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## Women have eyes on McGuinty

50% say they'll vote for Liberals  
Star poll targeted decided voters

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One out of two women say they'll vote for Dalton McGuinty's Liberals in the Oct. 2 election, the latest Toronto Star poll shows.

The EKOS Research Associates poll shows that among decided voters, 50 per cent of women support the Liberals, compared to 28 per cent for the Progressive Conservatives and 19 for the New Democrats.

The Liberal lead among men is less pronounced although sizeable, with 46 per cent supporting them, compared to 35 per cent for the Tories and 16 per cent for the NDP.

Liberal popularity among women was highlighted yesterday when McGuinty received two standing ovations at a Liberal fundraiser attended by about 200 business women.

Pamela Jeffrey, founder of the Women's Executive Network, introduced McGuinty's wife to the Sutton Place gathering, saying: "Terri McGuinty, the envy of every woman in this room."

The 48-year-old McGuinty got a standing ovation when he walked in and after speaking.

"My dad was a professor of romantic poetry and after 10 kids my mom said that will be enough romance, thank you very much," said McGuinty.

The businesswomen paid \$75 a plate to hear McGuinty's plan to subsidize day care and offer job-protected, six-week leave for workers who must care for dying parents or ill children.

In a speech peppered with anecdotes about his wife and children, McGuinty promised to help hard-working families struggling to care for both aging parents and growing children by forcing employers to grant workers time off if needed.

At one point, he recited poetry by Alfred Lord Tennyson to explain his inspiration to serve the province "at the expense of losing more male votes."

Since Mike Harris' Tories took power in 1995 with their right-of-centre policies, polls have consistently showed women favouring the Liberals.

McGuinty said he and his wife can empathize with the challenges of working parents. They've lived apart for much of the past 13 years; him in Toronto five days a week and Terri in Ottawa raising their four children,

"She has, in effect, been a single mom at least five days a week ... there are thousands and thousands of Ontario families going through the same kinds of challenges. Why she has not changed the locks on me I will never ever know," he said.

"This audience is full of women who juggle busy lives doing a wonderful job of raising the kids, helping their

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husbands, as well as being outstanding professionals in business or the arts or, heaven forbid, politics."

Asked later why women like him or his party's policies, McGuinty was suddenly shy.

"I'm making an appeal to all voters of all ages, of all genders. I'm speaking to those issues that I think resonate with all Ontarians," he said. "Good health care and good education is good for men and it's good for women. It's good for those people who are concerned about the social well-being of our society and it's good just as equally for those who are concerned about the strength of our economy."

McGuinty talked about subsidized day care — from \$5 to \$30 a day depending on family income — with a price tag of \$300 million a year, in the fourth year. The income ceiling is \$75,000 a year, unlike in Quebec, where everyone pays \$5 per child per day regardless of income.

"The first step to be taken during our first term will be to improve the quality and affordability of child care for our families, and this is just part of our commitment to what is going to be my top priority — public education," he said.

For the first time, McGuinty talked about the unpaid leave.

"We will introduce a new family medical leave act that will provide up to six weeks of job-protected unpaid leave to help you care for a member of your family," he said to loud applause. The U.S. has had a similar program for about a decade.

"Employers will have to grant that," McGuinty said.

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