



Media Release

Ontario PC support stalled – Performance and Budget Critical Leadership Change Right Choice

Ottawa, June 19, 2002 - A provincial survey of Ontarians released by polling firm SES Research indicates that the McGuinty-Liberals continue to enjoy a comfortable lead over the Ontario PCs. Government performance and public reaction to the provincial budget will be critical to defining the Eves-led Tories and moving the numbers.

Current SES polling puts the Ontario Liberals at 52%, the Progressive Conservatives (PC) at 34%, the NDP at 11% and the Green Party at 3% in Ontario. Support for both of the leading parties remains relatively unchanged since September 2001.

However, when asked to gauge the impact of the PC leadership change, 43% of Ontarians believed that Ernie Eves would increase the PCs chance of winning the next election.

This compares with only 14% of voters who said chances of a PC victory would decline as a result of the change. 27% said there would be no impact and 16% were unsure.

“This is a clear signal that Ontario voters were ready for a change in the leadership of the PC Party of Ontario,” stated Nikita Nanos, of the polling firm SES Research.

Fifty-three percent of Ontarian said they would consider voting PC compared to only 44% four months ago. This increase in the number of accessible voters has predominantly been driven by middle-aged Ontarians, a group critical to forming a government because of their preponderant likelihood to vote.

“The fact that the percentage of voters who would consider voting PCs has dramatically increased is also indicative that the PCs are now in position to realize some growth in support.”

“The PC leadership and resulting shift in direction have made the PCs an option for voters fatigued by the Harris-led Common Sense Revolution. The increase in the number of accessible PC voters could make the field very competitive in the next six months,” said Nanos.



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Among conservative voters, reaction to budget measures such as the tax cut moratorium will be critical. “Eves must tread a fine line between alienating core conservative supporters and appealing to soft Liberal voters,” said Nanos.

The one negative note for the PCs is that there has been virtually no change in voters evaluation of the Ontario PC government. Only thirty percent of voters characterized government performance as very/somewhat good compared to 31% four months ago. “Ontarians want to wait and see how Premier Eves performs,” noted Nanos. “Our polling data shows that although Ontarians are ready to give Premier Eves a chance, they have not yet passed judgment. The performance of the government in the next six months will be critical.”

SES’s Ontario Omnibus Survey is conducted every four months. It is based on a random telephone sample of 500 Ontarians, 18 years of age and older and was conducted on May 31st and June 1st, 2002. The margin of accuracy for the survey is 4.5 percentage points, plus or minus, 19 times out of 20. Validation of the demographic profile of respondents indicates that the poll is a fair representation of the Canadian voting populace.

Established in 1987, SES Canada Research Inc. is a full service marketing and public opinion research firm with offices in Toronto and Ottawa.

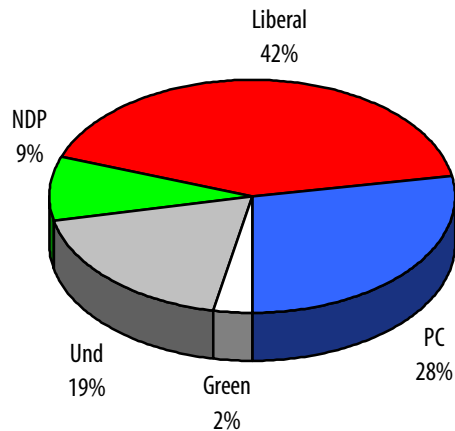
For a detailed review of the survey tables, please visit the SES Research website at <http://www.sesresearch.com>.

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THE BALLOT (committed and undecided)



Decided (%) Jun-02 Jan-02 1999*

PC	▼	34.1	35.6	45.1
Liberal	▼	52.3	53.1	39.9
NDP	▲	10.9	10.6	12.6
Green	▲	2.7		0.7

* Provincial Election

Commentary

Although there has been no major shift in support, factoring the margin of accuracy of the poll, the number of Ontarians who would consider voting PC has noticeably jumped from 44% to 53% since January 2002.

The recent leadership change has resulted in an increase in the number of accessible PC voters. The absence of a PC bump in support following the leadership convention would indicate that Ontarians are taking a "wait and see" attitude regarding Premier Eves.

THE METHODOLOGY

On May 31 and June 1, 2002, SES conducted a total of 500 telephone interviews across Ontario with eligible voters. Aggregate results of the survey are accurate to within 4.5 percentage points, plus or minus, 19 times out of 20.

Validation of the demographic profile of respondents indicates that the poll is a fair representation of the voters of Ontario.

Target Groups (+/- index)	PC	LIB	NDP	Und
Men	+5	-2	+1	-3
Women	-6	+3	-1	+4
18 to 29 years of age	-10	+15	-4	-1
30 to 39 years of age	+11	-7	+4	-7
40 to 49 years of age	+5	-6	+6	-7
50 to 59 years of age	-6	+11	-4	-1
60 plus	-4	-12	-4	+18
Homeowners	0	0	-1	+2
Renters	-1	+1	+1	-3
Urban Postal Code	-1	+1	+2	-1
Rural Postal Code	+3	-1	-6	+3

Note: Plus/minus index scores are based on the difference between the sub-group and the sample average. For example a +15 score for the Liberals would indicate that the subgrouping is 15% more likely to vote Liberal than the average voter.

PC Accessible (%) Yes No Und

Regardless of how you cast your ballot, would you consider voting for the Ontario Progressive Conservatives?

All voters (June 2002)	53	30	17
All voters (January 2002)	44	38	18
Men	58	28	14
Women	49	32	20
18 to 29 years of age	51	38	11
30 to 39 years of age	64	18	18
40 to 49 years of age	55	33	12
50 to 59 years of age	50	37	13
60 plus	42	27	30
Homeowners	57	25	19
Renters	48	39	14
Urban Postal Code	54	31	15
Rural Postal Code	50	27	23

ABOUT SES

Established in 1987, SES Canada Research Inc. is a full service public opinion research and management consulting firm.

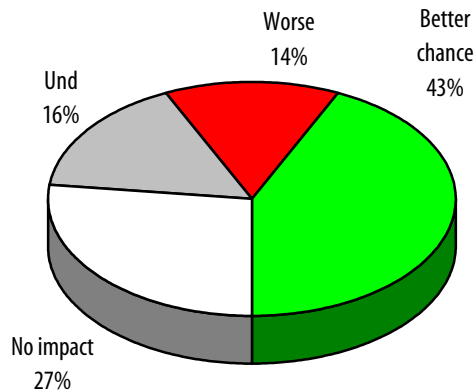
In order to maximize turn-around time and increase efficiency, SES has a 110-line call centre complete with a predictive dialer. SES is regularly called upon by corporate, government and para-public clients in Canada and the United States to conduct research and provide strategic advice.

For more information on our full range of services please visit our website

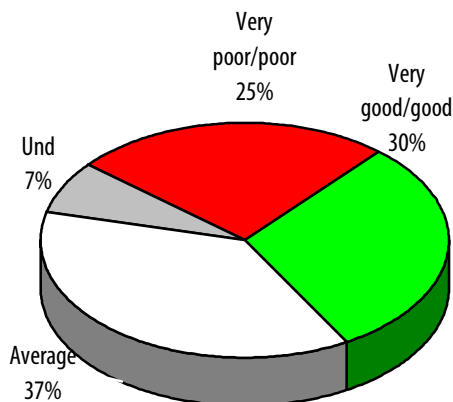
www.sesresearch.com or contact:

Mr. Nikita Nanos at (613) 234-4666 ext. 400 or nnanos@sesresearch.com

PC Chances at Next Election (N=500)



PC Government Performance (N=500)



THE QUESTION

As you may know, Ernie Eves recently replaced Mike Harris as the leader of the Ontario PCs. With this change do you think the Ontario PCs will have a better chance of winning the next election, a worse chance of winning or will it have no impact?

Target Groups (%)	Better	Worse	NI	Und
All voters (N=500)	43	14	27	16
Men (N=251)	41	16	31	12
Women (N=249)	45	11	24	20
18 to 29 years of age (N=121)	37	22	30	12
30 to 39 years of age (N=122)	48	10	30	13
40 to 49 years of age (N=89)	45	15	30	10
50 to 59 years of age (N=76)	41	15	21	24
60 plus (N=92)	45	8	24	24
Homeowners (N=317)	43	12	28	17
Renters (N=183)	43	16	27	14
Urban Postal Code (N=384)	42	14	27	17

Commentary

Changing leaders for the PCs was clearly the right decision. More than four of every ten Ontarians believe that the change and selection of Ernie Eves will increase PC chances during the next provincial election. The PCs realize a net positive gain of 29 points. More importantly, among women the net positive gain increases to 34 points.

Although the net positive score on government performance is only 5 points (30 very good/good less 25 very poor/poor), positive impressions among women and middle aged voters is good news for the PCs. The fact that 37% of Ontarians characterize PC government performance as average would indicate that there are few clear and formed impressions of the Eves government at this time.

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