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IN TOMORROW'S PAPER:

Caroline is in the City, and she knows where to find a good time...Tuesday's Lifestyle section....



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SUNshine Girl

SUN Comment Editorial

Sun, October 2, 2005

Dubious road ahead for Dalton

- E-MAIL TO A FRIEND
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Today, at the exact halfway mark of his first term of office, Premier Dalton McGuinty is trying to put the widespread public perception that he's a serial promise breaker behind him.

That's why he admitted on talk radio last week, in response to an indignant caller, that, yes, he broke his key election pledge in the 2003 campaign not to raise taxes.

He made this admission so he could move the debate on to his defence -- that he raised taxes for the greater good, in order to improve health care.

This is all intended to address what everyone knows will be McGuinty's Achilles heel in the next election, set for Oct. 4, 2007. That is, that based on his own record, he can't be trusted to keep his promises.

Only thing is, the widespread public perception of McGuinty isn't simply that he's a promise breaker. It's that he's a liar.

Asked earlier this year in a SES Research poll what they didn't like about McGuinty, a remarkable 41% of those surveyed responded, unprompted, that he "lied" or was a "liar."

These days, the news is somewhat better for the premier, although we doubt it's the sort of thing he'll be shouting from the rooftops in the coming weeks.

YOUR TURN

Do you think Governor General **Michaëlle Jean** will help the federalist cause in her home province of Quebec?

- Yes, she will inspire change.
- No, there will always be "two solitudes"

SUBMIT

Results



A follow-up SES poll showed that 41% figure has now dropped to 25%.

As SES pollster Nikita Nanos put it: "It's like the temperature in the kitchen has gone down from 95 degrees to 85 degrees, but it's still hot."

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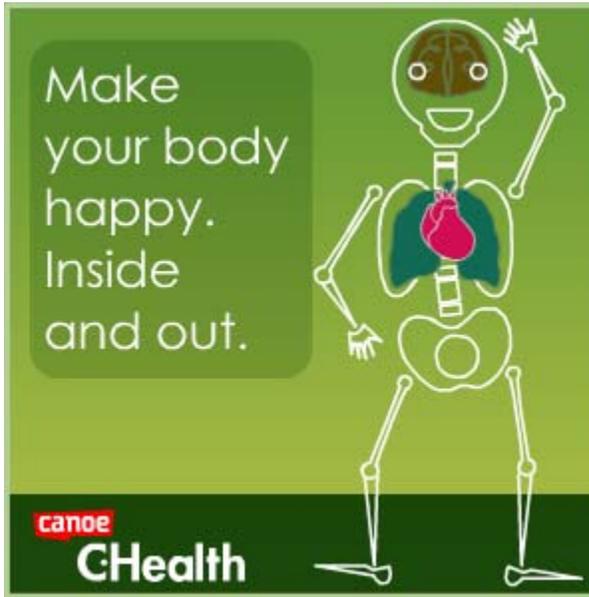
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Indeed. The fact remains many Ontario voters don't just believe McGuinty broke his tax freeze pledge to them -- along with many of his 230 other promises.

They believe McGuinty knew he couldn't keep this promise when he made it, while at the same time pledging all sorts of other expensive goodies like hiring 8,000 more nurses, 1,000 more cops and lowering class sizes in the early grades.

This perception that McGuinty deliberately lied during the 2003 campaign is far more dangerous to him than the relatively benign allegation he's now defending himself against.

That is, that while he did break his word, he made his original promise in good faith and only realized he couldn't keep it after the election, once he got a look at the books.

Ah, yes. The books.

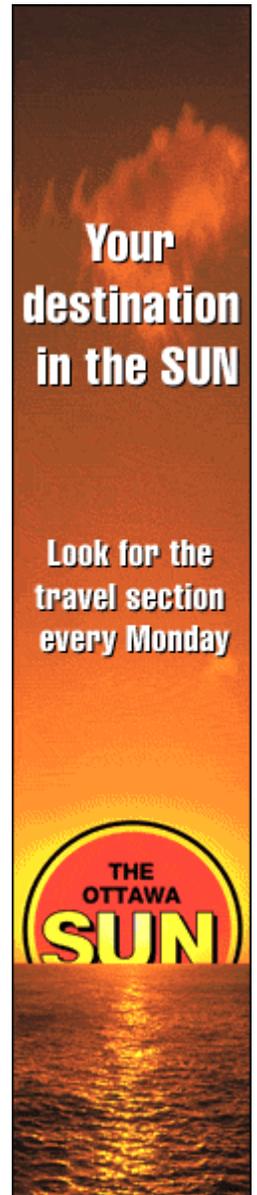
Since he first got to see those books, Premier McGuinty has magically been able to reduce a deficit that was initially projected at \$6.1 billion (horror of horrors!), and later \$3 billion, down to \$1.6 billion.

In other words, McGuinty appears to have torn a page from the Paul Martin school of accounting, where you run around screaming the sky is falling at the start of every year, so that things look better than you predicted at the end.

Our question is this: If McGuinty's defence for breaking his tax freeze pledge is that keeping it would have harmed the province, which of his 230 other promises is not vulnerable to being broken, using exactly the same logic? And why should the public believe any promise he makes in 2007?

We'll say this for him. The next two years should be fun.

Next story: [City mourns for Jennifer](#)



This site is updated by 6:00 a.m. EST each day and includes stories and columns from the day's print edition of the Sun.