

2014 Ontario Election: Week Four *Friday Update*

May 30, 2014

With two weeks left until Election Day and in the lead up to Leaders' Debate next Tuesday, parties are starting to feel the heat from increased media scrutiny.

Numerous media reports, including a front page story in Thursday's [Globe and Mail](#), have noted the chorus of independent economists critiquing Tim Hudak's "Million Jobs" claim. For example, on Tuesday, [Maclean's](#) published an article by economist Paul Boothe saying that the number of jobs the PC platform would create is vastly overestimated because the platform counted person-years of employment as permanent jobs.

Hudak [defended](#) his plan, noting that "permanent reductions in taxes on job creators and families mean permanent jobs." During a Friday lunch speech to the Canadian Club, Hudak positioned his Million Jobs Plan as a way to cut bureaucracy, invest in front-line services and help the most vulnerable to "close the opportunity gap."

Given how central the plan is to his campaign – "Million Jobs Plan" is plastered on his bus, podium and the banners behind him at every event – Hudak is unlikely to concede the point no matter how clear the consensus on the math, but by sticking to his guns he risks credibility with the media who report on him every day.

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Kathleen Wynne left the door open to a [coalition government](#), saying that she is "not ruling anything out." The PCs suggested Wynne is "desperate to cling to power," while Howarth remained tight-lipped about whether she would agree to a coalition and, if so, with which party.

On Thursday, both the PCs and NDP attacked the Liberals.

The PCs [accused](#) the Liberals of secretly approving \$317 million to bail out a real estate development for the MaRS Discovery District before the election. MaRS, a registered charity, received \$305 million (including a \$234 million loan) to build an office tower that houses Phase 2 of the medical and health research innovation centre, but is unable to pay back the loan. In a proposal reviewed by the Cabinet in recent weeks, the government would purchase the building and repay the loan with the bailout package. Wynne defended the Liberals, stressing that negotiations for the deal are ongoing and nothing has yet been approved. Hudak called it "another wasteful Liberal scandal and cover-up."

Expect the Tories to keep hammering on this and possibly revealing more internal government documents.

Andrea Horwath's NDP [accused](#) the Liberals of trying to generate fake grassroots support for Metrolinx's expansion plans. The party claimed that as part of a \$1 million government contract, consultants created fake Twitter accounts in order to build support for transit revenue tools. Metrolinx [denied](#) the accusations, stating potential anti-funding usernames were acquired for defensive purposes only, to prevent them from being used by transit opponents. None of these accounts had been used to actually Tweet.

Advance Polls

This is just a friendly reminder that early voting begins on Saturday, May 31st, and runs until Friday, June 6th. Advance poll locations are open from 10 am to 8 pm. Visit Elections Ontario's [website](#) to find your advance poll location.

The Polls

The Liberals and PCs continue to battle it out for the lead. The latest [Forum Research](#) poll released on Thursday shows both parties in a dead heat at 36%. The Liberals dropped 5 points from the last Forum poll, while the PCs gained 2 points. The NDP trails far behind at 20%. The two polls preceding Thursday's Forum poll released by [Abacus Data](#) and [EKOS](#) placed the Liberals in the lead, but with the PCs close behind.

[Ipsos Reid](#) continues to be the outlier firm. While the poll's numbers for eligible voters were in line with the other firms (PCs 36%, Liberals 34%, NDP 23%), its likely voter model had the PCs at 41% support, 12 points ahead of the Liberals at 29%. The NDP polled at 25%.

The party leaders participate in the Leaders' Debate next Tuesday, a pivotal event in the campaign. Expect new polls to be released soon after, which could provide answers to some key questions – will one party emerge from the debate with a clear advantage, will the race tighten up between two (or all three) parties, or will polling firms continue to provide conflicting information?

Firm	Poll Dates	Liberal	PC	NDP	Green
Forum	May 2	33%	38%	22%	6%
Oracle	May 2-5	31%	42%	25%	-
Innovative (tel)	May 2-6	39%	33%	24%	4%
Innovative (net)	May 2-6	39%	33%	20%	7%
Ipsos Reid	May 6-9	31%	37%	28%	4%
Forum	May 12	38%	35%	21%	5%
Ipsos Reid*	May 12-14	31%	43%	22%	-
EKOS	May 13-14	37%	30%	21%	7%
Abacus*	May 14-16	33%	36%	25%	5%
Forum	May 20	41%	34%	20%	4%
Ipsos Reid*	May 20-21	30%	41%	26%	-
EKOS	May 16-23	36%	30%	20%	12%
Abacus*	May 21-24	36%	33%	24%	6%
Forum	May 29	36%	36%	20%	7%
Ipsos Reid*	May 26-29	29%	41%	25%	

*Using Likely Voter models (as opposed to all eligible and committed/leaning voters)

On the Leaders' Tour

All of the party leaders continue to focus heavily on Toronto and the GTA. Wynne kept the busiest travel schedule, making a trip to the Niagara Region on Thursday and visiting Burlington, Lindsay and the Peterborough area on Friday. Hudak also made a mid-week trip to the Niagara Region but held events in Toronto and the GTA during the remainder of the week. Horwath held campaign events with Toronto-area candidates over the last three days.

Date	Kathleen Wynne	Tim Hudak	Andrea Horwath
Wed May 28	Markham Pickering	Niagara Falls Fenwick	Toronto
Thurs May 29	Toronto Niagara Falls Oakville	Toronto	Toronto
Fri May 30	Burlington Lindsay Peterborough	Whitby Toronto	Toronto

For more information, contact:
Counsel Public Affairs
416-920-0716, reception@counselpa.com