
THE ONTARIO POLITICAL SCENE: POST 2013 BUDGET

Research Report

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INTRODUCTION:

One of the most anticipated documents of any minority government is the *Budget*. Money bills are motions of confidence, so the opposition verdict determines whether the government lives or dies. Yet despite the undeniable impact budgets have on our lives, it is surprising how few people pay attention.

As part of an omnibus telephone survey of randomly selected landlines, INNOVATIVE asked 600 members of the general public in a survey which political party they would be most likely to vote for if an election were called in Ontario, how they feel about a Spring election, and how they feel about the provincial budget.

To measure voter preference, we asked the following questions:

If a provincial election were held today, which party would you vote for: the Progressive Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the New Democratic Party, the Green Party or another party? In that case, which party's candidate do you lean toward slightly? [Vote + Lean]

Progressive Conservatives
The Liberals
New Democratic Party
Green/Other
Undecided

To measure the desire for an election, we asked:

There has been some talk about the opposition parties voting against the minority government in Ontario and causing an election this spring. Which of the following statements is closest to your point of view about a possible provincial election? ROTATE

- 1 I think a provincial election this spring would be a good idea
 - 2 I don't like the thought of another election, but I think it is the only way we will get the change we need
 - 3 I think a provincial election this spring would be a waste of time and money
- 98 Don't know **DNR**

To measure the impression of the budget, we asked:

Have you read, seen or heard anything about the recent Provincial budget that was presented in the Legislature on Thursday, May 2nd, 2013?

Did it leave you feeling a lot more favourable, somewhat more favourable, somewhat less favourable, a lot less favourable towards the provincial Liberal government?

In general, how satisfied are you with the provincial budget? Would you say that you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

To probe on the government's motives, we also asked:

Which of the following statements is closest to your point of view? ROTATE STATEMENTS

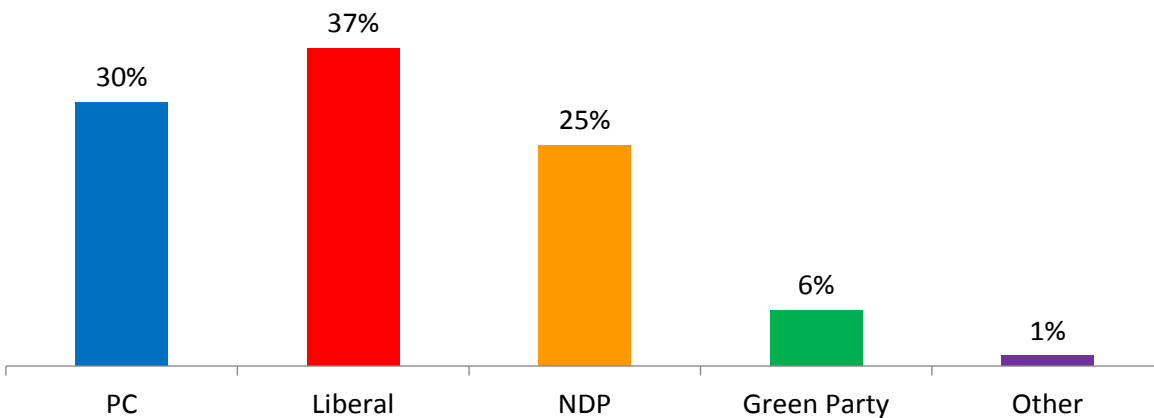
1. Some/Other people say that the Ont Liberal govt's budget is a good economic plan and will bring the change Ontario needs.
2. Others say that that the Liberal government is just trying to buy NDP support to stay in power and that the budget is not good for Ontario It's just good for the Liberal party
- 98 Don't know **[DO NOT READ]**
- 99 Refused **[DO NOT READ]**

The detailed results in the deck not only show top-line results, but result by underlying party loyalties and value clusters.

FINDINGS:

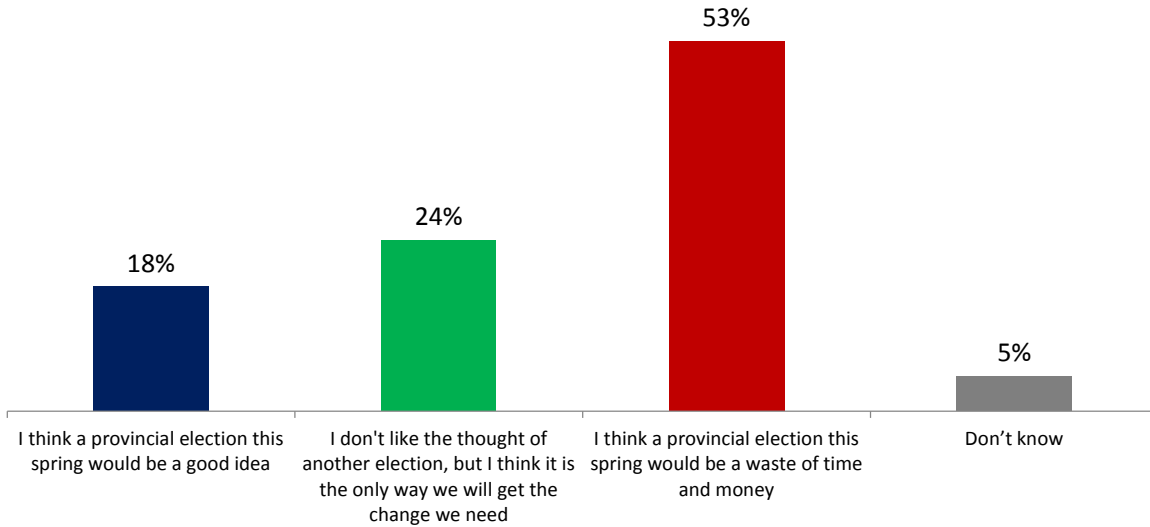
This is the first time since March 2012 that the Liberals have held a clear lead. The Ontario Liberal Party has moved ahead of the provincial PC's and the NDP. The decided vote shows the Liberals have a 7 point lead over the PCs, and a 12 point lead over the NDP. The Tories lead outside the GTA while the Liberals enjoy a strong lead in Toronto and the 905.

If a provincial election were held today, which party would you vote for: the Progressive Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the New Democratic Party, the Green Party or another party? In that case, which party's candidate do you lean toward slightly? [DECIDED VOTE] n=459



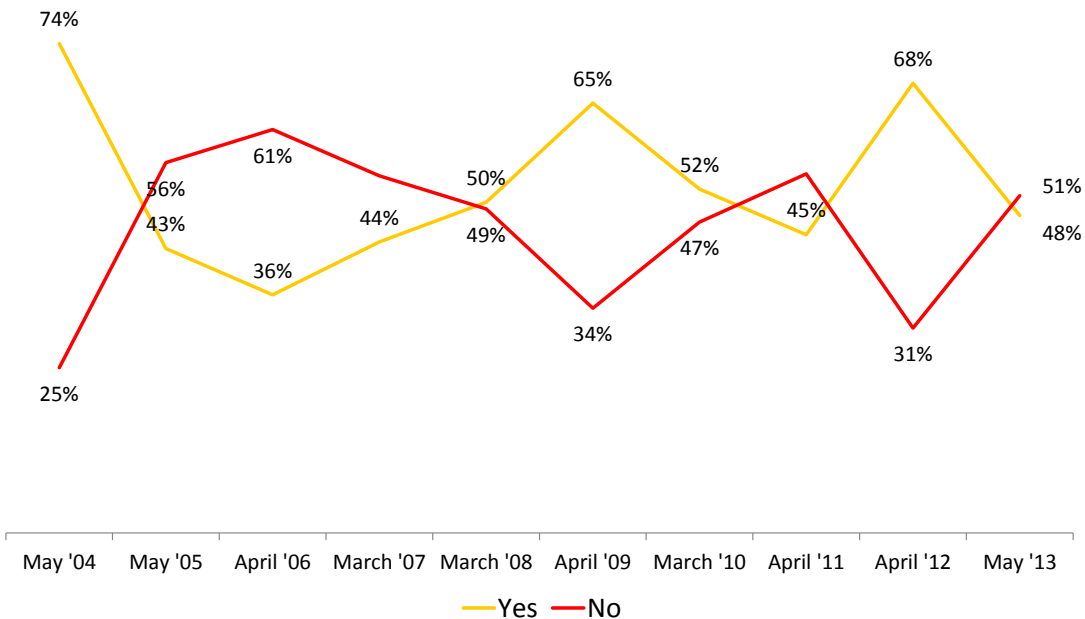
While the budget discussion has hinged on whether there should be a spring election or not, the public shows little desire to return to the polls. More than half of Ontarians say a spring election would be a waste of time and money including 56% of NDP voters and 59% of the Core Left value cluster.

Q There has been some talk about the opposition parties voting against the minority government in Ontario and causing an election this spring. Which of the following statements is closest to your point of view about a possible provincial election?



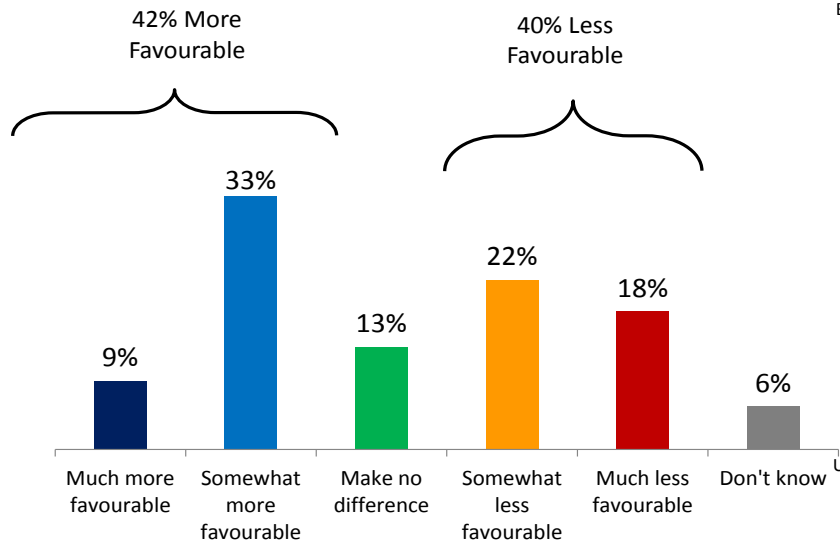
While the political class is seized with the budget, it has not captured the public imagination. Less than half the public reports having heard about Ontario's political budget

Have you read, seen or heard anything about the recent Provincial budget that was presented in the Legislature on [Budget date/Year] (n=600)

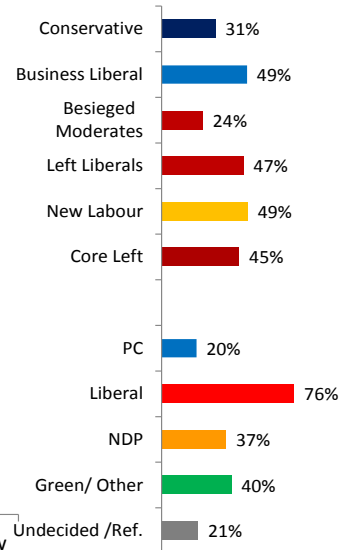


Among those who are aware of the budget, 42% feel more favourable towards the Liberals. This is the most positive political impact of any Liberal budget from the past decade. The budget does well with all the centre left value clusters with the exception of the Besieged Moderates.

Did it leave you feeling a lot more favourable, somewhat more favourable, somewhat less favourable, a lot less favourable towards the provincial Liberal government? (n= 291)

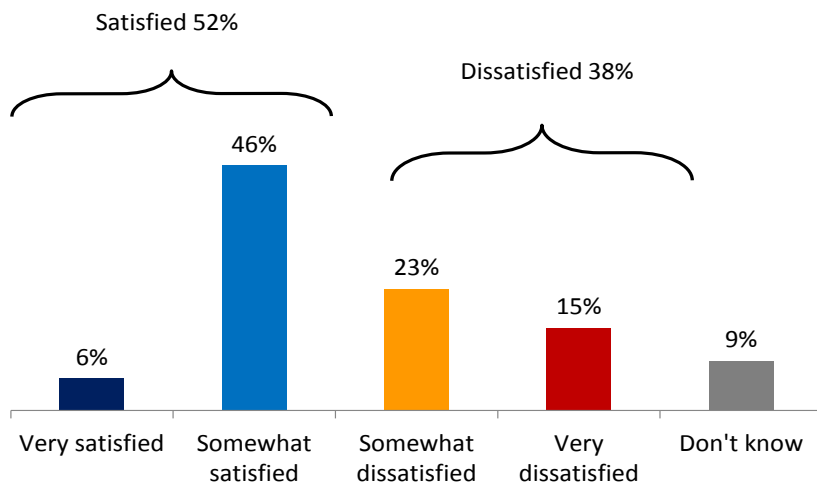


Percentage who said 'Favourable'

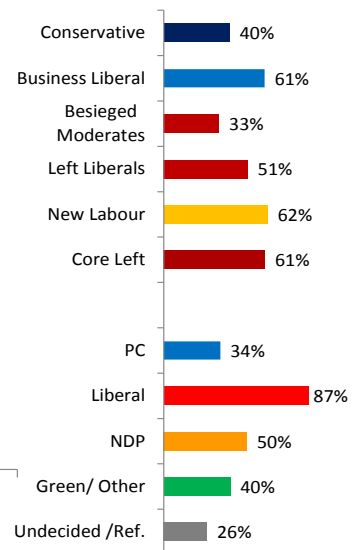


More than half of Ontarians say they are satisfied with the provincial budget, led by those who would vote Liberal. This is a 10 point increase from last year and one of the best budget satisfaction scores the Liberals have achieved since their first budget in 2004.

Q In general, how satisfied are you with the provincial budget? Would you say that you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

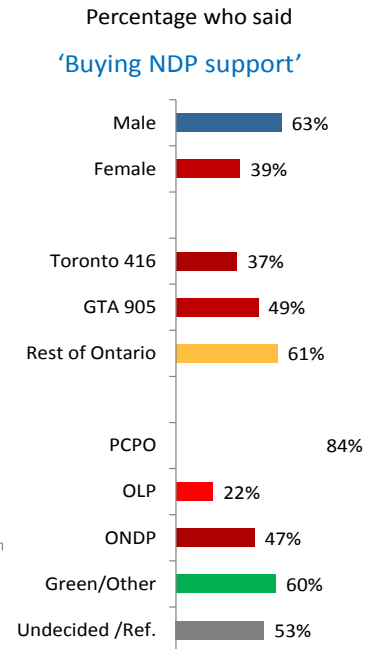
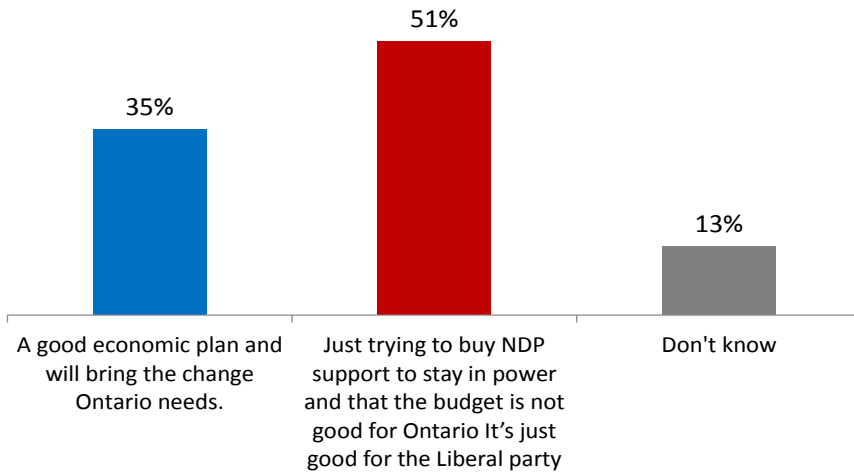


Percentage who said 'Satisfied'



However, satisfaction with the budget is not a ringing endorsement of Liberal motives. While 35% say the budget is a good plan that will bring needed change, just over 50% say it is just about keeping the Liberals in power.

Which of the following statements is closest to your point of view?
 Some/Other people say that the Ontario Liberal government's budget is a good economic plan and will bring the change Ontario needs.
 Others say that that the Liberal government is just trying to buy NDP support to stay in power and that the budget is not good for Ontario It's just good for the Liberal party. (n=290)



SUMMARY:

With the release of the provincial budget on May 2nd, 2013, the Ontario Liberals have a clear lead among decided voters for the first time in over a year, mainly at the expense of the NDP. This is likely due to the recent budget which has the most favourable political impact of any budget over the last decade. With that budget support and despite the ongoing coverage of the power plant controversy, a majority of Ontarians are not interested in an election.

The NDP are taking a big chance if they push for an election over the budget. Regionally, the Liberals are well ahead in the City of Toronto, a key target area for the NDP. Left wing value clusters like what they are seeing in the budget. Even among NDP voters, 50% said they were satisfied with the budget. However, the Liberals cannot take too much comfort from these results as only 35% believe the budget is actually a good economic plan for Ontario.

ABOUT THIS STUDY:

These are the findings of an Innovative Research Group, Inc. (INNOVATIVE) telephone survey conducted among 600 randomly-selected Ontario residents, 18 years or older, between May 3rd and May 9th, 2013.

The sample has been weighted using Statistics Canada's 2011 Census data to reflect the actual demographic breakdown of the Ontario population, based on age, gender, region and income.

An unweighted simple random sample of this size (600) has a margin of sampling error of ± 4.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

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