

## Jack Layton's death, Ford-effect and attack ads hurt Hudak Tories in Ontario

By Andy Radia | [Canada Politics](#) – Thu, 1 Sep, 2011

Just two months ago the Ontario Conservatives were sitting pretty in the polls with Tim Hudak well on his way to becoming the next premier.

A Forum Research [poll](#) from late June had the Tories leading the governing Liberals by a whopping 15 points.

But over the summer Hudak's road to Ontario's top job has gotten a little bumpier.

With about six weeks until the provincial election, a [new poll](#) indicates Tory support now sits at 35 per cent compared to the Liberals' 30 per cent, with the NDP following closely at 26 per cent.



Tim Hudak

If the election were held tomorrow, the poll suggests the Hudak Tories would "clinch a narrow victory to lead a minority government."

The poll gives us a hint of how the death of Jack Layton will help NDP provincial organizations across the country.

By [some accounts](#), the Ontario NDP have risen in the polls by eight percentage points over the past two weeks.

While no one is suggesting Andrea Horwath could be the next premier of Ontario, the NDP surge could hamper Hudak's goal of obtaining a majority government.

National Post writer Tristan Hopper cites Mayor Rob Ford's unpopular policies in Toronto as another reason for the Tory slip in the polls.

"In Toronto immediately following the May federal election, long slumbering pockets of Progressive Conservative voters began prophesying a return to the conservative triad," he wrote, referring to a Conservative prime minister and a Conservative mayor of Toronto.

"Five months later, Toronto's support for the Ontario Tories has evaporated faster than anywhere else. According to (the president of Forum Research) much of it is a backlash to Mr. Ford."

In addition to the Ford-effect, many believe it's the onslaught of Liberal attack ads that has finally chipped away at Hudak's popularity.

Pollster Nik Nanos told [The Globe and Mail](#) the negative ads have narrowed the race.

"(The attack ads) affect people's views of Tim Hudak and they also indirectly help (Premier) Dalton McGuinty as a default," he said.

Oh, how things have changed during the past two months.

With a new month upon us, the Hudak Tories can only hope their summer of discontent is now over.

(CP Photo)