

EKOS ACCURATELY PREDICTS ROB FORD'S VICTORY

[Toronto – October 26, 2010] As other polls and pundits were calling the race for Toronto's new mayor "too close to call,"^{1,2,3} EKOS correctly predicted a strong win for Rob Ford. Over the last week of the race, EKOS' nightly polling showed Ford with a widening lead over his nearest rival. Our final three day roll up was nearly identical to the final election result.

So why this clearly flawed sense of a tightly deadlocked race? The other polls were off for different reasons. First, Ford surged in the last few days of his campaign and this late trend was missed by those who polled earlier. Second, for those using non-random online polls, it is notable that the crucial strength for Ford was older voters and those of lower and moderate socioeconomic status. Internet use among these groups is much lower than general population. This particular result harshly exposes the problem of ignoring those who do not use the internet regularly (not to mention the problems of non-random opt-in sampling).

EKOS' successful prediction was a product of utilising advanced survey methodology. Our Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) technology allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator. IVR technology is not the methodology; it is simply the medium for administering sound survey design. We sampled randomly, used call backs, and replaced carefully, and our design and analysis were sound. IVR has an advantage over live interview polls in that it avoids the social desirability bias where a respondent would be uncomfortable identifying themselves as a Ford supporter (a non issue in the ballot booth and answering to a computer). We found this problem in the early days of Reform support where live interviewers consistently underestimated Reform support. This may have explained why other live interviewer polls understated Ford's support.

Beyond the issues of methodology, there are some crucial substantive lessons contained in the polling analysis. The results reveal the continued strength of a new brand of populist conservatism which rejects the old elite authorities. This movement is rooted in older, less educated voters. What is particularly notable is that they are increasingly on the winning side. As we commented in our final poll release on Sunday, "Mr. Ford has a huge lead with older voters. Mr. Smitherman does very well with the most educated voters, but this will not be a large enough advantage to surpass Mr. Ford's overall advantage. Education and age will be the key fault lines remaining after the winner is declared."

Educated, centrist-progressives continue to roll their eyes and click their tongues as they see the political agenda wrestled away from them by this angry and insecure cohort of older less educated voters. From the Tea Party movement in the States, to the continued dominance of Harper's conservatives on the federal stage, Rob Ford's victory is just another vivid illustration of

¹ "... Toronto's too-close-to-call mayoral race veered into dirty territory..." -The Globe and Mail (Oct. 24)

² "All polls, published and private, now show the race as too close to call between Ford and Smitherman." -Montreal Gazette (Oct. 25)

³ "(Toronto's mayoral race) was considered too close to call as voters headed to the polls Monday." -Toronto Star (Oct. 25)

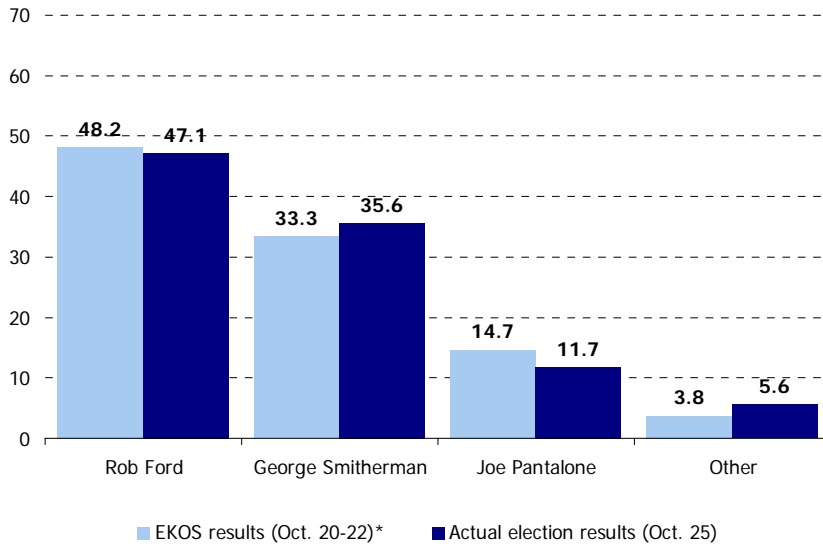
the new rules of electoral success. At some point, the progressives may want to park their indifference and contempt and take a few pages out of the increasingly successful populist conservative playbook.

For more information:

Charlie Graves
Vice President, Toronto
416.598.8002 x224

Frank Graves
President, Ottawa
613.235.7215 x105

EKOS versus the actual results



**Full report released on October 24th and is available at www.ekospolitics.ca*

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