

QUESTION

Thinking of the current provincial party leaders [rotate order] Ernie Eves (2002/3 wave)/Mike Harris (2001 wave), Dalton McGuinty and Howard Hampton. . . who, in your opinion, would make the best Premier of Ontario?

Commentary

SES' longitudinal tracking indicates a steady increase in the number of Ontarians who believe Ernie Eves would make the best Premier with levels returning to those observed for Mike Harris in the Fall 2001.

Dalton McGuinty's year long gains on this measure have been erased with only one in four Ontarians considering him the best choice for Premier. Currently, Ernie Eves leads McGuinty by seventeen percentage points – a 19 point swing in Ernie Eves favour over the past 120 days.

Research indicates that the upcoming party leaders debate will be a key ballot driver. Asked if the upcoming debate will have an effect on their vote more than four in ten (42%) stated it 'will have an effect on their vote'.

Half (52%) indicated the debate will not have an effect on their vote with a further six per cent undecided.

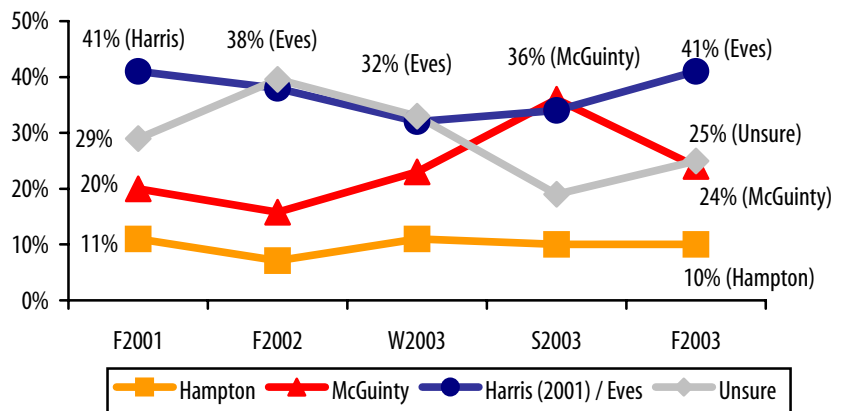
ABOUT SES

Established in 1987, SES Canada Research Inc. is a full service public opinion research and management consulting firm.

In order to maximize turn-around time and increase efficiency, SES has a 110-line call centre complete with a predictive dialer. SES is regularly called upon by corporate, government and para-public clients in Canada and the United States to conduct research and provide strategic advice.

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BEST PREMIER TRACKING



DEBATE IMPACT

Thinking about the upcoming debate between the three party leaders, do you think their performance in that debate will have an effect on your voting decision or will it have no effect on your voting decision?

Target Groups (+/- index)	Will have effect	No effect	Unsure
Total	42%	52%	6%
Men	-2	+2	0
Women	+2	-4	+1
18 to 29 years of age	+22	-17	-4
30 to 39 years of age	-6	+1	+5
40 to 49 years of age	-1	+2	-1
50 to 59 years of age	-15	+19	-4
60 plus	-6	+1	+5
Homeowners	-3	+3	0
Renters	+6	-6	+1
Urban Postal Code	+2	-2	0
Rural Postal Code	-8	+7	+1
PC	-8	+12	-4
Liberal	+2	-5	+3
NDP	-5	+6	0
Undecided	+15	-20	+5

Note: Plus/minus index scores are based on the difference between the sub-group and the sample average. For example a +22 score for Ontarians 10 to 29 would indicate that the subgrouping is 22% more likely to be influenced by the debate.

THE METHODOLOGY

On September 7th 2003, SES conducted a total of 500 telephone interviews across Ontario with eligible voters. Aggregate results of the survey are accurate to within 4.5 percentage points, plus or minus, 19 times out of 20.

Validation of the demographic profile of respondents indicates that the poll is a fair representation of the voters of Ontario.