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LIBERALS HEADED TO MAJORITY AS LEAD WIDENS TO 10 POINTS

[Ottawa – October 4, 2011] – In the final stages of the Ontario Election, Dalton McGuinty's Liberals have opened up a clear and, at this point, likely insurmountable lead over their rivals. At 39.1 points, they now have a full ten point advantage over the flagging Progressive Conservative Party who have fallen under 30 at 29.1 points. The NDP are stuck at 24.5, which seems to rule out their balance of power role in a possible minority situation and the Green Party is sitting at 6.0 points. In fact, barring some unforeseen late shifts, it would appear that Mr. McGuinty is now poised to comfortably secure a third successive majority.

Our survey involved 1,166 adults from across Ontario (including 1,065 decided and leaning voters) and was conducted from October 2-3. The margin of error associated with the total sample size is +/- 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

When we focus on the most likely voter population, this forecast isn't altered. This is important as in the May 2nd election, turnout dynamics produced a major shift in the final outcome as the Conservative Party of Canada drew a huge advantage with the voters who actually turned out. This time, a number of factors are coalescing to make this scenario highly unlikely. In fact, our adjusted estimate based on modelling conducted after the Ontario results on May 2nd suggests the following results (which we will refine in the coming couple of final days of the campaign):

- Ontario Liberal Party: 39.6 per cent
- Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario: 31.9 per cent
- New Democratic Party of Ontario: 22.1 per cent
- Green Party of Ontario: 5.3 per cent
- Other: 1.0 per cent

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Ontario provincial vote intention:**
 - ▣ 39.1% LPO
 - ▣ 29.1% PC
 - ▣ 24.5% NDP
 - ▣ 6.0% Green
 - ▣ 1.4% other
- **Ontario provincial vote intention (likely voters only):**
 - ▣ 39.6% LPO
 - ▣ 31.9% PC
 - ▣ 22.1% NDP
 - ▣ 5.3% Green
 - ▣ 1.0% other
- **Direction of province (Ontario):**
 - ▣ 58% right direction
 - ▣ 42% wrong direction
- **Direction of provincial government (Ontario):**
 - ▣ 56% right direction
 - ▣ 44% wrong direction

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

It is only natural that there may be some confusion or scepticism regarding this prediction. The polls have been rather inconsistent to this point in time and have actually averaged out to a slight lead for the Progressive Conservatives. So why this rather bold forecast?

First of all, our polling has not been inconsistent. We have seen the Liberal support as stable (across demographic and regional categories) and gradually widening in an orderly and clear fashion. Second of all, the key factors which produced a major advantage for the Conservative Party of Canada in Ontario on May 2nd are simply not in place here. In fact, it may be that many of the factors that served the federal Conservatives so well in that election are actually working in favour of Dalton McGuinty this time.

Some of these key factors include Liberal strength with seniors and boomers who are most likely to vote (they were far behind in these crucial segments on May 2nd), as well as with the university educated who are much more likely to vote than less educated and who have a hopeful positive orientation to the Ontario Government. Furthermore, as in the case of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his supporters, the Liberal Party of Ontario has overwhelming confidence in the current government and its direction. Just as in May, there is no burning appetite for the adventure of a change at this moment.

The Ontario Liberal supporters are also positively emotionally engaged around themes of optimism and happiness; the Progressive Conservatives are engaged around anger themes but there aren't enough persuaded by this message and the NDP are more discouraged and have a younger, lower socioeconomic status constituency which means they may well vote less than other supporters.

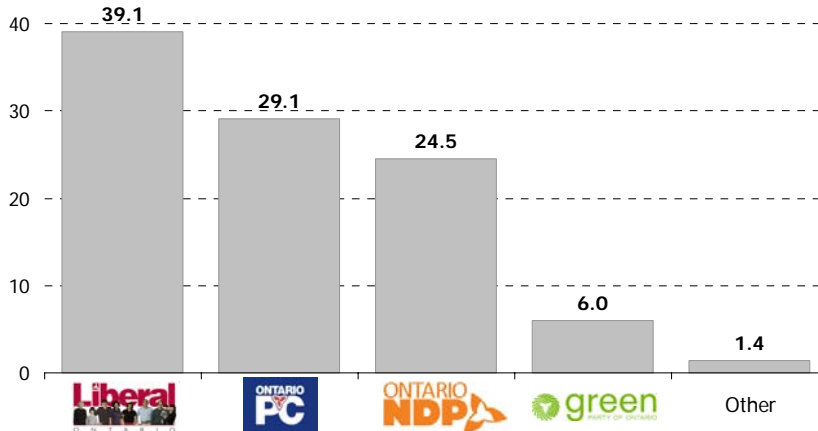
Finally, the Ontario Liberal Party has a huge advantage in Toronto which is driven by a desire to hedge bets and avoid having strong Conservative governments in the Greater Toronto Area, Ottawa, and Queen's Park. This is a more modest factor in the rest of Ontario as well and it is important to note that this aversion is not rooted in buyer remorse for the last federal election as the Conservative Party of Canada still leads handily over other parties in current federal vote intentions.

All in all, it looks very favourable for the Ontario Liberal Party and Dalton McGuinty is on the verge of what appears to be a third successive majority. This prospect would have been unthinkable six months ago and Election Day is still capable of delivering surprises but the smart money would pick a majority. We will monitor the final stages very carefully and make a final call on Wednesday.

Top Line Results:

Provincial vote intention

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



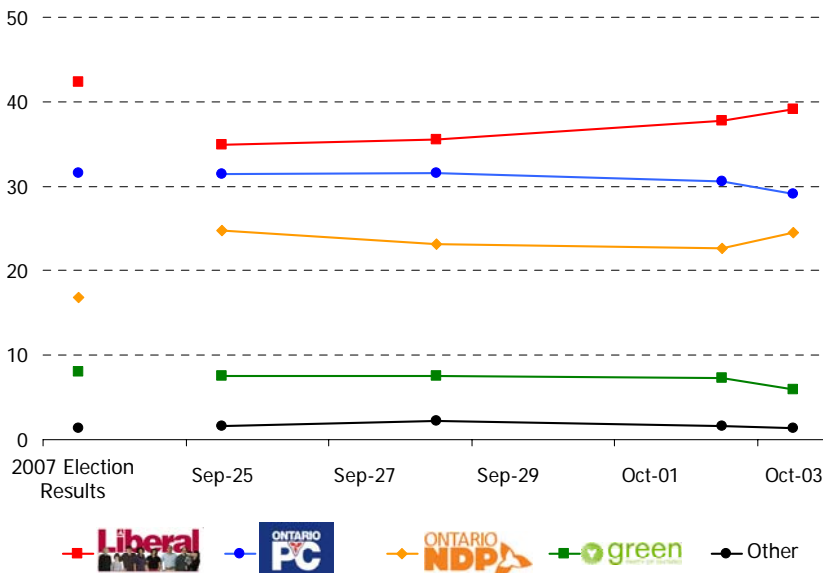
Note: The data on provincial vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only.

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BASE: Decided voters in Ontario; October 2-3, 2011 (n=1,065)

Tracking provincial vote intention

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



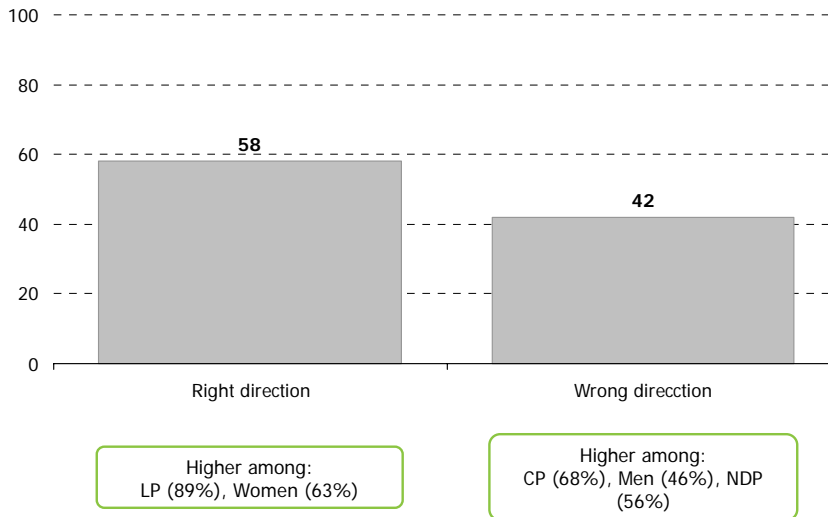
Note: The data on provincial vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only.

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BASE: Decided voters in Ontario; most recent data point October 2-3, 2011 (n=1,065)

Direction of province

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

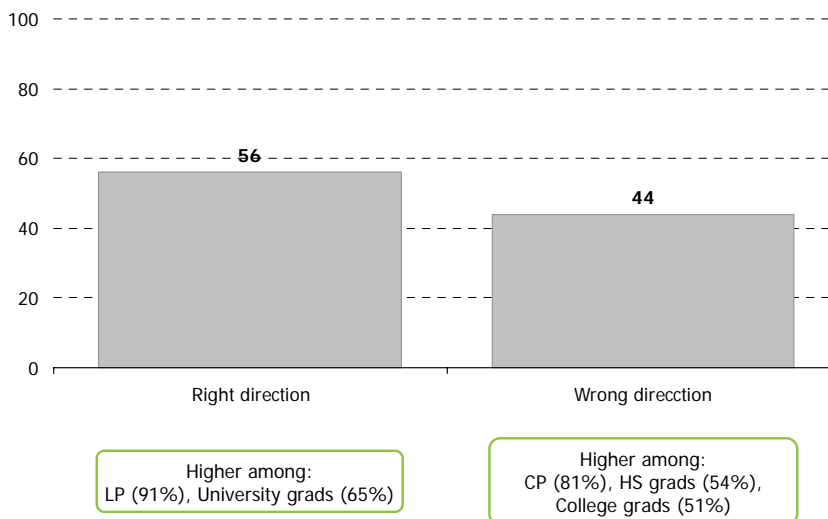


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BASE: Ontarians (half-sample); October 2-3, 2011 (n=539)

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); October 2-3, 2011 (n=508)

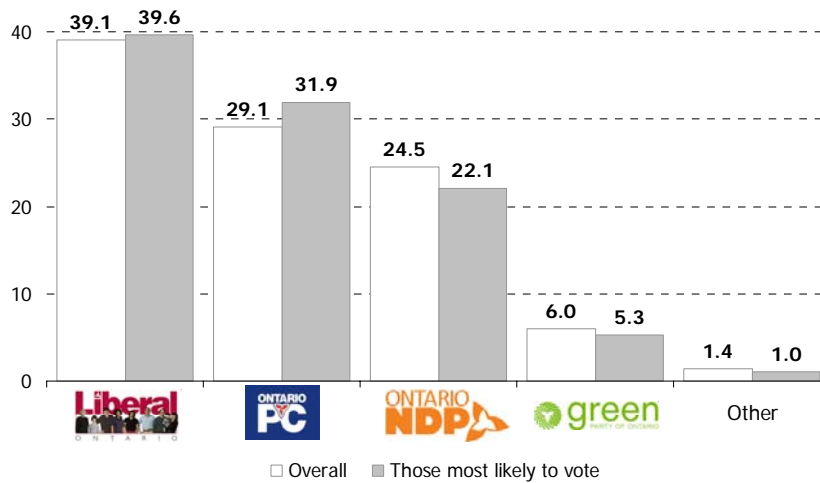
Voter Commitment:

We have constructed a preliminary estimate of voter support among the most likely voters. The results are shown below.

In this treatment of the data, we removed those who did not vote in the 2007 Ontario election. 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 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: October 2-3, 2011 (n=1,065)


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	39.1%	24.5%	29.1%	6.0%	1.4%	1065	3.0
GENDER							
Male	39.4%	19.9%	32.5%	6.7%	1.5%	531	4.3
Female	38.7%	29.0%	25.8%	5.2%	1.3%	534	4.2
AGE							
<25	40.4%	29.8%	17.1%	8.5%	4.2%	47	14.3
25-44	36.0%	26.8%	27.6%	8.3%	1.2%	252	6.2
45-64	40.3%	24.3%	29.3%	4.9%	1.1%	449	4.6
65+	41.7%	17.1%	38.7%	1.9%	0.6%	317	5.5
EDUCATION							
High school or less	32.8%	26.2%	30.8%	7.8%	2.4%	248	6.2
College or CEGEP	32.1%	27.9%	32.7%	5.3%	2.0%	344	5.3
University or higher	47.2%	21.2%	25.6%	5.5%	0.5%	473	4.5
PLACE OF BIRTH							
Canada	36.9%	25.4%	29.9%	6.3%	1.4%	851	3.4
Outside Canada	47.9%	21.0%	25.6%	4.3%	1.2%	214	6.7
REGION							
Toronto/Core GTA	50.1%	23.2%	19.8%	3.9%	3.0%	222	6.6
Suburban GTA	38.9%	23.5%	31.2%	6.4%	0.0%	277	5.9
Southwestern Ontario	35.0%	25.4%	32.7%	4.5%	2.3%	205	6.8
Ottawa & Eastern Ontario	32.9%	23.9%	34.1%	8.0%	1.1%	210	6.8
Northeastern & Central Ontario	35.5%	29.0%	27.5%	7.6%	0.5%	132	8.5
Northwestern Ontario	31.8%	22.3%	36.5%	9.4%	0.0%	19	22.5


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 (+/-)
PROVINCIALY	58.1%	41.9%	539	4.2
GENDER				
Male	53.9%	46.1%	284	5.8
Female	62.6%	37.4%	255	6.1
AGE				
<25	66.9%	33.1%	30	17.9
25-44	54.1%	45.9%	126	8.7
45-64	56.5%	43.5%	241	6.3
65+	62.8%	37.2%	142	8.2
EDUCATION				
High school or less	62.1%	37.9%	114	9.2
College or CEGEP	51.2%	48.8%	183	7.2
University or higher	61.7%	38.3%	242	6.3
PLACE OF BIRTH				
Canada	56.1%	43.9%	417	4.8
Outside Canada	65.0%	35.0%	122	8.9
REGION				
Toronto/Core GTA	68.0%	32.0%	109	9.4
Suburban GTA	50.0%	50.0%	141	8.3
Southwestern Ontario	55.3%	44.7%	106	9.5
Ottawa & Eastern Ontario	53.4%	46.6%	100	9.8
Northeastern & Central Ontario	69.9%	30.1%	73	11.5
Northwestern Ontario	52.5%	47.5%	10	31.0
PROVINCIAL VOTE INTENTION				
Liberal Party	88.6%	11.4%	201	6.9
NDP	43.8%	56.2%	100	9.8
Progressive Conservative Party	31.7%	68.3%	161	7.7
Green Party	52.3%	47.7%	29	18.2
Other	34.0%	66.0%	6	40.0

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	55.6%	44.4%	508	4.4
GENDER				
Male	52.0%	48.0%	246	6.3
Female	58.8%	41.2%	262	6.1
AGE				
<25	55.5%	44.5%	18	23.1
25-44	53.2%	46.8%	132	8.5
45-64	56.8%	43.2%	206	6.8
65+	58.7%	41.3%	152	8.0
EDUCATION				
High school or less	46.4%	53.6%	113	9.2
College or CEGEP	48.7%	51.3%	160	7.8
University or higher	64.7%	35.3%	235	6.4
PLACE OF BIRTH				
Canada	53.6%	46.4%	411	4.8
Outside Canada	64.6%	35.4%	97	10.0
REGION				
Toronto/Core GTA	69.1%	30.9%	100	9.8
Suburban GTA	59.1%	40.9%	133	8.5
Southwestern Ontario	49.8%	50.2%	92	10.2
Ottawa & Eastern Ontario	51.9%	48.1%	115	9.1
Northeastern & Central Ontario	41.8%	58.2%	60	12.7
Northwestern Ontario	36.1%	63.9%	8	34.7
PROVINCIAL VOTE INTENTION				
Liberal Party	90.7%	9.3%	196	7.0
NDP	48.2%	51.8%	113	9.2
Progressive Conservative Party	18.9%	81.1%	148	8.1
Green Party	44.4%	55.6%	17	23.8
Other	44.0%	56.0%	4	49.0


2007 Provincial Vote (Ontario)
Base: Eligible voters
Q. How did you vote in the most recent provincial election, held in 2007?

	LP	PC	NDP	Green	Other	Didn't vote	DK/NR	Sample Size	MOE (+/-)
PROVINCIALLY	36.2%	25.4%	19.1%	4.8%	0.7%	7.9%	6.0%	1147	2.9
GENDER									
Male	36.6%	29.3%	15.4%	5.3%	0.9%	7.6%	4.9%	568	4.1
Female	35.8%	21.7%	22.6%	4.2%	0.4%	8.3%	7.1%	579	4.1
AGE									
<25	28.1%	13.9%	22.2%	9.9%	2.0%	21.9%	2.1%	50	13.9
25-44	32.6%	21.5%	20.9%	6.6%	0.0%	11.4%	7.0%	273	5.9
45-64	40.3%	27.2%	19.1%	3.3%	0.8%	3.3%	6.0%	490	4.4
65+	39.8%	36.8%	13.2%	0.9%	0.9%	1.8%	6.5%	334	5.4
EDUCATION									
High school or less	28.6%	26.4%	20.5%	5.6%	1.5%	11.2%	6.1%	266	6.0
College or CEGEP	30.8%	28.9%	21.9%	4.0%	0.4%	7.9%	6.1%	377	5.1
University or higher	43.9%	22.4%	16.2%	4.9%	0.4%	6.3%	5.9%	504	4.4
PLACE OF BIRTH									
Canada	35.3%	26.1%	19.4%	5.4%	0.7%	7.0%	6.1%	907	3.3
Outside Canada	39.3%	22.8%	17.8%	2.3%	0.5%	11.7%	5.6%	240	6.3
REGION									
Toronto/Core GTA	43.1%	17.9%	20.6%	4.0%	0.9%	9.5%	3.9%	235	6.4
Suburban GTA	34.1%	31.0%	16.7%	4.4%	0.8%	7.3%	5.7%	299	5.7
Southwestern Ontario	34.2%	23.9%	19.5%	5.7%	0.9%	8.6%	7.1%	222	6.6
Ottawa & Eastern Ontario	35.9%	27.2%	16.6%	6.4%	0.4%	7.4%	6.1%	226	6.5
Northeastern & Central Ontario	30.6%	28.2%	24.3%	2.2%	0.0%	6.3%	8.5%	143	8.2
Northwestern Ontario	41.7%	15.0%	18.5%	8.7%	0.0%	8.2%	7.9%	22	20.9
PROVINCIAL VOTE INTENTION									
Liberal Party	66.3%	10.4%	10.5%	1.3%	0.0%	8.3%	3.1%	423	4.8
NDP	20.9%	9.9%	50.7%	4.8%	0.0%	8.1%	5.6%	244	6.3
Progressive Conservative Party	16.7%	64.5%	5.5%	2.5%	0.4%	5.3%	5.1%	333	5.4
Green Party	20.9%	11.7%	21.5%	37.8%	0.9%	3.8%	3.4%	53	13.5
Other	5.8%	13.4%	16.2%	16.2%	27.5%	20.9%	0.0%	12	28.3

Methodology:

EKOS' 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 October 2-3, 2011. In total, a random sample of 1,166 Ontario residents aged 18 and over responded to the survey (including a sub-sample of 1,065 decided and leaning voters). The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/- 2.9 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.