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DALTON MCGUINTY LIBERALS TRACKING TO VICTORY WITH 7-POINT LEAD

DEBATE HAD LITTLE IMPACT

[Ottawa – October 3, 2011] – In our most recent roll up of roughly 1,200 eligible voters in Ontario, Dalton McGuinty's Liberal Party is opening up a stable and widening lead over rivals Hudak and Horwath. While the patterns that we have seen over the last week show that the debate has had no discernable impact on the fortunes of the three parties, the Ontario Liberals appear to be moving ahead slightly while the NDP appears to be wobbling slightly in the home stretch. Progressive Conservative support is quite firm, but simply not large enough at this point to wrestle power away from Dalton McGuinty.

Although the Liberal lead is highly statistically significant and appears to have widened, it is still unclear whether this will be a minority or majority government. The answer may very well lie in the issue of voter turnout which produced some major surprises in the May 2nd federal election. Stephen Harper's Conservative Party found a majority victory on the strength of a major turnout advantage in Ontario in May. The obvious question is how turnout will work in this election. Indeed, if the provincial Tories were to achieve the same turnout advantage that their federal cousins enjoyed, they could easily be vaulted into government. A careful analysis of the underlying forces at work suggests this is unlikely and it is the Ontario Liberals who will be very close if not over the cusp of majority on Thursday.

The main reasons for these assertions are based on an analysis of the demographics and the underlying emotional orientations of the constituencies for the main contenders. The most important predictor of turnout in Ontario's last federal election was age. Youth voters had the most anaemic participation rates; gen X, (25-45), somewhat better; boomers much better; and seniors (over 65) the highest rates. In the last federal election, the Conservative Party of Canada

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Ontario provincial vote intention:**
 - ☒ 37.8% LPO
 - ☒ 30.6% PC
 - ☒ 22.7% NDP
 - ☒ 7.3% Green
 - ☒ 1.6% other
- **Direction of province (Ontario):**
 - ☒ 59% right direction
 - ☒ 41% wrong direction
- **Direction of provincial government (Ontario):**
 - ☒ 53% right direction
 - ☒ 47% wrong direction
- **Impact of majority Conservative government on provincial vote intention:**
 - ☒ 42% less likely to vote PC
 - ☒ 34% neither more or less likely
 - ☒ 16% more likely to vote PC
 - ☒ 8% DK/NR
- **Emotions towards McGuinty government:**
 - ☒ 27% Discouraged
 - ☒ 26% Angry
 - ☒ 24% Hopeful
 - ☒ 11% Happy
 - ☒ 11% DK/NR

Please note that the methodology is provided at the end of this document.

virtually owned the senior vote in Ontario with nearly twice the support that the Liberals found there. The federal Conservatives also had a large lead with boomers, though they fared relatively poorly with younger voters (who mostly stayed home).

In this election, however, there is a profoundly different demographic. The Ontario Liberals have an insignificant lead with seniors (which may be growing) and they are also leading with the crucial boomer segment. The Progressive Conservatives do well with seniors and men but they also do well with lower educated voters who are less likely to vote. The Ontario Liberal Party has a massive lead with the university educated who are very likely to vote and may be emotionally engaged by the Liberals as well. The NDP does well with all of the groups that are softer voters (younger and lower socioeconomic status groups) and there is some evidence that they are not emotionally engaged enough to actually show up in the same proportions that they are found in our surveys.

The other crucial driver of voter turnout (other than party machinery) is emotional engagement. Ontario Liberal supporters show a strong mixture of optimism (primary) and happiness (secondary). Both of these positive sentiments are linked to higher voter turnout. It is also the case that Liberal supporters are nearly unanimously pleased with the direction of the Ontario government. Turning to the Progressive Conservative supporters, they are also emotionally engaged with a response that is largely "angry" although there may be a growth in the less motivating "discouraged" category which is the dominant emotional response to the current government within NDP supporters.

It is also notable that in addition to being more discouraged than mad, NDP supporters are not overly upset with the direction of the provincial government. This may be why much of the enlarged NDP base from May 2nd has gone to the Ontario Liberal Party (about 25% of current Ontario Liberal supporters voted NDP in May). When we put all of this together, we expect that the actual turnout will see the NDP (and the very soft Green Party vote) decline on Thursday.

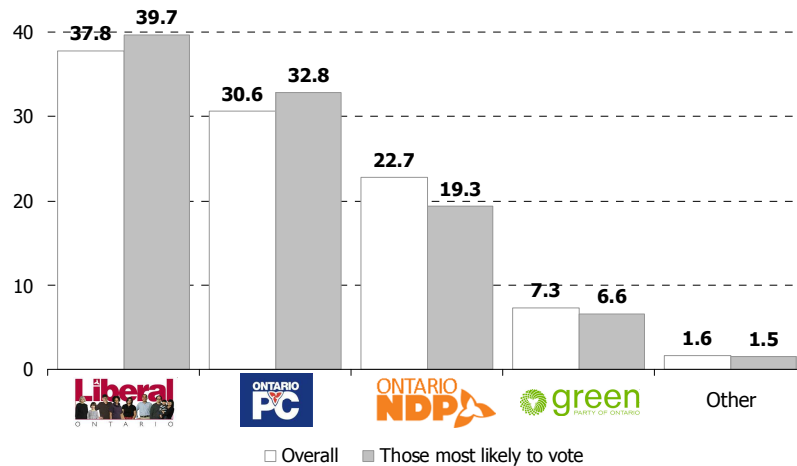
We have constructed a preliminary estimate of voter support among the most likely voters. It sees the following result¹:

¹ In this treatment of the data, we removed those who did not vote in the 2007 Ontario election and those who did not vote federally on May 2nd.

The data was also generated with an adjusted weight. We effectively doubled the weighted proportion of seniors (i.e., those over the age of 65) and halved the proportion of youth (those under 25). We also reduced reduced the weight of the Gen X cohort (those ages 25-44) by 25 per cent and left the balance to those ages 45-64 (leaving this group basically as it appears naturally in the population).

Provincial vote intention by likelihood of voting

Q. If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?



Note: The data on provincial vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only.

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BASE: Decided voters in Ontario; September 29-October 2, 2011 (n=1,133)

There is one other clear finding that is worth commenting on. We see that Ontario voters are clearly leaning to the idea that it is best to hedge bets with the senior levels of government in Ottawa and Queen's Park. Nowhere is this lean to saying that the presence of strong majority Conservative government will make more voters lean to a non-Conservative choice than in Toronto. The ruins of the federal Liberal fortress are not applying to this election where Toronto voters say that the Conservative majority in Ottawa makes them four times more likely to vote non-Conservative than Conservative. This suggests that the vision of Conservative "trifecta" has clearly dampened the Progressive Conservative Party's prospects throughout the Greater Toronto Area. It should be noted, however, that this aversion to multiple Conservative governments isn't rooted in some kind of "buyer's remorse" with regards to the current federal Conservative government; the Conservative Party of Canada still leads handily in Ontario.

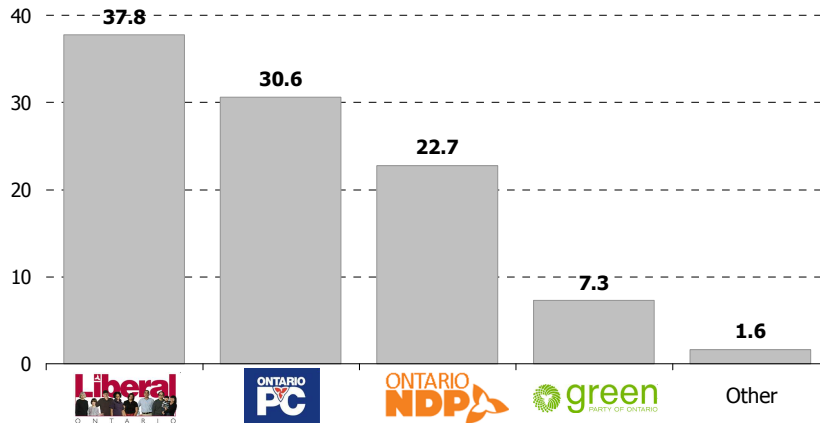
As you can see, this result would put the Ontario Liberals in government again. In fact, if turnout is as predicted now, it would produce a slim but clear majority. Over the final few days of the campaign, we will track the key predictors of turnout but based on the stability and trajectory, it appears that what would have been an unthinkable prospect of a third majority is now once again in the grasp of the Ontario Liberals.



Top Line Results:

Provincial vote intention

Q. If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?



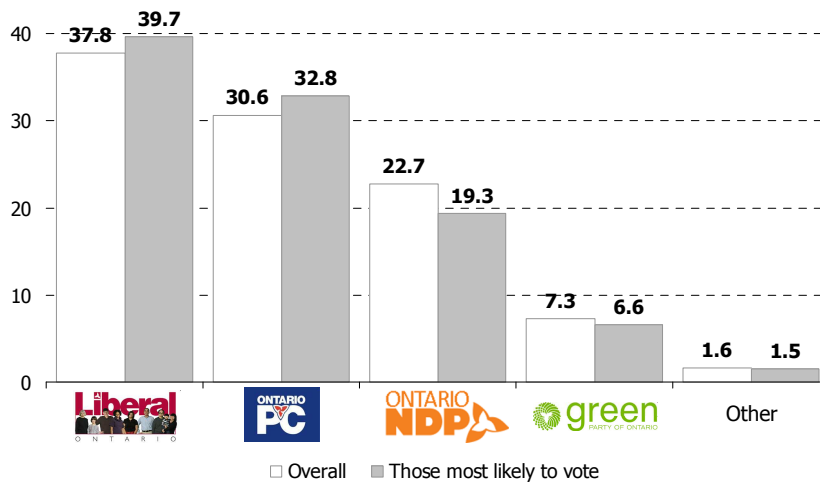
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Provincial vote intention by likelihood of voting

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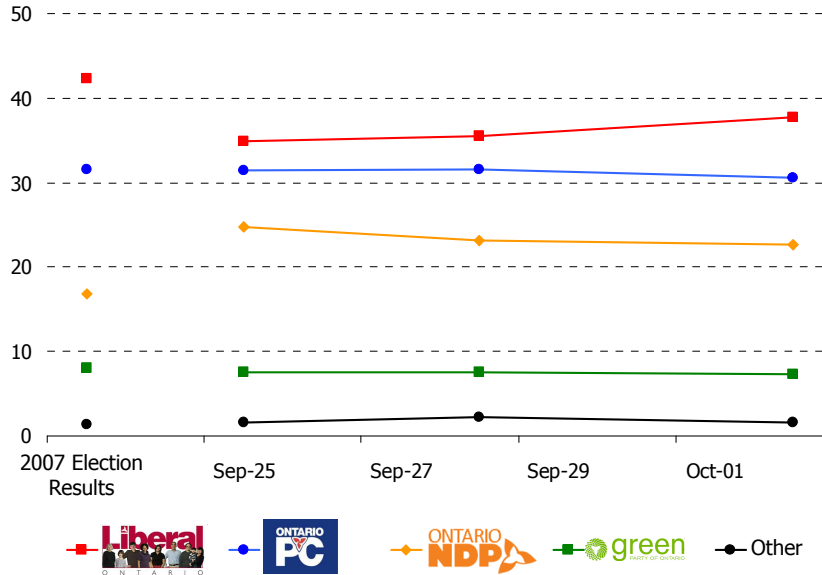
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BASE: Decided voters in Ontario; September 29-October 2, 2011 (n=1,133)

Tracking provincial vote intention

Q. If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?



Note: The data on provincial vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only.

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BASE: Decided voters in Ontario; most recent data point September 29-October 2, 2011 (n=1,133)

Provincial vote intention by federal vote intention

Q. If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

CURRENT VOTE INTENTION	Vote Intention (Overall)	Federal Vote Intention				
		LPC	CPC	NDP	GP	Other
	37.8	89.2	15.7	25.3	8.4	8.5
	30.6	3.6	74.9	6.2	10.9	7.0
	22.7	5.3	5.1	63.1	17.3	0.0
	7.3	1.6	2.3	4.9	63.5	0.0
Other	1.6	0.3	2.0	0.4	0.0	84.5

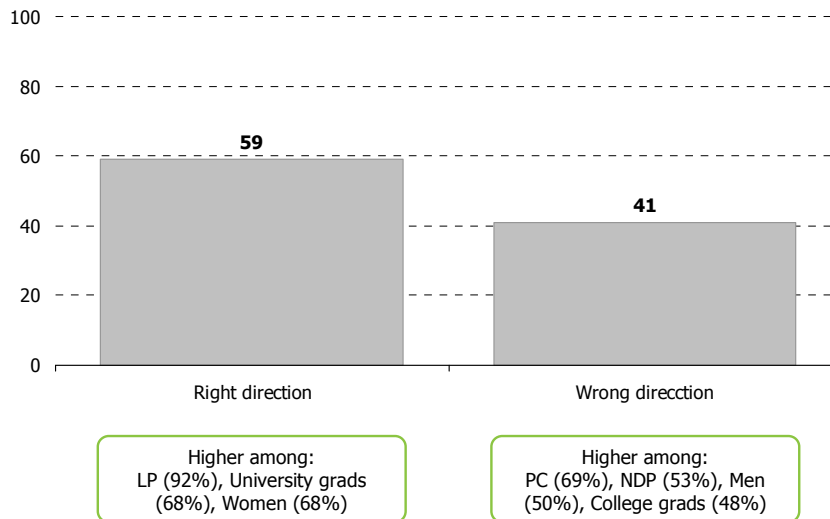
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BASE: Decided voters in Ontario; September 29-October 2, 2011 (n=1,133)



Direction of province

Q. All things considered, would you say Ontario is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?

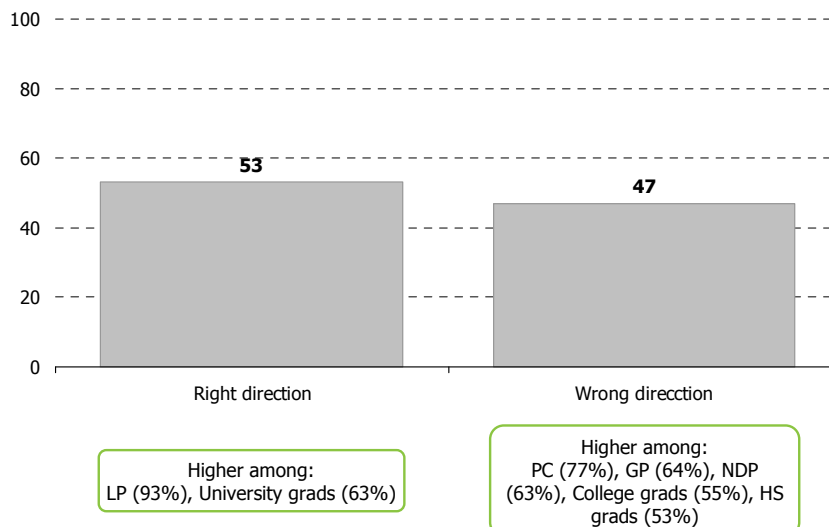


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BASE: Ontarians (half-sample); September 29-October 2, 2011 (n=548)

Direction of provincial government

Q. All things considered, would you say the Government of Ontario is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?



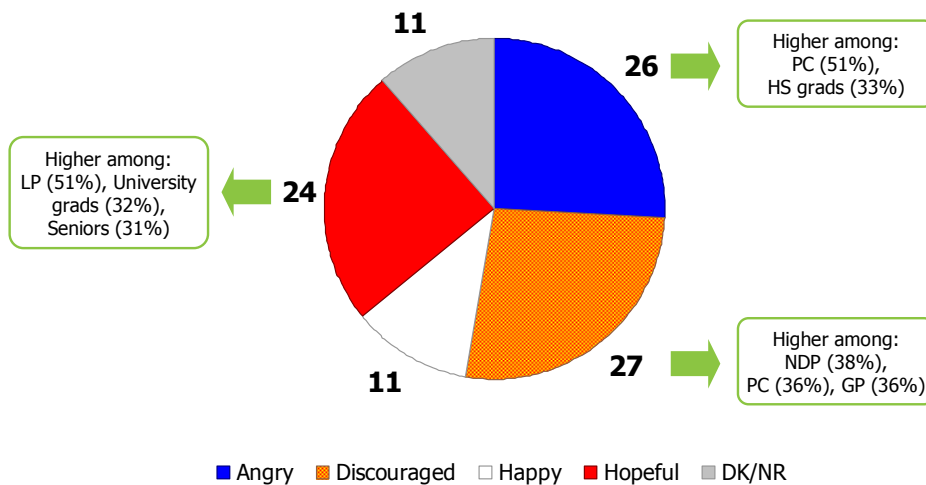
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BASE: Ontarians (half-sample); September 29-October 2, 2011 (n=660)



Emotions associated with McGuinty Liberal government

Q. When thinking about Dalton McGuinty's Liberal government, which of the following emotions best describes how you feel?

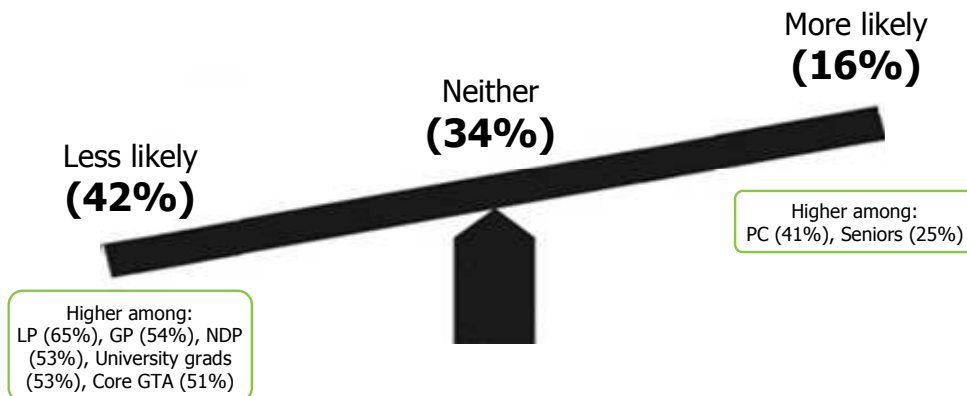


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BASE: Eligible voters in Ontario; September 29-October 2, 2011 (n=1,195)

Impact of majority Conservative government on vote intention

Q. Does the presence of a strong majority Conservative federal government make you less or more likely to vote for a Conservative choice in the next provincial election?



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BASE: Eligible voters in Ontario; September 29-October 2, 2011 (n=1,195)


Detailed Tables:

Provincial vote intention (Ontario)							
<i>Base: Decided and leaning voters</i>							
<i>Q. If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?</i>							
	Liberal	NDP	PC	Green	Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
PROVINCIALY	37.8%	22.7%	30.6%	7.3%	1.6%	1133	2.9
GENDER							
Male	36.2%	18.7%	36.9%	6.9%	1.4%	597	4.0
Female	39.3%	26.7%	24.5%	7.7%	1.9%	536	4.2
AGE							
<25	28.8%	37.9%	18.2%	13.0%	2.1%	53	13.5
25-44	38.7%	24.5%	27.2%	7.5%	2.2%	311	5.6
45-64	37.1%	20.5%	33.7%	7.2%	1.5%	466	4.5
65+	43.1%	14.1%	39.0%	3.4%	0.3%	303	5.6
EDUCATION							
High school or less	26.9%	27.2%	37.2%	7.9%	0.8%	256	6.1
College or CEGEP	30.7%	22.2%	36.5%	8.0%	2.6%	386	5.0
University or higher	48.9%	20.8%	22.7%	6.3%	1.3%	491	4.4
PLACE OF BIRTH							
Canada	36.8%	23.8%	30.6%	7.4%	1.5%	894	3.3
Outside Canada	41.9%	18.7%	30.3%	6.8%	2.3%	239	6.3
REGION							
Toronto/Core GTA	45.3%	24.7%	21.3%	8.1%	0.5%	235	6.4
Suburban GTA	36.7%	23.0%	33.0%	6.7%	0.6%	292	5.7
Southwestern Ontario	35.0%	23.9%	30.9%	6.6%	3.6%	247	6.2
Ottawa & Eastern Ontario	39.3%	13.4%	41.0%	4.9%	1.5%	206	6.8
Northeastern & Central Ontario	30.6%	29.7%	26.1%	11.2%	2.3%	141	8.3
Northwestern Ontario	29.9%	31.1%	27.3%	11.7%	0.0%	12	28.3
FEDERAL VOTE INTENTION							
Liberal Party	89.2%	5.3%	3.6%	1.6%	0.3%	301	5.7
Conservative Party	15.7%	5.1%	74.9%	2.3%	2.0%	431	4.7
NDP	25.3%	63.1%	6.2%	4.9%	0.4%	288	5.8
Green Party	8.4%	17.3%	10.9%	63.5%	0.0%	69	11.8
Other	8.5%	0.0%	7.0%	0.0%	84.5%	9	32.7

Direction of province (half sample)

Q. All things considered, would you say Ontario is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?

	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
PROVINCIALLY	59.2%	40.8%	548	4.2
GENDER				
Male	50.5%	49.5%	290	5.8
Female	67.5%	32.5%	258	6.1
AGE				
<25	63.1%	36.9%	24	20.0
25-44	57.7%	42.3%	150	8.0
45-64	56.1%	43.9%	228	6.5
65+	66.2%	33.8%	146	8.1
EDUCATION				
High school or less	53.5%	46.5%	131	8.6
College or CEGEP	52.4%	47.6%	186	7.2
University or higher	67.9%	32.1%	231	6.5
PLACE OF BIRTH				
Canada	56.3%	43.7%	429	4.7
Outside Canada	69.3%	30.7%	119	9.0
REGION				
Toronto/Core GTA	68.4%	31.6%	111	9.3
Suburban GTA	51.9%	48.1%	149	8.0
Southwestern Ontario	59.0%	41.0%	113	9.2
Ottawa & Eastern Ontario	60.7%	39.3%	88	10.5
Northeastern & Central Ontario	61.3%	38.7%	76	11.2
Northwestern Ontario	35.0%	65.0%	11	29.6
PROVINCIAL VOTE INTENTION				
Liberal Party	91.7%	8.3%	197	7.0
NDP	47.0%	53.0%	106	9.5
Progressive Conservative Party	31.1%	68.9%	165	7.6
Green Party	63.6%	36.4%	38	15.9
Other	47.6%	52.4%	5	43.8


Direction of provincial government (half sample)

Q. All things considered, would you say the Government of Ontario is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?

	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
PROVINCIALLY	53.3%	46.7%	660	3.8
GENDER				
Male	52.3%	47.7%	338	5.3
Female	54.2%	45.8%	322	5.5
AGE				
<25	56.9%	43.1%	35	16.6
25-44	53.9%	46.1%	183	7.2
45-64	50.1%	49.9%	270	6.0
65+	55.7%	44.3%	172	7.5
EDUCATION				
High school or less	47.2%	52.8%	151	8.0
College or CEGEP	45.3%	54.7%	224	6.6
University or higher	62.7%	37.3%	285	5.8
PLACE OF BIRTH				
Canada	51.3%	48.7%	516	4.3
Outside Canada	60.9%	39.1%	144	8.2
REGION				
Toronto/Core GTA	67.7%	32.3%	137	8.4
Suburban GTA	54.2%	45.8%	168	7.6
Southwestern Ontario	50.1%	49.9%	149	8.0
Ottawa & Eastern Ontario	48.9%	51.1%	129	8.6
Northeastern & Central Ontario	39.6%	60.4%	71	11.6
Northwestern Ontario	32.0%	68.0%	6	40.0
PROVINCIAL VOTE INTENTION				
Liberal Party	92.5%	7.5%	241	6.3
NDP	36.7%	63.3%	124	8.8
Progressive Conservative Party	23.1%	76.9%	211	6.8
Green Party	35.6%	64.4%	35	16.6
Other	29.1%	70.9%	11	29.6


Emotions associated with McGuinty Liberal government
Base: Eligible voters
Q. When thinking about Dalton McGuinty's Liberal government, which of the following emotions best describes how you feel?

	Angry	Discouraged	Happy	Hopeful	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
PROVINCIALITY	25.8%	27.1%	11.4%	24.4%	11.3%	1195	2.8
GENDER							
Male	31.0%	25.3%	13.7%	21.4%	8.6%	623	3.9
Female	21.0%	28.7%	9.3%	27.1%	13.8%	572	4.1
AGE							
<25	32.8%	18.2%	10.4%	15.6%	23.1%	57	13.0
25-44	25.3%	25.9%	14.0%	23.0%	11.8%	328	5.4
45-64	25.7%	32.3%	9.0%	25.5%	7.5%	494	4.4
65+	22.7%	24.8%	11.8%	30.7%	10.0%	316	5.5
EDUCATION							
High school or less	32.5%	32.0%	9.3%	15.0%	11.1%	277	5.9
College or CEGEP	31.2%	30.7%	8.6%	21.5%	8.0%	405	4.9
University or higher	18.1%	21.6%	14.8%	31.7%	13.9%	513	4.3
PLACE OF BIRTH							
Canada	26.7%	29.1%	10.9%	23.7%	9.6%	940	3.2
Outside Canada	22.7%	19.2%	13.4%	27.1%	17.6%	255	6.1
REGION							
Toronto/Core GTA	17.7%	23.4%	14.9%	28.8%	15.2%	245	6.3
Suburban GTA	30.0%	25.7%	9.9%	24.2%	10.1%	313	5.5
Southwestern Ontario	24.7%	31.2%	9.6%	23.6%	10.9%	259	6.1
Ottawa & Eastern Ontario	30.6%	24.1%	10.9%	23.4%	11.0%	217	6.7
Northeastern & Central Ontario	25.4%	31.9%	12.1%	21.5%	9.2%	145	8.1
Northwestern Ontario	28.7%	41.0%	19.9%	10.4%	0.0%	16	24.5
PROVINCIAL VOTE INTENTION							
Liberal Party	2.3%	8.9%	26.2%	51.2%	11.4%	438	4.7
NDP	28.5%	38.3%	4.6%	11.6%	17.1%	230	6.5
Progressive Conservative Party	51.2%	36.1%	1.6%	5.1%	6.0%	376	5.1
Green Party	29.2%	35.5%	6.5%	20.9%	8.0%	73	11.5
Other	53.8%	23.5%	0.0%	9.2%	13.4%	16	24.5

Impact of majority Conservative government on vote intention
Base: Eligible voters

Q. Does the presence of a strong majority Conservative federal government make you less or more likely to vote for a Conservative choice in the next provincial election?

	Less likely	Neither	More likely	DK/NR Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
PROVINCIALLY	42.1%	34.3%	15.7%	7.9%	1195	2.8
GENDER						
Male	42.3%	33.5%	18.4%	5.9%	623	3.9
Female	42.0%	35.0%	13.2%	9.8%	572	4.1
AGE						
<25	46.1%	36.3%	10.4%	7.1%	57	13.0
25-44	41.8%	38.0%	13.0%	7.2%	328	5.4
45-64	42.0%	34.0%	15.6%	8.3%	494	4.4
65+	40.5%	25.8%	24.8%	9.0%	316	5.5
EDUCATION						
High school or less	27.8%	43.1%	18.4%	10.7%	277	5.9
College or CEGEP	38.0%	33.0%	20.1%	8.9%	405	4.9
University or higher	53.1%	30.4%	10.9%	5.6%	513	4.3
PLACE OF BIRTH						
Canada	42.9%	34.8%	14.7%	7.6%	940	3.2
Outside Canada	39.1%	32.3%	19.5%	9.0%	255	6.1
REGION						
Toronto/Core GTA	51.4%	26.6%	12.9%	9.1%	245	6.3
Suburban GTA	36.2%	40.6%	16.0%	7.3%	313	5.5
Southwestern Ontario	42.3%	32.9%	16.8%	8.0%	259	6.1
Ottawa & Eastern Ontario	38.4%	35.9%	20.4%	5.3%	217	6.7
Northeastern & Central Ontario	44.6%	33.6%	12.6%	9.2%	145	8.1
Northwestern Ontario	37.4%	38.2%	0.0%	24.4%	16	24.5
PROVINCIAL VOTE INTENTION						
Liberal Party	64.5%	26.3%	1.9%	7.2%	438	4.7
NDP	53.1%	31.7%	4.8%	10.4%	230	6.5
Progressive Conservative Party	6.2%	47.5%	41.3%	5.0%	376	5.1
Green Party	53.6%	31.1%	10.9%	4.3%	73	11.5
Other	39.1%	15.7%	37.8%	7.5%	16	24.5

Methodology:

EKOS' weekly tracking polls are conducted using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology, which allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator.

In an effort to reduce the coverage bias of landline only RDD, we created a dual landline/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with a landline and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and landline only households. This dual frame yields a near perfect unweighted distribution on age group and gender, something almost never seen with traditional landline RDD sample or interviewer-administered surveys.

The field dates for this survey are September 29 – October 2, 2011. In total, a random sample of 1,208 Ontario residents aged 18 and over responded to the survey (including a sub-sample of 1,133 decided and leaning voters). The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-2.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of Ontario according to Census data.