

2014 Ontario Election Night Update:

Kathleen Wynne's Liberals Win Majority Government; Tim Hudak to Resign as PC Leader

June 13, 2014

Kathleen Wynne and her Ontario Liberals have won a remarkable majority victory last night – a feat many observers would have written off as impossible several months, weeks or even days ago.

With a few seats still in play but the results unlikely to be adjusted, the Liberals appear to have elected 59 members, comfortably above the threshold for a majority in the 107-seat Legislature.

	Liberals	PCs	NDP
Seats	58	28	21
Popular Vote	38.7%	31.4%	23.8%

Wynne becomes the first woman to be elected Premier in Ontario, since her tenure over the past year was courtesy of a Liberal Party leadership win instead a provincial election. She also becomes the first openly gay person elected to lead any province in Canada.

The Road to Victory

Going into this election, conditions appeared to be ripe for the opposition Progressive Conservatives to end 11 years of Liberal rule. Yet, despite inevitable regime fatigue, the retirement of some veteran Liberals, the highly publicized gas plant scandal and a host of other problems from the last days of the Dalton McGuinty administration, it is Tim Hudak's Tories who have come out of the campaign scarred and defeated.

For their part, the NDP emerged stronger than many polls had suggested they would, holding steady at 21 seats though losing most of their Toronto members.

In the face of the stunning defeat, PC Leader Tim Hudak announced he would be stepping down as leader of the PC party. The Tories will have four years to elect a new leader and attempt to craft positions that can appeal to a wider swath of the Ontario public.

Enormous credit must go to the Liberal campaign team – including Counsel's own Bob Lopinski, who chaired the Liberal War Room – for developing and executing a strategy that outflanked their opponents.

Most observers had expected that Liberal success, if it was possible, would come to a large degree from cutting into NDP support. The Liberal Budget and platform were clearly designed to cement the centre-

left. Though that dynamic played out in vote-rich Toronto, where the Liberals snatched three long-time NDP seats, it was a different story across the province where it was the collapse of PC support that gave the Liberals the throne. The Liberals took seats for the Conservatives in places like Barrie, Cambridge, Newmarket-Aurora and Burlington, well beyond their downtown Toronto fortress.

While both opposition parties tried to make the election all about Liberal scandals, the results seem to demonstrate that the public accepted Kathleen Wynne's apologies for past mistakes. Indeed, the apologies that so irked some of her critics may have helped her to be seen as someone real, with a different way of doing politics than most traditional (mainly male) politicians of all stripes.

Beyond an overreliance on hammering previous scandals as their main electoral weapon, the PC losses resulted from both a character contrast and a clear distinction in policy agendas that backfired against them.

On the former front, Kathleen Wynne consistently outperformed Tim Hudak in public opinion results related to leadership traits and, especially, likeability and sincerity.

On policy, faced with a clear choice between the PC austerity agenda – highlighted by their commitment to slash 100,000 public sector jobs – and the Liberal promise of strategic investment and stimulation to “preserve a fragile recovery” on the way to a balanced budget in three years, the public opted for the moderate approach.

What Happens Now?

The biggest challenge for the new Liberal government will be to satisfy the twin demands of achieving a zero deficit by 2017-18 while fulfilling election promises for new spending in key areas. Upcoming negotiations with several large groups of public sector workers will add to the strain.

Premier-designate Wynne has announced that she will be asking the Lieutenant Governor to recall the Legislature within 20 days. The spring Budget will be reintroduced and quickly passed.

That means the Cabinet will be selected and sworn in in short order. Expect to see many new faces and roles. She will have no shortage of fresh talent to choose from! We will introduce you to some of those new faces in the coming days.

Most other business will be deferred until the fall session, after the new government has had time to get its feet under it and Members are recovered from a grueling campaign. But normal government business that has been frozen while the public service was in caretaker mode, like regulatory approvals, consultation meetings and policy development, can be expected to re-commence very quickly. The certainty of a majority will make it far easier to “get back to business” than would have been the case in a minority scenario.

Wins and Losses

The Liberals lost only one Cabinet Minister, Teresa Piruzza in Windsor West. They also managed to hang on to several difficult seats vacated by retiring members, such as Kingston, Brampton-Springdale and Kitchener Centre, though the NDP took over in Sudbury.

At the same time, they took both PC and NDP seats in Toronto, which they now virtually own. As well, they seized a swath of Tory seats in suburban and semi-rural Ontario, while hanging on to their northern and eastern seats in Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and the Ottawa area. However, the rural areas of southwestern and eastern Ontario remained difficult terrain for the Liberals.

For the Tories, it was just all bad news.

Below are the swings between parties.

Riding	Incumbent	2014 Winner
Barrie	Rod Jackson	Ann Hoggarth
Beaches East York	Michael Prue	Arthur Potts
Burlington	Jane McKenna	Eleanor McMahon
Cambridge	Rob Leone	Kathryn McGarry
Davenport	Jonah Schein	Cristina Martins
Durham	Mike Patrick [John O'Toole]*	Granville Anderson
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Doug Holyday	Peter Milczyn
Halton	Ted Chudleigh	Indira Naidoo-Harris
Newmarket-Aurora	Jane Twinney [Frank Klees]*	Chris Ballard
Northumberland-Quinte West	Rob E. Milligan	Lou Rinaldi
Oshawa	Jerry Ouellette	Jennifer French
Sudbury	Andrew Olivier [Rick Bartolucci]*	Joe Cimino
Trinity-Spadina	Rosario Marchese	Han Dong
Windsor West	Teresa Piruzza	Lisa Gretzky

*MPP did not seek re-election

Note: While initial reports stated Liberal candidate Sandra Yeung Racco beat PC MPP Gila Martow in Thornhill, data entry errors were discovered in the official tally, allowing Martow to reclaim the seat. Yeung Racco has asked for a judicial recount.