

FYI - QP Briefing: Ontario Liberals could be on comeback trail, a poll suggests

From: "Ostergard, Matt (TBS)" <matt.ostergard@ontario.ca>
To: "@TBS-L-O-Minister's_Office" <tbs-l-o-ministers-office@msgov.gov.on.ca>
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Ontario Liberals could be on comeback trail, a poll suggests

[17.05.2017](#) [Geoff Zochodne](#) 0

There finally may be a light at the end of the tunnel for the Ontario Liberals.

After many months of trailing in the polls – years, even – a survey by Campaign Research suggests the Grits could have managed to claw their way back into contention using promises such as pharmacare and lower hydro bills.

The online poll sampled the opinions of 864 Ontario voters, 37 per cent of whom said they would vote Liberal if a provincial election were held tomorrow. Another 34 per cent said they would support the Progressive Conservatives, within the poll's margin of error, and 22 per cent were backing the NDP.

Campaign Research CEO **Eli Yufest** chalked up the Liberals' improvement to their recent policy announcements, such as pharmacare for Ontarians under the age of 25 and the government's plan to reduce the average hydro bill by another 17 per cent. The government also recently tabled its first balanced budget since 2008, unveiling reforms aimed at cooling the real estate market and details of its basic income pilot project, which proved popular among voters [in another Campaign Research poll](#).

"We know that that's what's driving the strong results we're seeing for the Liberals," Yufest told *QP Briefing* in an interview. "What the electorate hears, they like."

But Premier **Kathleen Wynne**'s approval rating is up only slightly in the poll (provided exclusively to *QP Briefing*; it can be viewed below), to just 19 percent, a two percentage point improvement over a Campaign Research survey done in April.

The latest poll asked if voters think Wynne will still be Liberal leader come the next election, scheduled for June 7, 2018. Of those surveyed, 42 per cent said Wynne will still be leading the Grits, while 26 per cent predicted she would be gone and 34 per cent weren't sure.

PC Leader **Patrick Brown**'s approval rating was sitting at 29 per cent in the latest Campaign Research poll (up from 24 per cent in April) and NDP Leader **Andrea Horwath** was winning the popularity contest with 40-per-cent support (up a single percentage point from April). The poll found that 35 per cent of the voters thought the PCs will win the 2018 election, while 25 per cent picked the Liberals and 11 per cent bet on the NDP.

Yufest, however, said the Liberal government's current position still allows them to set the political agenda, and pointed out that Brown remains unknown to many voters. The Campaign Research poll found 47 per cent of those surveyed had no opinion of the PC Leader.

"He basically has the largest number of people that just don't know anything about him," Yufest said.

But the poll's findings break a long string of surveys that showed the Grits trailing the Tories. [An April poll by Campaign Research](#) pegged Liberal support at 31 per cent, while the PCs and NDP had 36 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively. A recent Forum Research poll had the Tories at 41 per cent, the Liberals at 28 per cent and the NDP at 23 per cent.

"What happens in the future, I can't tell you for sure," Yufest said. "But I can tell you the Liberals are clearly on the right track with their recent announcements, and the results of the poll clearly show that."

The online poll was done between May 9 and 13. Campaign Research says a sample of this size would have a margin of error of four percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

To contact the reporter on this story:

gzychodne@gpbriefing.com

416-212-5913

Twitter: @[geoffzychodne](https://twitter.com/geoffzychodne)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE PROVINCIAL LIBERALS WILL NOT GIVE UP WITHOUT A FIGHT

TORONTO, MAY 16, 2017 - In the fourth wave of the Campaign Research Poll, an online omnibus opinion survey conducted among 864 Ontario voters, more than one third will vote for the provincial Liberals if an election were held tomorrow (37%), putting them slightly ahead of the Progressive Conservatives (34%) for the first time this year, with the NDP still trailing (22%).

The Liberal vote is characteristic of the youngest (61%), females (39%) rather than males (35%), in the GTA surrounding Toronto (41%) and among the less wealthy (\$20K to \$40K - 46%). The PC vote is common to the oldest (47%), males (38%) rather than females (30%) and among the very wealthiest (\$100K to \$250K - 46%). The NDP vote is concentrated among the boomers (55 to 64 - 31%), females (25%) rather than males (19%), more so in Toronto (23%) than in the surrounding GTA (15%) and among the least wealthy (less than \$20K - 43%).

Horwath's approval higher than party, opposite applies to Wynne

Kathleen Wynne has the approval of one fifth of voters (19%), and her net favourability score (approve minus disapprove) remains at -50. This is similar to levels recorded last month (April 17, -53). Patrick Brown has the approval of 3 in 10 voters (29%) similar to his party's level of support. His net score is +5. This represents a slight increase since last month (+1). Andrea Horwath personally outperforms her party with a net score of +23.

Of note, just 4 in 10 Liberals approve of their leader (44%) and a similar proportion disapproves of her (40%). One sixth don't know her well enough to have an opinion (16%). Patrick Brown has the approval of 6 in 10 PC voters (58%) and just a tenth disapprove (7%), but his unknown factor is very high, even among his own party members (Don't know - 35%). The vast majority of New Democrats approve of Andrea Horwath (80%) and her unknowns are very low (17%).

"Though Kathleen Wynne's personal popularity has not improved, support for the Ontario Liberals is increasing. The movement is directly related to how popular recent policy announcements and public debate has been around issues such as pharmacare, basic income, minimum wage increase and a balanced budget. The 25% cut to hydro bills has also likely made an impact.

This is a significant turnaround for the Liberals who have been able to close the gap with the PC Party. It is clear that no one should be counting the Liberals out." said Eli Yufest, CEO of Campaign Research. Eli may be reached at eyufest@campaignresearch.ca or at (647) 931-4025 ext 109.

100-2 Toronto St., Suite 555, Toronto, Ontario M5C 2B5
p. 647.931.4025

