



November 04, 2011


[onw NEWS](#) | [SEND A NEWS TIP](#) | [ARCHIVE](#) | [RESOURCES](#) | [ABOUT ONW](#)

SEARCH

First Post-Campaign Poll Shows Liberals Needn't Fear New Election

By: *Susanna Kelley*

Posted Nov. 4, 6:30am



The first Ontario poll released since the October 6th election shows Dalton McGuinty's Liberals have little to fear should their minority government fall and a new election be called.

Rather, it is the Progressive Conservatives and the NDP that risk losing political power, according to a new Innovative Research Group poll obtained by ontarionewswatch.com.

The Liberals have the support of 39 per cent of those polled, while the Tories are at 34 per cent, the NDP 23 per cent and the Green Party four per cent.

Exclusive

What's more, should the government fall the Liberals have a much better chance of winning a majority than the Progressive Conservatives.

The October election left the Liberals just one seat short of a majority at 53 seats. The PC's won 37 and the New Democrats 17.

But post-election analysis shows the Liberals lost 15 seats by less than 10 per cent of the vote and would only have to pick up one of those to add to their current 53 seats in order to achieve majority government status.

The Conservatives lost 14 ridings by less than ten per cent, but would have to win all of those plus three more, as well as hold all 37 of their current seats to win a majority.

The NDP faces the steepest uphill climb, needing all five seats they lost by less than 10 per cent plus 32 more.

New Democrats would also risk losing their current strength - holding the balance of power.

The analysis means the Liberal minority is much stronger than has been presumed, according to Innovative Research Group managing director Greg Lyle.

"How stable is this government? There is absolutely no reason for the opposition to gang up on the government and defeat them, because if they forced an election, the best they can get is another Liberal minority, and the Liberals have a decent shot at an actual majority."

"So there's no reason for the Tories or NDP to pull the plug, and if you're the Liberals, you almost want them to," said Mr. Lyle in an interview.

As a matter of fact, the seat analysis might tempt the Liberals to trip an election sooner rather than later, Mr. Lyle said.

"If I were the Liberals, I'd be tempted to include a trap in the next budget," painting the opposition parties into such a corner they'd be forced to let the government fall, said Mr. Lyle.

Ontarians are fairly evenly split about being satisfied with the election results, according to the online poll of 545 people taken October 27 to 31st. (The margin of error for an equivalent sample in a random poll is plus or minus 4.2 per cent, 19 times out of 20.)

While 52 per cent said they were very or somewhat dissatisfied with the result, 48 per cent were very or somewhat satisfied.

Interestingly, distrust of the leaders and their parties drove the vote for the Liberals and Tories more than any positive impressions. The public voted against those on offer rather than for them.

For those that voted for Dalton McGuinty's Liberals, for example, 30 per cent said distrust and dislike of "the other guys" was the most important reason they supported the governing party.

The same was true of voters who supported Tim Hudak's Conservatives. Again, 30 per cent of those who voted Tory did so because they disliked or distrusted "the other guys."

Only those who voted for Andrea Horwath's New Democrats did so for a positive reason. 40 per cent said support for the party's values and policies influenced them to vote NDP.

The poll results were presented at a post-election session hosted by Counsel Public Affairs for clients Tuesday morning.

The session featured former PC Premier Bill Davis, who led two successful minority governments. About 150 people also heard from former MPP's Murray Elston and New Democrat Ross McClellan, both of whom served as party house leaders for the Liberals and NDP respectively during Ontario's last minority government under then-LIB leader David Peterson from 1985 to 1987.

However, there were warning signs for the Liberals in another other Innovative Research poll that Mr. Lyle told the group about.

A majority of those asked - 56 per cent - felt the McGuinty Liberals had "lost touch" with problems facing average people. Only 34 per cent disagreed.

"They need some people in the government who are unrelenting about delivering on promises or commitments that show them to be in touch," Mr. Lyle observed.

"Right now with the fumbling on the power plant in Mississauga they're reinforcing the perception that they're lying. They need people in the government who will push relentlessly to get it shut down" if they want to be seen as understanding everyday Ontarians, he said.

Mr. Lyle was referring to the eleventh-hour campaign decision by Mr. McGuinty to cancel the construction of a gas-fired power plant in the riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville and on the border of Mississauga South, a move widely seen as a desperate attempt to keep the ridings in the Liberal fold. The Liberals did take the seats, but now Mr. McGuinty says he's powerless to quickly stop the construction of the controversial facility. He has promised to relocate it.

The pressures of a minority government may force them to find that passion to deliver on their promises, Mr. Lyle noted, but if they don't, "they're going to be in big trouble."

However the Liberals are far from alone in doing policy about-faces in the midst of election campaigns. That same PC Premier Bill Davis famously cancelled the Spadina Expressway in Toronto (a portion of which is nicknamed "the Davis Ditch") just three months before the 1971 election. Mr. Davis also plucked rent controls from the NDP platform in the 1975 election when NDP leader Stephen Lewis threatened to overtake the Tories. Mr. McGuinty himself promised in mid-campaign in 2003 to stop development on a parcel of land on the Oak Ridges Moraine, only to break the promise within weeks of winning the election.

But worrying for all parties now is the increasing number of Ontarians who no longer think of themselves as party loyalists.

During the autumn election, the number of Ontarians who identified themselves as independent was higher than those who identified with any one of the other parties. Fully 26 per cent called themselves "independent" voters. Usually, 20 per cent or less give themselves that designation.

The Liberals seem to be the main losers here. Only 25 per cent of those asked identified themselves as Liberals, down from well over 30% in the last two campaigns, according to Mr. Lyle.

Just behind at 24 per cent were the Progressive Conservatives, and 16 per cent identified with the New Democratic Party.

These numbers were from the second Innovative poll, a random sampling taken of 600 Ontarians just before the leaders' debate in the last election, from September 22 to 26. The margin of error is plus or minus 4 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

Innovative Research Group paid for both polls.

[<< Back to News](#)

[ADVERTISE](#) | [CONTACT](#) | [TERMS OF USE](#)
Copyright 2009-2011, OntarioNewsWatch Limited