

Six-in-ten Ontario residents support legislation to raise minimum wage to \$15 per hour

Women and millennials are especially supportive of the measure

December 28, 2017 – With a provincial election slated for next summer and a premier who has consistently been ranked as [Canada's least popular](#) over the last 18 months, Ontario's long-governing Liberal Party has been searching for policy wins.

A new analysis of quarterly polling data by the Angus Reid Institute shows that the party may have found at least one one in [recently passed legislation](#) that would raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2019. Six-in-ten Ontarians (60%) say they support new law – twice as many as oppose it (30%).

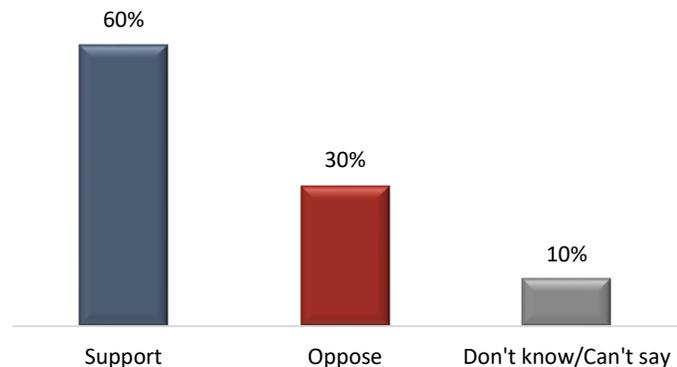
This favourable assessment from the Ontario public may be partially responsible for the slight uptick in Premier Kathleen Wynne's approval rating this quarter.

[Related – One-in-five approve of Wynne as 2017 comes to a close](#)

More Key Findings:

- The minimum wage change is especially popular among residents ages 18-34. Nearly four-in-ten (38%) say they "strongly support" it, compared to 23 per cent or fewer among other age groups
- Two-thirds of Ontario women (67%) are in favour of the measure, while a smaller majority of men (53%) say the same
- Opinion on this question also varies along political lines, with those who cast ballots for the Liberals or the New Democratic Party in the 2014 election overwhelmingly supportive of a minimum wage increase, while those who voted for the Progressive Conservative Party are more likely to oppose it (51% do) than support it (40%)

The government of Ontario has committed to raising the provincial minimum wage to \$15/hour by January 1, 2019. Would you say you support or oppose this decision?



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute analyzed the results of an online survey conducted from December 7 – 14, 2017, among a representative, randomized sample of 5,413 Canadian adults – including 817 Ontario residents – who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). The survey data were donated by [MARU/Matchbox](#). The sample plan included large over-samples in many provinces, weighted back to provide a national snapshot. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of 817 would carry a margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Associate: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

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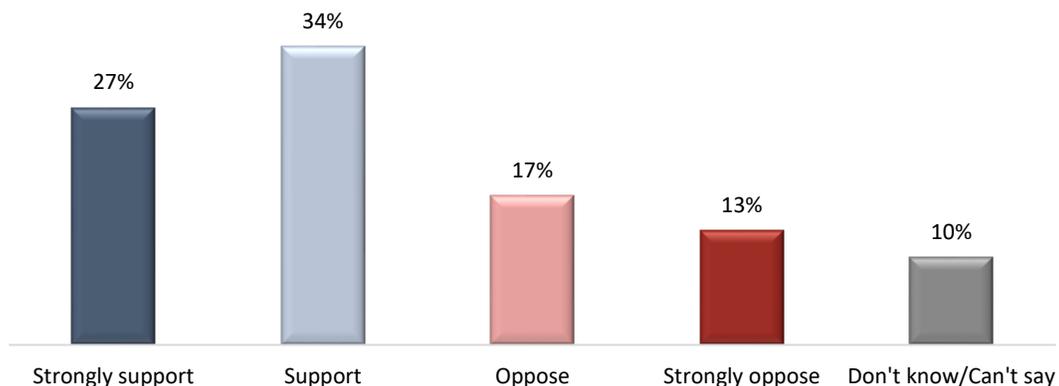
- Age, gender, income drive opinions
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Age, gender, income drive opinions

The legislation passed at the end of November will raise Ontario's minimum wage almost immediately. On Jan. 1, 2018, it will jump from \$11.60 to \$14 per hour, and it will rise again to \$15 on Jan. 1, 2019.

More than one-in-four residents (27%) say they support this change "strongly," and another one-in-three (34%) offer less-emphatic support. Notably, strong support outnumbers strong opposition to the law by a two-to-one margin:

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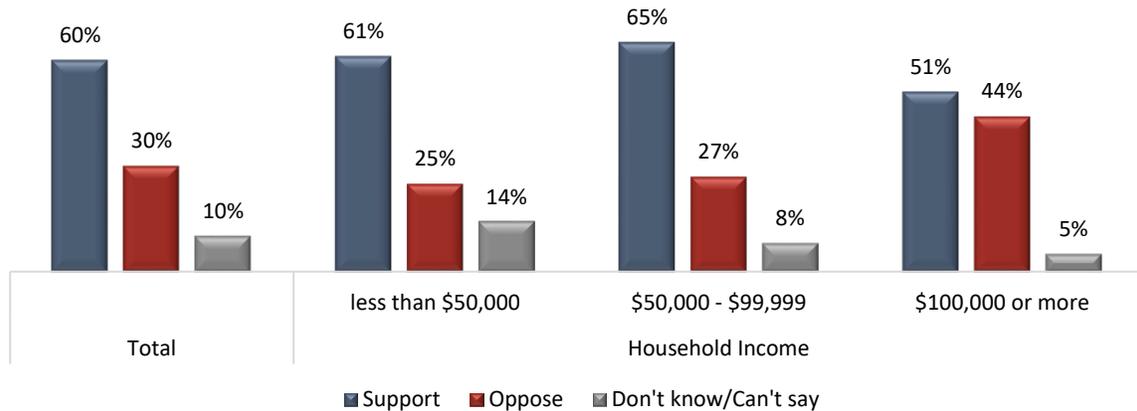
It's estimated that one-quarter of Ontario's workforce – [some 1.6 million people](#) – currently earn less than \$15 per hour, meaning a substantial number of Ontarians will be receiving raises next month.

Some six-in-ten (61%) of those who live in households earning less than \$50,000 annually say they support the wage hike – a total essentially identical to the province-wide average. Support rises slightly among those with household incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000, and declines among wealthier households, as seen in the following graph:

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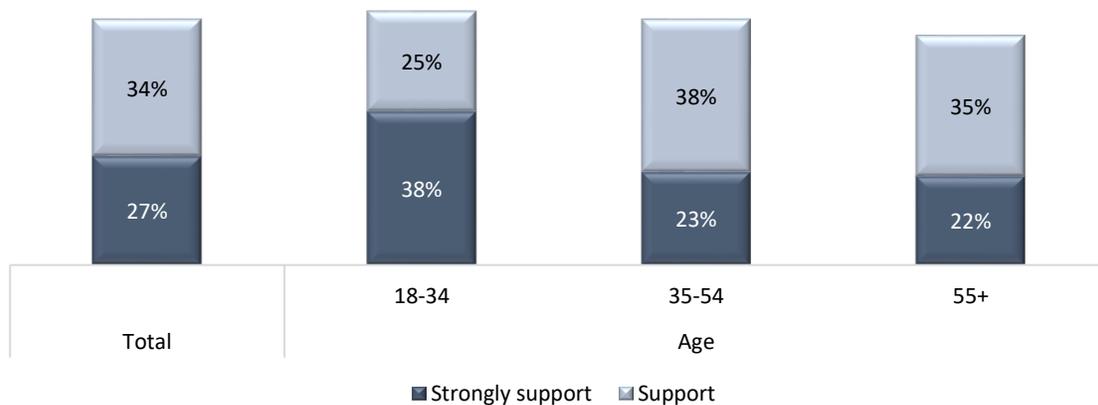
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Associate: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

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Opinion on the minimum wage plan also varies by age and gender, though in different ways. Members of the millennial generation – those ages 18-34 in this poll – are not much more likely than the general population to support the law, overall (63% do), but they *are* more likely to offer strong support, as seen in the graph that follows.

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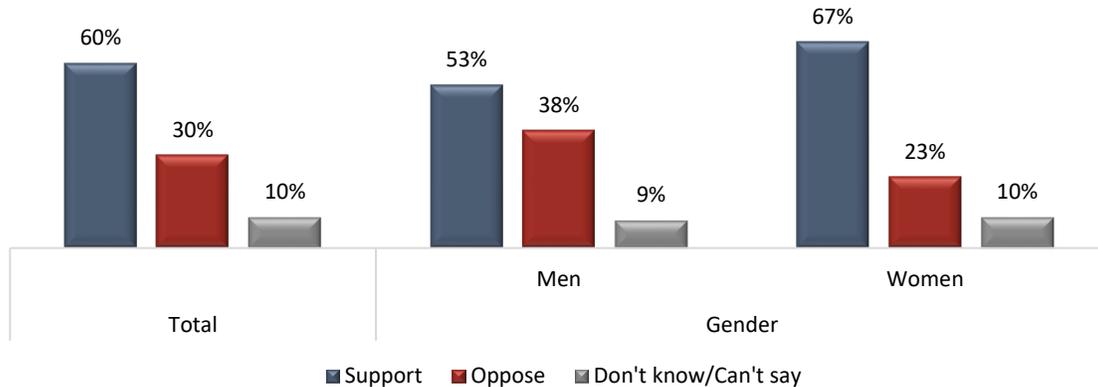
The difference between women and men on this question, meanwhile, is between support and opposition. While majorities of both genders support the plan to increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2019,

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fully two-thirds of women (67%) take this position, while significantly fewer men do. Notably, 60 per cent of minimum wage workers in Canada [are women](#).

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The political story

The idea of a \$15 minimum wage has been championed by left of centre politicians and activists for years. Founded in 2012, the grassroots organization "[Fight for \\$15](#)" claims 300 chapters in cities on all six inhabited continents.

In Canada, the \$15 minimum wage has primarily been an NDP policy priority. Alberta's NDP government [passed legislation](#) in September 2016 that will see minimum worker compensation rise to \$15 per hour by October 2018, and Ontario's New Democrats had made upping the wage a centrepiece of their platform heading into next year's election – at least until Wynne's Liberals [made the idea their own](#).

Wynne's embrace of a \$15 minimum wage represents a reversal of her party's previous position, but this polling data suggests it is a popular one. Almost three-quarters (74%) of those who voted for the Liberals in the 2014 provincial election say they support the government's proposal, as do seven-in-ten past New Democrats (69%).

Of course, how one voted in the 2014 election is not necessarily predictive of how one will vote in 2018. The fact that people who voted for Wynne's Liberals last time around are broadly supportive of this minimum wage initiative does not necessarily mean they will cast ballots for the party again in the future.

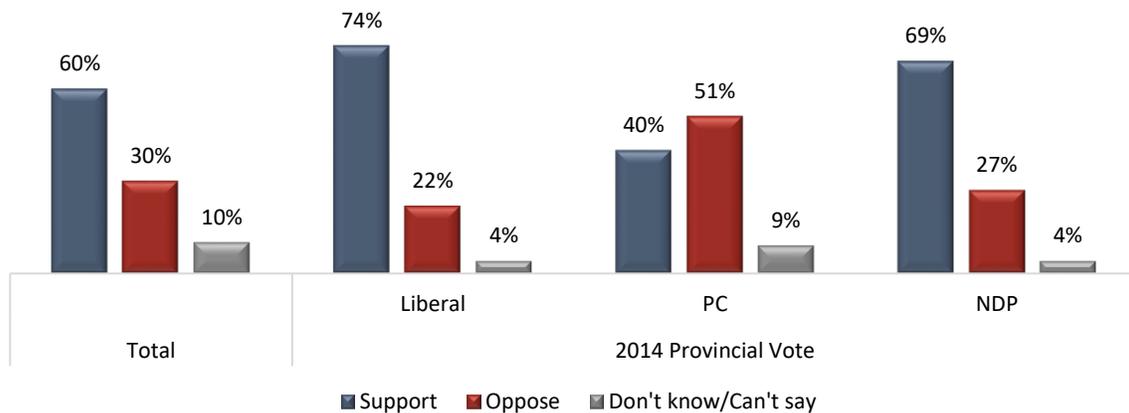
Those who supported the Progressive Conservatives in the last election are more divided than past Liberal and NDP voters. Slightly more than half (51%) oppose the change to a \$15 per hour minimum wage, while a substantial minority (40%) support it.

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In response to the government's decision, the PCs [have promised to phase in the changes](#) over four years, increasing the minimum wage by 25 cents per year between 2018 and 2022. The initial jump from \$11.60 to \$14 will take place before this summer's election, however.

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*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

Summary tables follow

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The government of Ontario has committed to raising the provincial minimum wage to \$15/hour by January 1, 2019. Would you say you support or oppose this decision?

(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (817)	Gender		Age		
		Men (389)	Women (428)	18-34 (179)	35-54 (251)	55+ (387)
Strongly support	27%	27%	27%	38%	23%	22%
Support	34%	26%	40%	25%	38%	35%
Oppose	17%	20%	15%	14%	16%	23%
Strongly oppose	13%	18%	7%	5%	15%	16%
Don't know/Can't say	10%	9%	10%	18%	7%	4%

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(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (817)	Household Income		
		Less than \$50,000 (280)	\$50,000 - \$99,999 (264)	\$100,000 or more (125)
Strongly support	27%	31%	31%	19%
Support	34%	30%	34%	32%
Oppose	17%	10%	15%	28%
Strongly oppose	13%	15%	12%	16%
Don't know/Can't say	10%	14%	8%	5%

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(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (817)	2014 Provincial Vote		
		Liberal (255)	Progressive Conservative (259)	New Democratic Party (153)
Strongly support	27%	34%	9%	34%
Support	34%	40%	31%	35%
Oppose	17%	10%	31%	17%
Strongly oppose	13%	12%	20%	9%
Don't know/Can't say	10%	4%	9%	4%

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