# John Swinney Targets Economic Growth Amid SNP Challenges



### John Swinney Targets Economic Growth Amid SNP Challenges

John Swinney, the newly-appointed leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP), has recently shifted his focus towards economic growth, a priority that seems novel given the party's 17-year governance. In a speech, Swinney advocated for a pro-business "can-do attitude" and emphasized the removal of investment barriers. This comes after years of policy aligned with the anti-capitalist Green Party, reflecting a possible change in the SNP's economic strategy.

Swinney’s new direction includes fewer bureaucratic "strategy documents" and more substantial actions to stimulate Scotland's economy. He highlighted the necessity of avoiding further tax hikes, a standpoint potentially contradicting his previous actions as finance secretary, which included increasing taxes for higher earners.

This economic pivot coincides with a significant drop in SNP support, as revealed in a recent YouGov poll. The poll indicates the SNP's backing has hit a decade-low at 29%, suggesting the party could lose up to 40 of its 48 seats in Westminster to Labour, which has surged to 39% support. Labour also leads in both constituency and regional polls for Holyrood elections.

Swinney's leadership faces additional scrutiny, with a net favourability score of -3 according to YouGov, and only 43% of Scots believing he will perform better than his predecessors, Humza Yousaf and Nicola Sturgeon. Sturgeon’s legacy is marred by financial scandals, yet she remains the most popular figure in Scottish politics despite substantial disapproval ratings.

Support for Scottish independence remains stagnant at 45%, further complicating the SNP’s future prospects amid economic and political challenges.