

## Liberal minority likely, majority possible, polls finds

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The poll is the last survey that can be legally published before voters head to the polls Thursday.  
DAVE CHIDLEY/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Dalton McGuinty's Liberals are poised to win at least a minority government in Thursday's election, according to the last two major public-opinion polls to be published before the vote.

A new Forum Research survey found the Liberals at 37 per cent, the Progressive Conservatives at 36 per cent, the New Democrats at 23 per cent and the Green Party at 3 per cent.

The latest Angus Reid poll had the Grits at 37 per cent, the Tories at 33 per cent, the NDP at 26 per cent, and the Greens at 3 per cent.

Angus Reid's online survey of 1,003 Ontarians, conducted Tuesday and Wednesday, is considered accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20

Forum's interactive voice response poll of 1,034 Ontarians was conducted Tuesday and is considered accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

While the two front-runners are within the margin of error and therefore statistically tied, Forum president Lorne Bozinoff, who has done the largest polling samples of this election for the Star, said the Liberal vote is "way more efficient."

"The Tories' vote is all piled up in far too few seats, so even though it's a dead heat — as we've been saying for almost a month now — it probably won't end up that way," Bozinoff said Wednesday.

"Everyone looks at the horse race, but you have to look at the seat counts," he said.

The Liberals traditionally do well in urban ridings, while the Tories tend to win by large margins in rural constituencies.

Bozinoff, whose Sept. 24 survey of 40,750 people for the Star was one of the largest polls in Canadian history, has done an exhaustive seat analysis.

He said the Liberals should win between 40 and 60 seats on Thursday, with an expected tally of 54, which would be a majority in the 107-seat Legislature.

Tim Hudak's Conservatives, on the other hand, should take between 31 and 51 seats, with 36 the likeliest result and Andrea Horwath's New Democrats between 14 and 19 with a midpoint of 17 seats. Mike Schreiner's Greens will again be shut out.

"The Tories cannot win a majority, it's just not possible for them with these ranges," said Bozinoff.

The two polls' top line numbers echo the Star-Angus Reid survey published Wednesday that also showed a statistical tie.

That Angus Reid online poll of 2,223 people contacted between Sunday and Tuesday had the Tories at 36 per cent, the Liberals at 33 per cent, the NDP at 26 per cent and the Greens at 5 per cent, with a margin of error of within 2.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

But Jaideep Mukerji, managing director at Angus Reid, noted the Liberals, who hold 19 of Toronto's 23 seats, are now at 52 per cent in the city — well ahead of the New Democrats, who have four seats here, at 21 per cent. The Tories, who again face being shut out in a city where they have not won a provincial riding since 1999, are at 25 per cent, and the Greens at 2 per cent.

"Liberal support is concentrated in areas that happen to be seat-rich, so that's beneficial to them," he said.

While Mukerji stressed it is "fundamentally still a tight race" and he couldn't say if the Liberals would secure a majority for a third term in office, he said momentum appears to be going their way.

"The Liberals are peaking at just the right time," he said.

"If the ballot question is: 'Are you mad enough at Dalton McGuinty to vote for Tim Hudak?' then the answer so far appears to be: 'Not really.'"

In the 905 region, the Tories have 42 per cent to 36 per cent for the Liberals, 15 per cent for the NDP and 4 per cent for the Greens, which suggests the governing party could lose some GTA seats.

Under Ontario law, media organizations may not publish new polls between midnight Wednesday and the end of voting at 9 p.m. Thursday.

At dissolution, the Liberals held 70 seats, the Tories 25, the NDP 10, and there were two vacancies in ridings that had been Grit constituencies.