

Faith-based Funding a Clear Loser for John Tory, But Desire for Change Buttresses Conservatives

Lack of Faith in McGuinty's Leadership VS Tory's Support for Faith-based School Funding Weigh on Voters Support

Public Release Date: September 10, 2007, 6:00 AM EST



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Lack of Faith in McGuinty's Leadership VS Tory's Support for Faith-based School Funding Weigh on Voters Support

Toronto, ON – A new Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for CanWest News Service and Global Television and released on the eve of the official launch of the Ontario provincial election campaign finds that John Tory's Progressive Conservatives have narrowed the gap in their race against Dalton McGuinty's Ontario Liberals from a seven-point deficit measured on August 24th to a five-point deficit today--a result that comes in the face of John Tory's apparently unpopular stance in favour of faith-based funding for schools, which apparently has been partially offset by the latest Conservative "McGuinty's record of broken promises" radio blitz.

The results find that 41% of Ontarians would support the Ontario Liberals, while 36% would support the Progressive Conservative party. The NDP led by Howard Hampton would receive the support of 17% of Ontarians if an election were held tomorrow, while the Green Party under Frank de Jong would receive the support of 6% of Ontarians.

The poll also finds that three in five Ontarians (62%) *oppose* the Ontario Government extending full funding to all faith-based schools, not only the Catholic schools, a stance championed by Progressive Conservative Leader John Tory. Opposition to the plan cuts across party lines, and is opposed by majorities of Liberal supporters as well as Tory's own PC supporters. In fact, if given a choice, a majority in the province support a public school only system (53%) compared with the status quo (23%) and extended funding (21%).



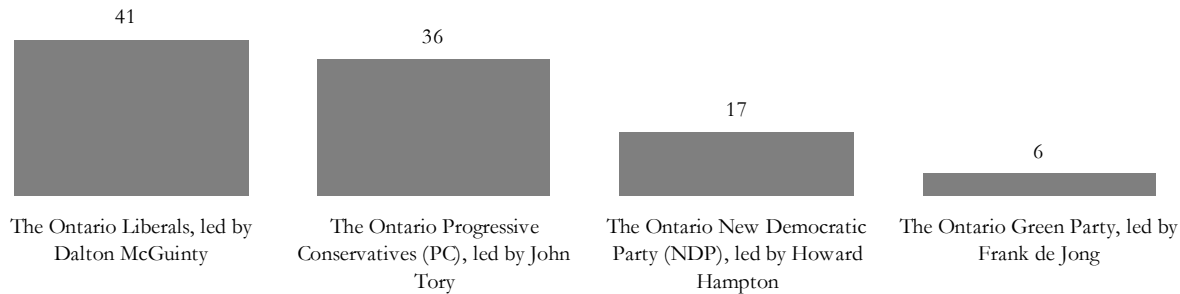
While the faith-based funding issue may weigh as an anchor on PC support, a majority Ontarians (52%) also say that it's time for new leadership in the province compared to 41% who say that the Liberal government under Dalton McGuinty deserves re-election.

It remains to be seen which problem, faith-based funding for schools or the lack of faith in Premiers leadership--with opposition critical of "broken promises"--will compel Ontario's voters in the run up to the October 10th contest.

And in a seat model done exclusively for Ipsos Reid using an aggregate of the last five publicly released polls, including today's result, by DemocraticSPACE show McGuinty's Liberals with 55 seats (40 solid, 15 leaning), Tory's Progressive Conservatives with 40 seats (28 solid, 12 leaning) and Hampton's NDP with 12 seats (9 solid, 3 leaning). With 107 seats in the Legislature, the seat model is currently projecting a likely slim Liberal *majority* government if the polling numbers appeared in real vote as they are herein on Election Day, October 10, 2007. However, with a month ahead in the campaign, these numbers will likely change.

Party Support in Ontario, September 8, 2007

Q: I would like you to focus on the Ontario provincial government, not the federal government. As you may know, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and his Provincial Liberal Party formed a majority government in the last provincial election. Thinking of how you feel right now, if a PROVINCIAL election were held tomorrow, which of the following parties' candidates would you, yourself, be most likely to support?



CanWest News Service/ Global News IpsosReid Survey, Aug. 28-Sept. 8, 2007. Decided voters including leaners (n=723).

6% of all Ontario adults (n=801) are undecided

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for CanWest News Service and Global Television from August 28 to September 8, 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 ± 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 Ontarian population according to Census data.



Seat Model Shows Liberals Take 55 Seats Of 107 Seats For Slim Majority...

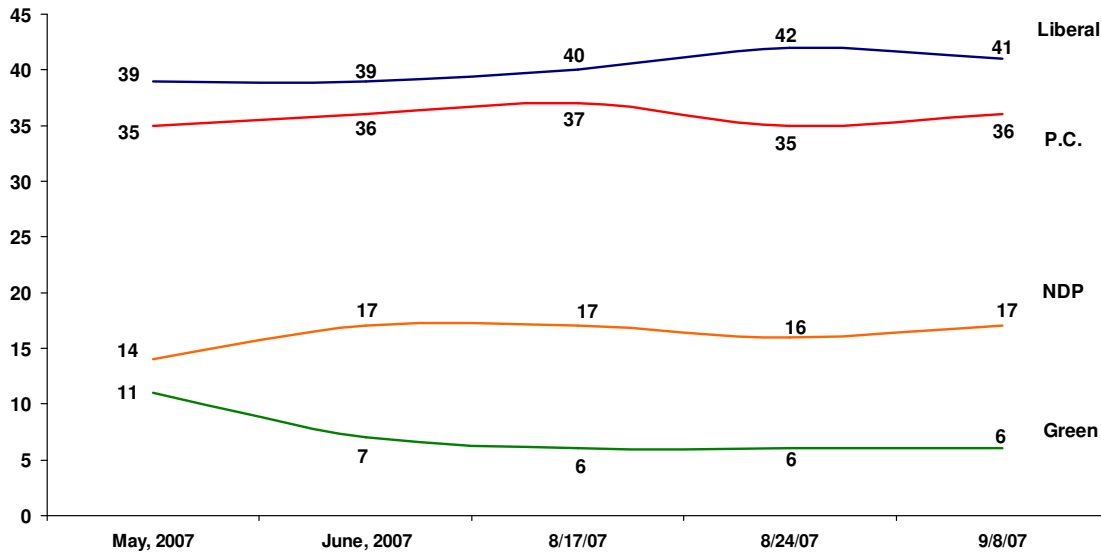
Using an aggregate of the last five publicly released polls, including today's result, seat projections prepared exclusively for Ipsos-Reid by DemocraticSPACE show McGuinty's Liberals with 55 seats (40 solid, 15 leaning), Tory's Progressive Conservatives with 40 seats (28 solid, 12 leaning) and Hampton's NDP with 12 seats (9 solid, 3 leaning) if the real vote appeared as in the polling numbers on election day on October 10, 2007. With a month of campaigning ahead these numbers may be subject to change. *For complete details on DemocraticSPACE's seat projections, please visit <http://democraticSPACE.com/ontario2007>.*

Liberals Lose Momentum in Ontario...

After widening their lead over the Conservatives to a seven-point margin in August, the Liberal advantage has narrowed to a five point lead today, taking the support of 41% of Ontarians compared to 36% for the PCs, marking little improvement over their four-point lead measured in May. The NDP (17%) and the Green Party (6%) remain in a holding pattern, moving little in their support since June.

Party Support in Ontario (Tracking)

Q: I would like you to focus on the Ontario provincial government, not the federal government. As you may know, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and his Provincial Liberal Party formed a majority government in the last provincial election. Thinking of how you feel right now, if a PROVINCIAL election were held tomorrow, which of the following parties' candidates would you, yourself, be most likely to support?



CanWest News Service/ Global News IpsosReid Survey, Aug. 28 – Sept. 8, 2007. Decided voters including leaners (n=722).

6% of all Ontario adults (n=801) are undecided

Within the GTA...

Within the GTA, the Liberals (at 42% support) enjoy a six-point lead over the Progressive Conservatives (at 36% support).

- In the 905 belt, the PCs have taken the lead at 44% to 40% for the Liberals, improving their take in the region by six-points since August 24. The NDP have the support of 10% of Ontarians living in the 905, while the Green Party has the support of 5% in the 905.

- In the 416, the Liberals are ahead by a 17-point margin over the PCs, with the support of 44% of Torontonians to 27% for the Tories. The NDP trails behind at 23% support, while the Green takes 6%.

Outside of the GTA...,

Outside of the GTA, the Liberals retain a slight three-point lead over the Progressive Conservatives with 39% support to 36% for the PCs. The NDP have the support of 18% of Ontarians outside of the GTA (up 2 points since August 24), while the Greens have the support of 6% of Ontarians living outside of the GTA (unchanged).

- In Central Ontario, the PCs have 40% support, a seven-point lead over the Liberals at 33%. The NDP trail at 21%, while the Green Party has the support of 7% of Central Ontarians. This is the only area of the province where the Tories have a lead over the Liberals.
- In Eastern Ontario, the Liberals have 49% support while the Progressive Conservatives lag at 35% support. The NDP are far behind at 11% support, while the Green Party has the support of only 4% of Eastern Ontarians.
- In South-western Ontario, the Liberals (38%) and PCs (37%) are locked in a one-point contest. The NDP is at 17% support, and the Green Party has 8% support.
- In Northern Ontario, the Liberals enjoy a comfortable 14-point lead over the PCs, with 42% support compared to 28%. The NDP are not far behind the PCs at 25% support, while the Green Party trails at 5% support among Northern Ontarians.

Those Most Likely to Support the Liberals...

Below is an analysis indicating those who are more likely to support the Liberals under Dalton McGuinty:

- Women (43%) are more likely than men (38%) to support the Liberals.
- Younger Ontarians, aged 18 to 34 (42%), and middle-aged Ontarians, aged 35 to 54 (41%), are just slightly more likely to support the Liberals than older Ontarians, aged 55 and older (39%).
- Those with a university degree (43%) are more likely than those with a post-secondary education (39%) or a high school diploma or less (38%) to support the Liberals.
- Those earning less than \$30,000 (49%) and those earning \$60,000 or more (42%) are more likely than middle-income earners, earning between \$40,000 and \$60,000 (35%), to support the Liberals.

Those Most Likely to Support the Progressive Conservatives...

Below is an analysis indicating those who are more likely to support the Progressive Conservatives under John Tory:

- Men (42%) are more likely than women (30%) to support the PCs.
- Older Ontarians, 55 years and older (43%), are more likely than middle-aged Ontarians, aged 35 to 54 (35%) to support the Conservatives. In turn, younger Ontarians, aged 18 to 34 are least likely to support the PCs (29%).

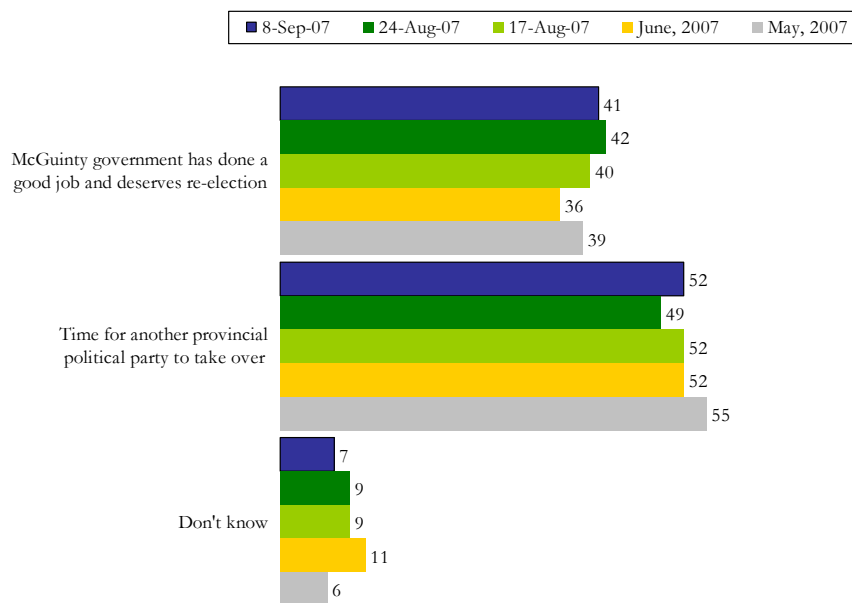
- Those with a high school diploma or less (38%) and those with some post-secondary education (38%) are more likely than those with a university degree (33%) to support the Tories.
- High income earners, earning \$60,000 or more (39%), and middle income earners, earning between \$40,000 and \$60,000 (39%) are more likely than lower income earners, earning \$30,000 or less (24%), to support the PCs.

Over half of Ontarians (52%) want a new Provincial party in power, while four in ten (41%) Believe McGuinty has done a 'Good Job'...

When presented with two differing opinions of the McGuinty government, 41% of Ontarians agree that the McGuinty government 'has done a good job and deserves re-election'. On the other hand, slightly more than half (52%) believe that 'it is time for another provincial party to take over' in Ontario. Seven percent (7%) do not know with which statement they most closely identify.

Assessment of McGuinty's Government, September 8, 2007

Some people say that the Liberal Government under Premier Dalton McGuinty has done a good job and deserves to be re-elected during the provincial election this upcoming October. Other people say that it is time for another provincial party to take over and run the province. Which statement is closest to your point of view?



CanWest News Service/ Global News IpsosReid Survey, Aug. 28-Sept. 8, 2007. All Ontarians (n=801).

Since August 24, the proportion of Ontarians who say McGuinty's government deserves re-election has dipped by one point to 41%, while the proportion who say that it is time for another political party to take over has grown by three-points to 52%.

Those most likely to say it is time for a new provincial party to take over include:

- Central Ontarians (57%) and Northern Ontarians (56%, ironic considering that Northern Ontarians support the Liberals over the PCs by a wide margin) compared to 44% among Eastern Ontarians (among whom a slight majority, 51%, say McGuinty deserves re-election);

- Older Ontarians, aged 55 and over (55%), and middle-aged Ontarians, aged 35 to 54 (54%), compared to younger Ontarians (45%);
- Men (56%) compared to women (49%);
- Those with some post-secondary education (55%) or a high school diploma or less (54%) compared to those with a university degree (48%); and,
- High income earners, earning \$60,000 or more (54%), and middle income earners, earning between \$30,000 and \$60,000 (54%), compared to lower income earners, earning less than \$30,000 (41%).

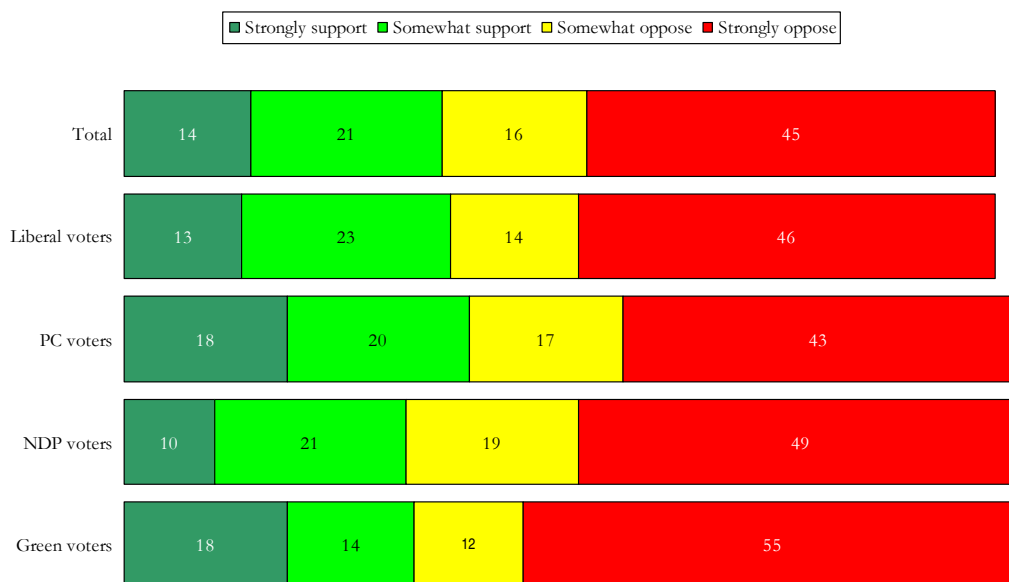
Three in Five Ontarians (62%) Oppose the Ontario Government Extending Full Funding to Faith-Based Schools...

Ontarians were read the statement, “A group of religious leaders from Ontario representing the Jewish, Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and Armenian communities is calling for the funding of all faith-based schools that meet provincial standards with taxpayer’s money. Currently, the Ontario Catholic school system is funded by taxpayers, but not other faith-based schools,” and asked whether they support or oppose extending full funding to faith-based schools.

On this basis, 62% of Ontarians *oppose* full funding for faith-based schools, including 45% who strongly oppose the plan. Just over one in three (35%) supports the plan, including 14% who strongly support it.

Support for Faith-based Funding Overall and By Party Support, September 8, 2007

Overall, do you support or oppose the Ontario Government extending full funding to these faith-based schools and others of a similar nature?



CanWest News Service/ Global News IpsosReid Survey, Aug. 28-Sept. 8, 2007. All Ontarians (n=801).

Among party supporters, opposition to faith based funding is as high among PC supporters (60% opposed, including 43% strongly) as among Liberal voters (60% opposed, including 46% strongly). NDP voters (68% opposed, including 49% strongly) and Green voters (67% opposed, including 55% strongly) are even more fixed in their opposition to faith-based school funding.

Among other demographic subgroups, those most likely to oppose faith-based funding for schools include:

- South-western Ontarians (66%) compared to Eastern Ontarians (54%);
- Older Ontarians, 55 years and older (69%), compared to younger Ontarians, 18 to 34 years of age (49%);
- Men (65%) compared to women (58%); and,
- Higher income earners, earning \$60,000 or more (64%), compared to those earning \$30,000 or less (53%).

When presented with options, more than half (53%) would prefer that the public and Catholic school systems be merged into a single school system...

Ontarians were given three options: merge the Catholic and public school systems into a single publicly funded system; keep everything as it is, continuing funding for Catholic schools but not other faith-based schools; or, extend funding to faith-based schools. On this basis, a majority of Ontarians (53%) say the Catholic and public systems should be merged into a single school system. One in four (23%) say the status quo – of funding Catholic, but not other faith-based schools—should prevail, while one in five (21%) believe that funding should be extended to all faith-based schools in the province.

Those more likely to prefer the two systems merge into a single system include:

- NDP (62%) and Green Party supporters (63%);

- Northern Ontarians (58%);
- Older Ontarians, 55 years of age and older (57%);
- University graduates (56%); and,
- Higher income earners, earning \$60,000 or more (55%).

When asked to choose, two thirds of Ontarians (65%) prefer Dalton McGuinty's perspective on faith-based funding to John Tory's...

Ontarians were asked to choose which of two perspectives best reflects their view: that government should not extend faith-based funding to other schools because we need to concentrate on strengthening our public school system and keep schools from becoming segregated, which is the essence of Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty's view; or, that by having government extend funding to other faith-based schools the system becomes more inclusive for all, the view of Progressive Conservative leader John Tory.

On this basis, about two in three Ontarians (65%) say the view espoused by Dalton McGuinty, that strengthening the public system and avoiding schools becoming segregated by faith, best reflects their own perspective, while three in ten (31%) prefer John Tory's belief that extending funding to faith-based schools other than only the Catholic system would make the system more inclusive for all.



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Liberal (68%), NDP (66%) and Green Party voters (66%) are each more likely to say the government should not extend faith-based funding, in favor of more support for the public school system, while PC voters (63%) are only slightly less likely to adopt this perspective.

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