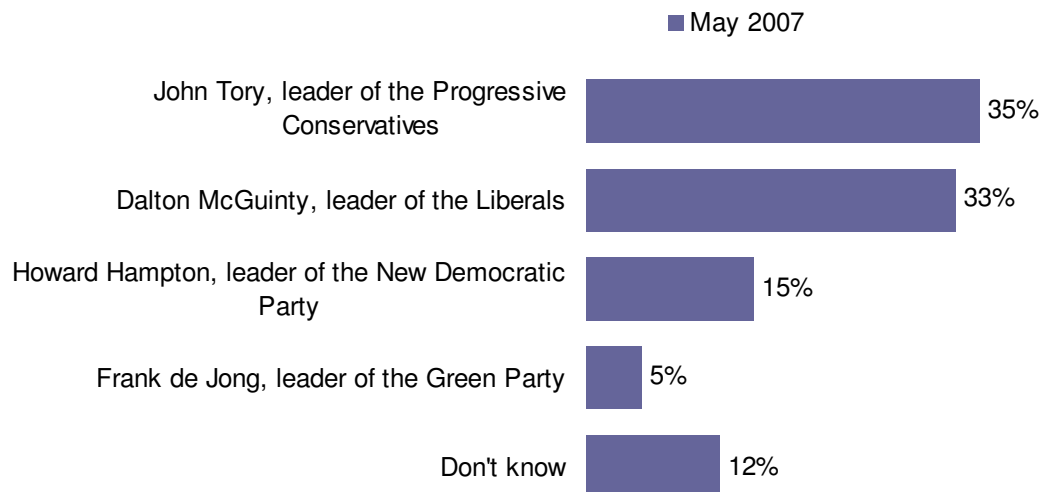
### ***More Canadians Choose Tory over McGuinty as Best Premier...***

While the margin between the two is close, more Canadians choose Conservative Leader John Tory (35%) over current Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty (33%) as making the best premier of Ontario. Howard Hampton trails significantly at 15% support, while Frank de Jong, leader of the Green party, appears to have a lot of work to do increasing his profile, with only 5% of Ontarians indicating that he would make the best premier of Ontario. 12% of Ontarians do not know, suggesting that there is ample room for movement.

- Older Canadians, aged 55 and up, are much more likely than young Canadians, aged 18 to 34, to choose Tory as the best premier for Ontario. At 47% and 24% respectively, it appears that age remains a dominant factor in one's political preferences.
- McGuinty, on the other hand, has received the support of 40% of young Canadians when asked who would make the best premier of Ontario.

- Howard Hampton's best constituencies are in Northern Ontario (24%) and South-western Ontario (23%).

#### Who Would Make Best Premier of Ontario?



Q: Which of the four major party leaders do you think would make the best Premier of Ontario?

It appears that good old partisan politics is at work when it comes to deciding on who would make the best premier, with the major parties disproportionately supporting their own leaders as making the best premier.

- Eight in ten (79%) Ontarians who support the Tories say that John Troy would make the best premier, with McGuinty (12%) and Hampton (12%) trailing far behind.
- Three quarters (74%) of Ontarians who support the Liberals say that Dalton McGuinty would make the best premier, with Hampton (13%) and Tory (5%) coming up far behind.

- Only six in ten (61%) supporters of the NDP claim that Howard Hampton would make the best premier of Ontario, with McGuinty (13%) and Tory (12%) virtually tied as a second option.

### ***One third (32%) of Ontarians have a 'Worsened' View of McGuinty over the Past Few Months...***

Perhaps a sign of his government's rocky road over the past little while, one third (32%) of Ontarians indicate that they have a 'worsened' opinion of Premier McGuinty over the past few months. What is particularly interesting, however, is that one in ten (9%) individuals who support the Liberal party in Ontario indicate that they have a 'worsened' opinion of McGuinty. In line with partisan expectations, half of Conservative supporters (51%) and NDP supporters (47%) say that they have a 'worsened' view.

- Nearly four in ten (38%) Ontarians living in the south-western part of the province have a worsened view of McGuinty.
- A similar margin (37%) of older Canadians, aged 55 and over, feel the same way.

However, a similar comparison with John Tory indicates about half the level of worsened impressions among other party supporters. While 14% of Ontarians indicated that they have a 'worsened' opinion of John Tory, only 20% of Liberal supporters indicate this, and 24% of NDP supporters say the same. These findings suggest that, despite partisan politics, opinions of McGuinty have changed for the worse at a greater rate than John Tory.

- One quarter (23%) of Ontarians have an 'improved' opinion of John Tory, while only 14% have a 'worsened' opinion of him.





- Nearly half (47%) of PC supporters have an improved impression of John Troy. Furthermore, one in ten (11%) Liberal supporters, and a similar (9%) proportion of NDP supporters actually have an 'improved' opinion of John Tory.

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