EKOS' FINAL POLL FOR THE 2011 ONTARIO ELECTION

… AND A FEW COMMENT ON WHY THIS ISN'T OUR MOST IMPORTANT POLL

[Ottawa – October 5, 2011 (evening)] – In our final poll, we offer two sets of numbers: all eligible voters and those we believe are most likely to vote. We don't do this in the interest of doubling our chances of getting it right. Our best guess at a forecast is the most likely voter number, We do, however, think the other number is at least as important for other reasons and that the final closeness of polling numbers to the outcome isn't best yardstick of "good" polling.

Good polling in our view should accurately chart the rhythms of the campaign. It should tell the readers what are the evolving patterns of voter response. How and when did things shift? What forces seem to explain the dynamics of the campaign and voter response? What are the key areas of differentiation in voter response across

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Ontario provincial vote intention (ALL ELIGIBLE VOTERS):**
  ¤ **37.7% LPO**
  ¤ **31.5% PC**
  ¤ **23.3% NDP**
  ¤ **5.9% Green**
  ¤ **1.6% other**

- **What we expect to see on Election Day ("likely" voters only):**
  ¤ **38.6% LPO**
  ¤ **34.0% PC**
  ¤ **21.1% NDP**
  ¤ **5.2% Green**
  ¤ **1.1% other**

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

demographic and regional categories and what do these tell us about the fault lines in the political landscape? What are the preferences and attitudes of what will be about half of the citizenry who won't show up tomorrow? In our view, these are far more important tests of polling quality than whether one happened to get the last poll closest, whether by chance or by design. Frankly, almost no one will read or consider this poll other than those seeking to assign the best marks in an increasingly flawed measure of polling quality.

Despite this view, we offer up our final numbers in the pollster sweepstakes. We predict that the Ontario Liberal Party will win a majority, but a final tightening of the race means that this is not a certainty. Ironically, we have seen a modest tightening of the race just as others have found a major breakout for the Liberals in the 11th hour of the campaign.

So we think that the Ontario Liberals will win somewhere around 38 to 39 points. We believe that the Progressive Conservative Party will get around 34 points and we project that the NDP will garner about 21 points with the Greens getting around 5 per cent of the vote. Our estimates of final turnout are slightly but, unlike in the case of the May 2nd federal election, not dramatically different than what we find for all eligible voters.

There will be ample room to determine whether we met either standards for judging polling quality in the coming weeks and months. We have also offered our explanations of why we believe things developed the way they did throughout this remarkable campaign. The relative efficacy of anger, hope, and despair were part of our narrative on the campaign. The role of political prudence and the political hedging of bets was also a key theme, as was the remarkable resurgence of Liberal fortunes in the aftermath of the ruins of Toronto after the May 2nd vote.

The role of demographics has also been highlighted with the Ontario Liberals managing to hold their own with crucial senior and boomer segments and to open up huge advantages with the university educated and foreign born. Mr. Hudak has retained a strong presence with male and senior voters and has kept them focussed on themes of anger with the current regime, albeit not in sufficient numbers to depose of them. Ms. Horwath has clearly upped the NDP game although she has fallen short of the NDP federal performance last May. The more discouraged, younger, and less affluent constituency she carries are less engaged and insufficient to propel her to the heights of opposition leader.

So a very interesting and important campaign comes to a close with some areas of relative certainty and some remaining puzzles. Although we don't expect a rise in voter participation, we would certainly hope for one. We end by thanking the thousands of Ontarians who have generously participated in our surveys and by congratulating all of those who have thrown their hats in the ring in service of their unshakable commitment to democracy.

Top Line Results:

We have constructed an estimate of voter support among the most likely voters. In this treatment of the data, we removed those who did not vote in the 2007 Ontario election. The data was also generated with an adjusted weight. We effectively doubled the weighted proportion of seniors (i.e., those over the age of 65) and halved the proportion of youth (those under 25). We also reduced the weight of the Gen X cohort (those ages 25-44) by 25 per cent and left the balance to those ages 45-64 (effectively leaving this group as it appears naturally in the population).

The chart below compares the vote intentions of all eligible voters with the vote intentions of those who are most likely to vote.

Provincial vote intention

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

□ ALL ELIGIBLE VOTERS   ■ WHAT WE EXPECT TO SEE ON ELECTION DAY
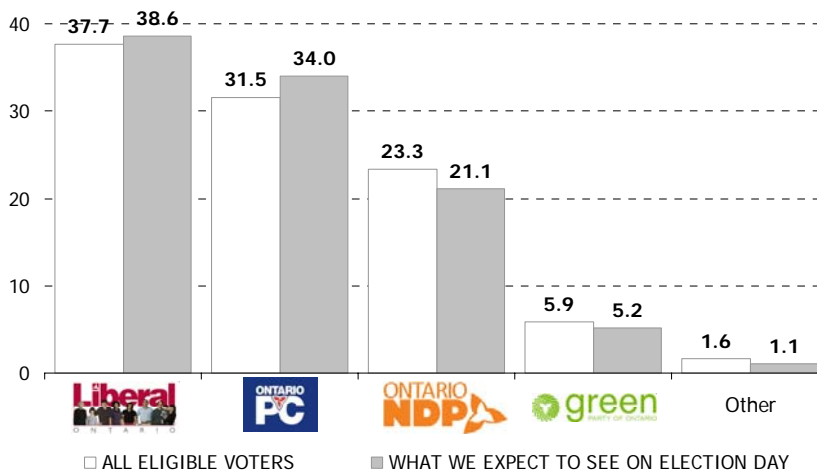
Note: The data on provincial vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only.

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BASE: Decided voters in Ontario; October 3-5, 2011 (n=2,165)

Tracking provincial vote intention

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

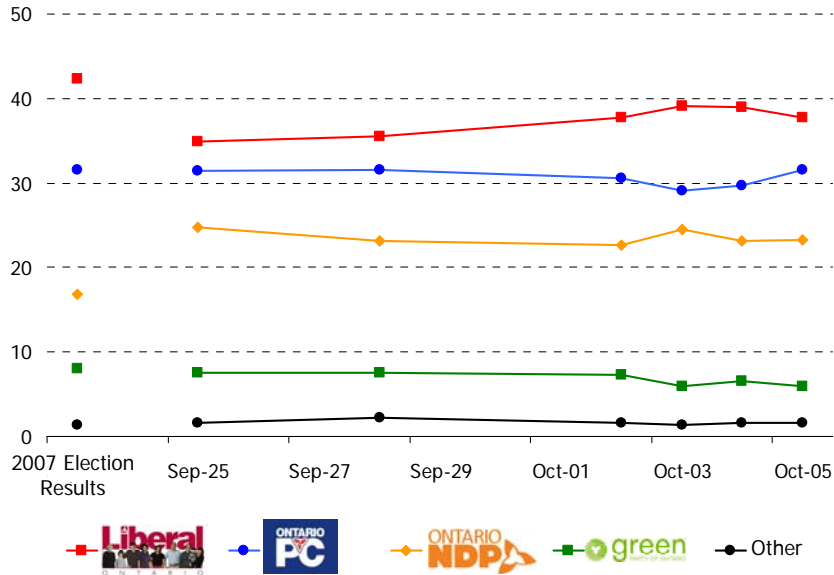*Note: The data on provincial vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only.*

BASE: Decided voters in Ontario; most recent data point October 3-5, 2011 (n=2,165)

Detailed Tables:

Provincial Vote Intention (Ontario)
Base: Decided and leaning voters

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

	Liberal	NDP	PC	Green	Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
PROVINCIALLY	**37.7%**	**23.3%**	**31.5%**	**5.9%**	**1.6%**	**2165**	**2.1**
GENDER							
Male	37.3%	18.3%	36.4%	6.4%	1.6%	1077	3.0
Female	38.1%	28.3%	26.6%	5.5%	1.5%	1088	3.0
AGE							
<25	33.0%	26.7%	21.9%	14.7%	3.7%	109	9.4
25-44	37.5%	26.1%	27.7%	7.2%	1.5%	461	4.6
45-64	38.7%	22.6%	33.9%	3.4%	1.4%	903	3.3
65+	39.0%	17.2%	39.4%	3.6%	0.7%	692	3.7
EDUCATION							
High school or less	29.9%	24.9%	35.1%	7.9%	2.3%	568	4.1
College or CEGEP	32.1%	27.7%	33.0%	5.7%	1.5%	711	3.7
University or higher	46.7%	18.8%	28.2%	5.1%	1.2%	886	3.3
PLACE OF BIRTH							
Canada	36.6%	23.5%	32.2%	6.2%	1.6%	1688	2.4
Outside Canada	41.9%	22.5%	28.9%	5.1%	1.6%	477	4.5
REGION							
Toronto/Core GTA	49.3%	23.3%	19.9%	5.0%	2.6%	431	4.7
Suburban GTA	37.7%	20.0%	35.1%	6.7%	0.5%	555	4.2
Southwestern Ontario	31.1%	26.0%	35.1%	6.2%	1.6%	463	4.6
Ottawa & Eastern Ontario	35.1%	19.5%	38.2%	5.1%	2.1%	427	4.7
Northeastern & Central Ontario	33.1%	31.0%	27.4%	7.2%	1.3%	256	6.1
Northwestern Ontario	33.3%	30.4%	31.0%	5.3%	0.0%	33	17.1

Methodology:

EKOS' polls are 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.

The field dates for this survey are October 3-5, 2011. In total, a random sample of 2,391 Ontario residents aged 18 and over responded to the survey (including a sub-sample of 2,165 decided and leaning voters). The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/- 2.0 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 region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of Ontario according to Census data.