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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Progressive Conservatives Tracking Toward Super Majority

Liberals look to be relegated to third party after 15 years in government

Toronto, February 26th – In a random sampling of public opinion taken by the Forum Poll[™] among 1,120 Ontario voters, amongst decided and leaning voters, the Progressive Conservatives have extended nearly a twenty-point lead over their nearest rival in the province. If an election were held today the PCs would get (44%), the NDP (25%), the Liberals (24%), and Green (6%).

The Progressive Conservatives have a broad base of support across Ontario. They now have a clear lead in four of six regions: 905 (47%), Eastern Ontario (49%), Southwestern Ontario (42%), and North Eastern Ontario (46%), and they (37%) are statistically tied with the Liberals (34%) in Toronto. The only region where PCs don't lead is Northwestern Ontario, where NDP hold the advantage by six percent (39% - 33%).

Third party status possible for Wynne's Liberals

In 2018 the Ontario Legislature expands to 122 seats. If these results were projected up to seats in the expanded Legislature, the PCs would win 84, the NDP would secure 27, and the Liberals just 11.

Wynne, Brown, and Horwath all see decreased approval

Wynne has the approval of only (11%) of voters, and her net favourable score (approve minus disapprove) is a staggering -66, which is 6 points lower than in November (-60: Nov 23). Wynne appears to be polarizing Liberal supporters with (42%) approving of her leadership, while (40%) disapprove.

Patrick Brown has seen his approval drop as well from (28%: Nov 23) to (20%), putting his net favourable score at -3. Brown remains a strongly unknown quantity to voters as (57%) don't know whether they approve or disapprove of him. Almost four-in-ten (38%) who indicate they will vote Progressive Conservative approve of him, but he is still unknown to the bulk of PC supporters (46%).

Andrea Horwath's approval is down eight percent (36%: Nov 23) but her approval (28%) is the still highest amongst the leaders of the three parties. Her net favourable score is +2, down considerably (+11: Nov 23). Her approval amongst NDP supporters is (46%), but even amongst those planning to vote NDP (41%) say they don't know whether to approve or disapprove of her leadership.

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• "The Progressive Conservatives have a commanding lead over both the NDP and Liberals, but even when facing a governing party with a historically unpopular leader they must remain disciplined and error free in their campaign to ensure they achieve the majority they desire. The Liberals have effectively capitalized on PC mistakes in the past so to have the best chance of winning, the Progressive Conservatives can't afford to make any," said Dr. Lorne Bozinoff, President of Forum Research.

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Neither Wynne, Horwath, or Brown seen as best choice for premier

The plurality (28%) indicates that none of the these (Brown/Horwath/Wynne) would be the best choice for premier followed by a statistical tie between Patrick Brown (21%), Andrea Horwath (19%), and don't know (21%). Kathleen Wynne is well behind with (9%).

Almost 5-in-10 believe the Progressive Conservatives will win in 2018

Those polled believe quite strongly that the PCs will win the next election (48%). The Liberals (19%) are tied with don't know (19%), and only (12%) believe that the NDP will win in 2018. A hopeful (2%) believe that the provincial Green party will instead emerge victorious.

Two thirds don't believe the 2017 budget will be balanced

There has been a considerable amount of rhetoric regarding the upcoming provincial budget, but one thing that's clear is that the majority do not believe it will be balanced, with (64%) saying it won't be. Only (7%) believe that it can be done in 2017, with (29%) saying they don't know if it will or won't.

High cost of hydro and lack of trust in government motivating factors

Hydro rates and lack of trust in government will determine the votes of slightly more than 5-in-10 voters, with the ever-increasing cost of hydro as the dominant motivating factor for a plurality of voters with (31%). Lack of trust in government is second at (23%). None of the above (11%) and don't know (10%) follow well back. Issues with little traction include trust in government (7%), tuition rates (6%), revised sexual education curriculum (5%), and the local candidate (5%), which are all virtually tied. Party loyalty is almost completely a non-factor in the upcoming election (3%).

"The Progressive Conservatives have a commanding lead over both the NDP and Liberals, but even when facing a governing party with a historically unpopular leader they must remain disciplined and error free in their campaign to ensure they achieve the majority they desire. The Liberals have effectively capitalized on PC mistakes in the past, so to have the best chance of winning the Progressive Conservatives can't afford to make any," said Dr. Lorne Bozinoff, President of Forum Research.

Lorne Bozinoff, Ph.D. is the president and founder of Forum Research. He can be reached at lbozinoff@forumresearch.com or at (416) 960-9603.

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Methodology

The Forum Poll[™] was conducted by Forum Research with the results based on an interactive voice response telephone survey of 1,120 randomly selected Ontario Voters. The poll was conducted on Feb 15-16 2017.

Results based on the total sample are considered accurate +/- 3%, 19 times out of 20. Subsample results will be less accurate. Margins of error for subsample (such as age, gender) results are available at <u>www.forumresearch.com/samplestim.asp</u>

Where appropriate, the data has been statistically weighted by age, region, and other variables to ensure that the sample reflects the actual population according to the latest Census data.

This research is not necessarily predictive of future outcomes, but rather, captures opinion at one point in time. Actual results depend on the parties' success at getting their voters out. Forum Research conducted this poll as a public service and to demonstrate our survey research capabilities. Forum houses its poll results in the Data Library of the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto.

With offices across Canada and around the world, 100% Canadian-owned Forum Research is one of the country's leading survey research firms. This Forum Poll™and other polls may be found at Forum's poll archive at <u>www.forumresearch.com/polls.asp</u>

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Provincial Party Preference

If a provincial election were held today, which party are you most likely to vote for?

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[Decided/Leaning]

Age/Gender

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1026	106	131	189	281	319	513	500
Progressive Conservative	44	37	44	42	50	46	51	37
Liberal	24	19	23	22	22	32	20	27
New Democratic	25	35	26	28	21	17	22	29
Green	6	8	5	5	6	4	5	6
Another Party	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	1

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Income

%	Total	<\$20K	\$20- \$40K	\$40- \$60К	\$60- \$80К	\$80- \$100K	\$100- \$250К
Sample	1026	107	158	144	134	136	165
Progressive Conservative	44	21	41	52	42	44	48
Liberal	24	37	27	19	31	24	19
New Democratic	25	36	23	24	18	26	26
Green	6	5	7	2	9	4	6
Another Party	2	1	2	3	0	2	1

Region

%	Total	REGION - Eastern Ontario	REGION - Toronto 416	REGION - Toronto 905	REGION - South- western Ontario	REGION - North- eastern Ontario	REGION - North- western Ontario
Sample	1026	155	173	310	231	134	23
Progressive Conservative	44	49	37	47	42	46	33
Liberal	24	22	34	21	20	20	19
New Democratic	25	25	23	24	30	23	39
Green	6	3	4	6	7	9	10
Another Party	2	1	2	2	1	1	0

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Education

%	Total	Secondary school or less	Some college or university	Completed college or university	Post graduate studies
Sample	1026	214	276	371	165
Progressive Conservative	44	50	45	45	32
Liberal	24	21	27	23	22
New Democratic	25	19	24	24	38
Green	6	7	3	6	6
Another Party	2	2	1	2	1

Past Provincial Vote Preference

%	Total	PAST PROV VOTE - Progressive Conservative	PAST PROV VOTE - Liberal	PAST PROV VOTE - NDP	PAST PROV VOTE - Green	PAST PROV VOTE - Other parties
Sample	1026	368	319	145	47	48
Progressive Conservative	44	90	22	13	26	34
Liberal	24	5	46	13	14	23
New Democratic	25	2	27	68	9	23
Green	6	2	4	5	51	8
Another Party	2	1	1	1	0	13

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Kathleen Wynne Approval

Do you approve or disapprove of the job Kathleen Wynne is doing as premier?

[All Respondents]

Age/Gender

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1120	117	141	200	305	357	551	554
Approve	11	12	7	9	11	16	10	13
Disapprove	77	72	84	83	80	70	81	75
Don't know	11	16	8	8	9	14	9	13

Income

%	Total	<\$20K	\$20-\$40K	\$40-\$60K	\$60-\$80K	\$80-\$100K	\$100-\$250K
Sample	1120	122	178	149	141	141	178
Approve	11	10	11	11	17	9	12
Disapprove	77	68	73	80	73	82	79
Don't know	11	23	16	8	10	8	8
Don't know	11	23	16	8	10	8	8

Region

%	Total	REGION - Eastern Ontario	REGION - Toronto 416	REGION - Toronto 905	REGION - South- western Ontario	REGION - North- eastern Ontario	REGION - North- western Ontario
Sample	1120	165	182	340	258	146	29
Approve	11	7	20	10	8	13	6
Disapprove	77	81	67	78	81	79	92
Don't know	11	13	13	12	11	8	2

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Current Provincial Vote Preference

%	Total	PROV VOTE - Progressive Conservative	PROV VOTE - Liberal	PROV VOTE - New Democratic	PROV VOTE - Green	PROV VOTE - Other Parties
Sample	1120	471	263	195	70	27
Approve	11	2	42	2	8	13
Disapprove	77	95	40	88	82	73
Don't know	11	3	18	10	9	14

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Education

%	Total	Secondary school or less	Some college or university	Completed college or university	Post graduate studies
Sample	1120	239	305	398	178
Approve	11	8	10	11	17
Disapprove	77	80	75	80	73
Don't know	11	12	15	9	10

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Patrick Brown Approval

Do you approve or disapprove of the job Patrick Brown is doing as leader of the Opposition?

[All Respondents]

Age/Gender

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1120	117	141	200	305	357	551	554
Approve	20	7	21	29	26	23	26	14
Disapprove	23	22	20	24	25	25	26	20
Don't know	57	71	59	47	50	52	48	66

Income

%	Total	<\$20K	\$20-\$40K	\$40-\$60K	\$60-\$80K	\$80-\$100K	\$100-\$250K
Sample	1120	122	178	149	141	141	178
Approve	20	16	11	19	26	18	24
Disapprove	23	18	22	19	24	28	29
Don't know	57	66	67	62	51	53	47

Region

%	Total	REGION - Eastern Ontario	REGION - Toronto 416	REGION - Toronto 905	REGION - South- western Ontario	REGION - North- eastern Ontario	REGION - North- western Ontario
Sample	1120	165	182	340	258	146	29
Approve	20	20	21	19	17	26	10
Disapprove	23	25	24	23	19	27	22
Don't know	57	55	54	57	65	48	69

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Current Provincial Vote Preference

%	Total	PROV VOTE - Progressive Conservative	PROV VOTE - Liberal	PROV VOTE - New Democratic	PROV VOTE - Green	PROV VOTE - Other Parties
Sample	1120	471	263	195	70	27
Approve	20	38	8	8	6	4
Disapprove	23	16	30	28	32	36
Don't know	57	46	61	64	61	60

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Education

%	Total	Secondary school or less	Some college or university	Completed college or university	Post graduate studies
Sample	1120	239	305	398	178
Approve	20	22	16	21	18
Disapprove	23	16	21	25	30
Don't know	57	61	63	54	52





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Andrea Horwath Approval

Do you approve or disapprove of the job Andrea Horwath (HOR-vath) is doing as Leader of the NDP?

[All Respondents]

Age/Gender

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1120	117	141	200	305	357	551	554
Approve	28	22	25	35	33	30	26	31
Disapprove	26	17	35	29	28	27	33	20
Don't know	45	61	40	36	39	43	41	49

Income

%	Total	<\$20K	\$20-\$40K	\$40-\$60K	\$60-\$80K	\$80-\$100K	\$100-\$250K
Sample	1120	122	178	149	141	141	178
Approve	28	25	22	30	27	30	31
Disapprove	26	23	20	30	37	25	29
Don't know	45	53	58	40	35	45	40

Region

%	Total	REGION - Eastern Ontario	REGION - Toronto 416	REGION - Toronto 905	REGION - South- western Ontario	REGION - North- eastern Ontario	REGION - North- western Ontario
Sample	1120	165	182	340	258	146	29
Approve	28	30	25	30	28	27	40
Disapprove	26	18	31	28	30	20	16
Don't know	45	53	44	42	42	54	44

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Current Provincial Vote Preference

%	Total	PROV VOTE - Progressive Conservative	PROV VOTE - Liberal	PROV VOTE - New Democratic	PROV VOTE - Green	PROV VOTE - Other Parties
Sample	1120	471	263	195	70	27
Approve	28	26	21	46	29	17
Disapprove	26	34	29	12	19	50
Don't know	45	40	50	41	52	33

Education

%	Total	Secondary school or less			Post graduate studies
Sample	1120	239	305	398	178
Approve	28	32	25	27	32
Disapprove	26	20	23	30	30
Don't know	45	48	52	43	38

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Best Premier

Regardless of which party you would vote for, who do you think would make the best Premier of Ontario?

[All Respondents]

Age/Gender

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1120	117	141	200	305	357	551	554
Kathleen Wynne	9	10	3	9	11	14	8	11
Patrick Brown	21	14	22	26	26	23	28	15
Andrea Horwath	19	29	17	17	18	11	17	22
None of these	28	23	36	33	29	24	31	26
Don't know	21	24	22	16	16	27	16	27

Income

%	Total	<\$20K	\$20- \$40K	\$40- \$60К	\$60- \$80К	\$80- \$100K	\$100- \$250К
Sample	1120	122	178	149	141	141	178
Kathleen Wynne	9	7	9	9	14	12	10
Patrick Brown	21	14	19	20	23	19	27
Andrea Horwath	19	27	17	23	15	20	15
None of these	28	19	20	34	28	33	33
Don't know	21	34	35	15	20	16	14

Region

%	Total	REGION - Eastern Ontario	REGION - Toronto 416	REGION - Toronto 905	REGION - South- western Ontario	REGION - North- eastern Ontario	REGION - North- western Ontario
Sample	1120	165	182	340	258	146	29
Kathleen Wynne	9	8	17	8	7	8	4
Patrick Brown	21	27	20	21	19	23	12
Andrea Horwath	19	21	15	18	23	22	27
None of these	28	19	29	31	31	29	28
Don't know	21	25	20	22	20	18	29

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Current Provincial Vote Preference

%	Total	PROV VOTE - Progressive Conservative	PROV VOTE - Liberal	PROV VOTE - New Democratic	PROV VOTE - Green	PROV VOTE - Other Parties
Sample	1120	471	263	195	70	27
Kathleen Wynne	9	1	35	2	6	6
Patrick Brown	21	44	6	7	8	0
Andrea Horwath	19	13	12	47	15	13
None of these	28	28	23	24	40	67
Don't know	21	14	24	20	31	15

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Education

%	Total	Secondary school or less	Some college or university	Completed college or university	Post graduate studies
Sample	1120	239	305	398	178
Kathleen Wynne	9	6	11	9	12
Patrick Brown	21	23	17	24	19
Andrea Horwath	19	18	20	19	20
None of these	28	22	26	32	29
Don't know	21	31	26	16	19

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2018 election winner

In your opinion, who will win the provincial election in 2018?

[All Respondents]

Age/Gender

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1120	117	141	200	305	357	551	554
Liberal	19	23	16	16	17	21	18	21
Progressive Conservative	48	44	54	49	53	40	54	42
NDP	12	17	10	11	10	8	10	13
Green	2	3	4	3	1	0	3	2
Other parties	19	13	17	20	18	31	15	22

Income

%	Total	<\$20К	\$20- \$40K	\$40- \$60К	\$60- \$80К	\$80- \$100K	\$100- \$250K
Sample	11 20	122	178	149	141	141	178
Liberal	19	26	24	15	23	25	16
Progressive Conservative	48	33	39	50	46	47	65
NDP	12	17	13	16	9	8	8
Green	2	2	1	0	5	0	3
Other parties	19	23	23	18	17	19	9

Region

%	Total	REGION - Eastern Ontario	REGION - Toronto 416	REGION - Toronto 905	REGION - South- western Ontario	REGION - North- eastern Ontario	REGION - North- western Ontario
Sample	1120	165	182	340	258	146	29
Liberal	19	19	32	18	14	13	5
Progressive Conservative	48	45	46	50	48	44	46
NDP	12	15	6	12	11	17	15
Green	2	1	3	2	3	4	2
Other parties	19	19	14	18	23	21	32

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Current Provincial Vote Preference

%	Total	PROV VOTE - Progressive Conservative	PROV VOTE - Liberal	PROV VOTE - New Democratic	PROV VOTE - Green	PROV VOTE - Other Parties
Sample	1120	471	263	195	70	27
Liberal	19	6	59	14	8	7
Progressive Conservative	48	80	15	39	23	37
NDP	12	6	6	32	12	10
Green	2	0	2	1	25	4
Other parties	19	8	17	15	31	43

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Education

%	Total	Secondary school or less	Some college or university	Completed college or university	Post graduate studies
Sample	11 20	239	305	398	178
Liberal	19	15	29	14	22
Progressive Conservative	48	43	41	55	44
NDP	12	11	15	11	9
Green	2	6	1	2	2
Other parties	19	26	14	18	23



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A Balanced Budget in 2017

Will the provincial government present a balanced budget in 2017?

[All Respondents]

Age/Gender

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1120	117	141	200	305	357	551	554
Yes	7	5	5	10	8	6	7	6
No	64	64	65	66	71	54	70	59
Don't know	29	31	30	24	21	39	23	35

Income

%	Total	<20K	20-40K	40-60K	60-80K	80-100K	100-250K
Sample	1120	122	178	149	141	141	178
Yes	7	7	8	4	10	7	8
No	64	51	59	65	65	76	73
Don't know	29	41	33	31	25	17	20

Region

%	Total	REGION - Eastern Ontario	REGION - Toronto 416	REGION - Toronto 905	REGION - South- western Ontario	REGION - North- eastern Ontario	REGION - North- western Ontario
Sample	1120	165	182	340	258	146	29
Yes	7	7	11	5	6	5	0
No	64	60	61	66	62	71	73
Don't know	29	33	27	29	32	24	27

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Current Provincial Vote Preference

%	Total	PROV VOTE - Progressive Conservative	PROV VOTE - Liberal	PROV VOTE - New Democratic	PROV VOTE - Green	PROV VOTE - Other Parties
Sample	1120	471	263	195	70	27
Yes	7	3	17	5	4	7
No	64	80	46	59	64	57
Don't know	29	18	37	36	32	36

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Education

%	Total	EDU - Secondary school or less	EDU - Some college or university	EDU - Completed college or university	EDU - Post graduate studies
Sample	1120	239	305	398	178
Yes	7	6	5	7	8
No	64	59	63	68	61
Don't know	29	35	31	25	30





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Voter motivation

Which of the following issues is most likely to determine your vote in the next provincial election?

[All Respondents]

Age/Gender

%	Total	18- 34	35- 44	45- 54	55- 64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1120	117	141	200	305	357	551	554
Hydro Rates	31	31	25	39	31	30	32	31
Tuition Rates	6	12	3	5	3	2	3	9
Revised Sexual Education Curriculum	5	5	6	6	1	4	4	4
Lack of Trust in Government	23	18	24	20	30	25	27	18
Trust in Government	7	7	6	5	10	6	8	6
Party Loyalty	3	2	6	4	1	2	3	3
Local Candidate	5	4	5	2	6	10	5	6
None of the above	11	11	16	12	9	7	12	10
Don't know	10	10	10	7	9	14	7	12

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Income

%	Total	<\$20K	\$20- \$40K	\$40- \$60K	\$60- \$80K	\$80- \$100K	\$100- \$250К
Sample	1120	122	178	149	141	141	178
Hydro Rates	31	32	30	33	38	26	31
Tuition Rates	6	9	8	7	2	8	1
Revised Sexual Education Curriculum	5	4	10	4	4	5	3
Lack of Trust in Government	23	14	17	24	27	26	23
Trust in Government	7	6	5	9	7	5	10
Party Loyalty	3	2	1	4	5	5	5
Local Candidate	5	4	8	4	4	5	5
None of the above	11	17	7	8	5	10	19
Don't know	10	13	15	6	7	11	3

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Region

%	Total	REGION - Eastern Ontario	REGION - Toronto 416	REGION - Toronto 905	REGION - South- western Ontario	REGION - North- eastern Ontario	REGION - North- western Ontario
Sample	1120	165	182	340	258	146	29
Hydro Rates	31	37	28	32	28	30	44
Tuition Rates	6	6	10	2	7	8	0
Revised Sexual Education Curriculum	5	4	6	5	5	3	0
Lack of Trust in Government	23	17	21	26	24	18	20
Trust in Government	7	8	4	5	7	11	10
Party Loyalty	3	3	4	4	4	1	2
Local Candidate	5	5	3	4	6	11	9
None of the above	11	11	12	14	8	9	8
Don't know	10	9	11	9	12	8	8

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Current Provincial Vote Preference

%	Total	PROV VOTE - Progressive Conservative	PROV VOTE - Liberal	PROV VOTE - New Democratic	PROV VOTE - Green	PROV VOTE - Other Parties
Sample	1120	471	263	195	70	27
Hydro Rates	31	39	21	33	27	25
Tuition Rates	6	1	10	10	3	4
Revised Sexual Education Curriculum	5	6	4	3	1	6
Lack of Trust in Government	23	31	9	18	37	29
Trust in Government	7	5	13	6	5	4
Party Loyalty	3	3	6	1	4	11
Local Candidate	5	4	9	5	2	1
None of the above	11	6	15	17	9	11
Don't know	10	6	13	7	12	9

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Education

%	Total	Secondary school or less	Some college or university	Completed college or university	Post graduate studies
Sample	1120	239	305	398	178
Hydro Rates	31	30	30	36	21
Tuition Rates	6	2	14	2	7
Revised Sexual Education Curriculum	5	5	4	4	6
Lack of Trust in Government	23	24	20	23	23
Trust in Government	7	5	8	5	8
Party Loyalty	3	4	4	3	1
Local Candidate	5	4	5	5	8
None of the above	11	8	5	14	17
Don't know	10	18	9	7	8

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TORONTO February 26th, 2017



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