

HARMONIZED SALES TAX

# Ontarians Decidedly Oppose HST, Foresee Higher Prices

*Three-in-four respondents claim to be “very familiar” or “moderately familiar” with the creation of the harmonized sales tax.*

[TORONTO – Dec. 4, 2009] – Ontarians are decidedly dismissive of the proposal to bring in a harmonized sales tax (HST), and the idea is clearly affecting the standing of the incumbent provincial government, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll conducted in partnership with the *Toronto Star* has found.

In the online survey of a representative provincial sample of 1,162 Ontario adults, 27 per cent of respondents claim to be very familiar with the issue of creating an HST in Ontario, while almost half (49%) are moderately familiar.

Only 15 per cent of respondents support the establishment of the HST in Ontario, while 75 per cent are opposed—including 57 per cent who claim to be “strongly opposed.”

The HST has also led to a wide range of scepticism, with just eight per cent of respondents siding with the argument that the tax will save Ontarians money by eliminating hidden retail taxes, reduce the tax burden on businesses and create jobs in the province through a more competitive tax structure. An overwhelming majority of respondents (83%) foresees, instead, more expensive goods and services.

Seven-in-ten Ontarians (70%) acknowledge that the creation of the HST has negatively affected their views of the incumbent provincial government, and more than half of respondents (54%) say their impression of Premier and Liberal Party leader Dalton McGuinty has worsened over the past three

## KEY FINDINGS

- **76% are very or moderately familiar with the HST**
- **75% oppose the establishment of the HST in Ontario**
- **83% believe the HST will make goods and services more expensive**
- **70% say their opinion of the McGuinty government has worsened over the HST**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

*From November 23 to November 26, 2009, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,162 randomly selected Ontarian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 2.8%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of Ontario. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

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months. These numbers give McGuinty a net momentum score of -50, while his two main rivals—Progressive Conservative Party leader Tim Hudak and New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Andrea Horwath—stand at -1.

In fact, the opposition Progressive Conservatives (41%) now hold a 14-point advantage over the incumbent Liberals (27%) when Ontarians are asked to ponder their choices in a provincial election. The NDP is third with 20 per cent, followed by the Green Party with 11 per cent.

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### Ontario Politics

If a provincial election were held tomorrow in Ontario, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?

	Region							
	Ontario	416	905	GTA	Hamilton / Niagara	Southwest	East	North
<b>Progressive Conservative Party</b>	41%	33%	42%	38%	51%	35%	47%	47%
<b>Liberal Party</b>	27%	34%	31%	32%	19%	25%	22%	26%
<b>New Democratic Party (NDP)</b>	20%	20%	14%	17%	22%	27%	16%	22%
<b>Green Party</b>	11%	10%	13%	11%	5%	12%	14%	4%
<b>Other party</b>	1%	3%	0%	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%

### Ontario Politics

Over the course of the last three months, would you say your impression of the following leaders has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?

	Improved	Stayed the same	Worsened	Not sure
<b>Premier and Liberal Party leader Dalton McGuinty</b>	4%	36%	54%	6%
<b>Progressive Conservative Party leader Tim Hudak</b>	15%	47%	16%	22%
<b>New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Andrea Horwath</b>	9%	56%	10%	25%

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### Harmonized Sales Tax

As you may know, the Ontario government recently brought forward legislation to harmonize the provincial sales tax (PST) with the GST. The result will be one harmonized sales tax (HST) on the sale of all goods and services in Ontario. How familiar would you say you are with the issue of creating a harmonized sales tax (HST) in Ontario?

Region								
	Ontario	416	905	GTA	Hamilton / Niagara	Southwest	East	North
<b>Very familiar</b>	27%	21%	25%	23%	33%	25%	34%	36%
<b>Moderately familiar</b>	49%	60%	50%	54%	40%	47%	48%	41%
<b>Not too familiar</b>	19%	12%	22%	18%	27%	20%	14%	20%
<b>Not familiar at all</b>	5%	7%	3%	5%	0%	8%	3%	3%

### Harmonized Sales Tax

Based on what you have seen, read or heard about the harmonized tax in Ontario, do you support or oppose the establishment of the HST?

Region								
	Ontario	416	905	GTA	Hamilton / Niagara	Southwest	East	North
<b>Strongly support</b>	3%	6%	3%	4%	0%	3%	4%	1%
<b>Moderately support</b>	12%	17%	14%	15%	10%	14%	7%	7%
<b>Moderately oppose</b>	18%	23%	20%	21%	14%	14%	19%	17%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	57%	47%	55%	52%	65%	58%	64%	63%
<b>Not sure</b>	9%	7%	8%	8%	11%	11%	5%	12%

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### Harmonized Sales Tax

Some people support the creation of a harmonized sales tax because it will save Ontarians money by eliminating hidden retail taxes, reduce the tax burden on businesses and create jobs in the province through a more competitive tax structure. Others oppose the creation of the HST because it will now add 8% provincial sales tax to many goods and services which were previously exempted from the tax, thereby making them more expensive. Based on what you know of the HST, which of these two statements comes closest to your personal point of view?

	Region							
	Ontario	416	905	GTA	Hamilton / Niagara	Southwest	East	North
The HST will save Ontarians money	8%	10%	7%	9%	6%	10%	9%	2%
The HST will make goods and services more expensive	83%	76%	84%	81%	85%	80%	87%	91%
Not sure	9%	14%	8%	11%	9%	11%	4%	8%

### Harmonized Sales Tax

Has the creation of the Harmonized Sales Tax in Ontario improved or worsened your impression of Dalton McGuinty's government?

	Region							
	Ontario	416	905	GTA	Hamilton / Niagara	Southwest	East	North
Strongly improved	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Moderately improved	3%	7%	3%	5%	2%	2%	3%	4%
Had no effect	22%	22%	29%	26%	13%	26%	16%	10%
Moderately worsened	27%	31%	27%	29%	25%	25%	26%	28%
Strongly worsened	43%	35%	39%	37%	51%	42%	51%	48%
Not sure	4%	5%	2%	3%	9%	4%	2%	11%

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*Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995*

*Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.*

*Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum ([www.angusreidforum.com](http://www.angusreidforum.com)), Springboard America ([www.springboardamerica.com](http://www.springboardamerica.com)) and Springboard UK ([www.springboarduk.com](http://www.springboarduk.com)) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.*

*Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election.*

<http://bit.ly/4zxf1S>

*Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.*

*More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://bit.ly/3z0u1l>*

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**For more information, please contact  
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:  
<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>**

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