ONTARIO LIBERAL LEADERSHIP RACE RE-ENERGIZES PARTY SUPPORT

PC SUPPORT LIKELY UNDERSTATED

[Ottawa – February 15, 2013] – Kathleen Wynne's victory as leader of the Ontario Liberal Party appears to have been well-received by the public and the party now stands at 33 per cent, holding a small lead over the Progressive Conservative Party, who are at 29 points, and the NDP, who elicit the support of 26 per cent of eligible voters. This represents a modest improvement in the Liberal Party's fortunes from two months ago, when it was sitting on the lower end of a three-way statistical tie with the two opposition parties in aftermath of prorogation and Dalton McGuinty's resignation.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Ontario provincial vote intention:**
  - ¤ **32.5% Liberal**
  - ¤ **28.5% Progressive Conservative**
  - ¤ **25.6% NDP**
  - ¤ **10.1% Green Party**
  - ¤ **3.3% Other**

Please note that the methodology is provided at the end of this document.

It is not clear, however, whether this rise in support is a nod of approval to Wynne's performance or whether it is merely a blip arising from the extensive media coverage the party has received over the last few weeks. It is not unusual for political parties to enjoy a temporary surge in support after the election of a new leader. For example, in the wake of Michael Ignatieff's ascension to leader of the federal Liberal Party, we saw the party catapulted into a commanding leader over the ruling Conservatives, only to watch as the party plummeted helplessly to its disastrous third place finish in the 2011 federal election.

In any case, this rise in support would seem to suggest that Ontarians are at least somewhat receptive to extending the shelf life of current government, at least for the time being. This, coupled with the recent slide of the PC and NDP may curb their enthusiasm for an early election.

Much of the PC's support appears to be concentrated among men, while the NDP is highly popular with women. Liberal support is more demographically balanced, although it is skewed somewhat towards those with a university education. Liberal support remains unrivalled in the core of the Greater Toronto Area, although the rest of the province is evenly divided among all three parties, with the exception of the Eastern Ontario where the NDP is not competitive.
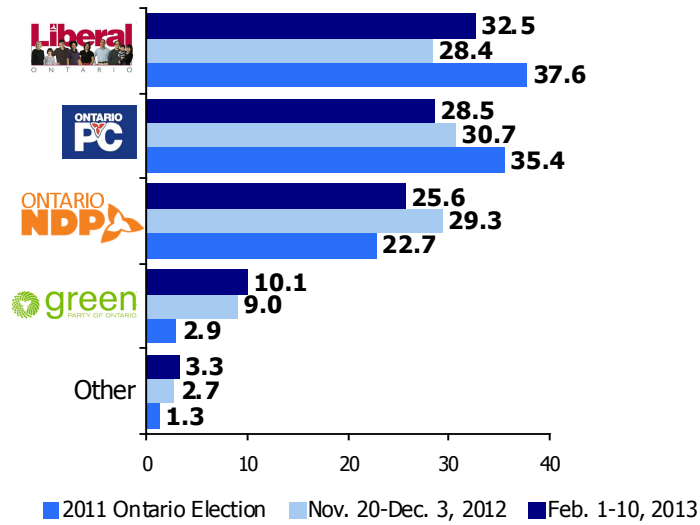
Finally, it should be noted that support for the Ontario PCs and, to a lesser extent, the Ontario Liberals, is likely understated, as much of their support comes from seniors and baby boomers – groups with the highest propensity to actually get out and vote. The Ontario NDP and Green Party, meanwhile, rely heavily on younger generations and will find their biggest challenge to be motivating a demographic that routinely flakes out on Election Day.

Top Line Results:

Ontario provincial vote intention

Q. If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

Liberal
- 32.5
- 28.4
- 37.6

Ontario PC
- 28.5
- 30.7
- 35.4

Ontario NDP
- 25.6
- 29.3
- 22.7

green
- 10.1
- 9.0
- 2.9

Other
- 3.3
- 2.7
- 1.3

■ 2011 Ontario Election ■ Nov. 20-Dec. 3, 2012 ■ Feb. 1-10, 2013

Note: The data on provincial vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only.

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Detailed Tables:

Provincial Vote Intention: Ontario

Q. If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?
[If undecided] Even if you do not have a firm idea, are you leaning towards a party?
[If yes] As it stands, towards which party are you leaning?

	Liberal ONTARIO	ONTARIO PC	ONTARIO NDP	green PARTY OF ONTARIO	Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
OVERALL	**32.5%**	**28.5%**	**25.6%**	**10.1%**	**3.3%**	**1468**	**2.6**
GENDER							
Male	31.0%	33.4%	21.9%	10.1%	3.7%	765	3.5
Female	34.4%	22.9%	30.0%	10.0%	2.7%	696	3.7
AGE							
<25	31.3%	21.3%	26.2%	16.3%	5.0%	80	11.0
25-44	32.1%	22.3%	27.4%	15.2%	3.0%	362	5.2
45-64	33.1%	31.1%	25.5%	7.0%	3.3%	604	4.0
65+	33.2%	39.1%	22.3%	3.2%	2.3%	412	4.8
EDUCATION							
High school or less	27.7%	33.0%	23.9%	10.2%	5.3%	367	5.1
College or CEGEP	29.5%	27.4%	26.4%	11.8%	5.0%	461	4.6
University or higher	37.7%	26.8%	26.0%	8.8%	0.7%	629	3.9
COUNTRY OF BIRTH							
Canada	32.5%	28.5%	26.4%	9.5%	3.1%	1087	3.0
Other	32.6%	28.9%	23.6%	11.4%	3.6%	373	5.1
REGION							
Toronto/Core GTA	39.5%	21.4%	27.2%	10.6%	1.3%	346	5.3
Suburban GTA	27.9%	31.8%	28.9%	8.0%	3.5%	360	5.2
Southwest Ontario	29.4%	31.0%	26.9%	7.8%	4.9%	302	5.6
Ottawa & East Ontario	36.3%	34.5%	17.3%	10.2%	1.8%	252	6.2
Northeast & Central Ontario	28.5%	23.3%	26.1%	16.1%	6.1%	180	7.3
Northwest Ontario	29.5%	28.7%	30.4%	8.8%	2.6%	28	18.5
FEDERAL VOTE INTENTION							
Conservative Party of Canada	11.4%	78.3%	5.6%	2.9%	1.9%	448	4.6
Liberal Party of Canada	77.0%	7.9%	11.4%	3.1%	0.6%	401	4.9
NDP	19.7%	5.7%	69.2%	3.1%	2.4%	339	5.3
Green Party	11.8%	7.0%	20.3%	58.7%	2.3%	116	9.1
Other	13.1%	10.7%	22.6%	11.6%	42.0%	36	16.3

Methodology:

This study was conducted using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology, which allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator.

In an effort to reduce the coverage bias of landline only RDD, we created a dual landline/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with a landline and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and landline only households. This dual frame yields a near perfect unweighted distribution on age group and gender, something almost never seen with traditional landline RDD sample or interviewer-administered surveys. This methodology is not to be confused with the increasing proliferation of non-probability opt-in online panels which have recently been incorrectly reported in major national media with inappropriate margin of error estimates.

The field dates for this survey are February 1-10, 2013. In total, a random sample of 1,797 Ontario residents aged 18 and over responded to the survey (including a sub-sample of 1,468 decided voters). The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-2.6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.