

FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS

Canadians Perceive Harper Government as Arrogant, Secretive

Almost three-in-five are dissatisfied with the way the current federal administration is informing Canadians about policies and plans.

[VANCOUVER – May 30, 2008] – A majority of Canadians use two negative terms to describe the administration headed by Stephen Harper, a new *Toronto Star* / Angus Reid poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, respondents were asked to select up to six words—from a list that included seven positive and seven negative characteristics—to describe the current federal government, as well as the two previous national administrations.

A majority of respondents portray the Harper government as arrogant (51%) and secretive (50%), while two-in-five (44%) say it is out of touch with Canadians (44%) and one-third deem it uncaring (35%) and ineffective (34%). The highest rated positive response was efficient (24%).

When asked to assess the minority government headed by Paul Martin from December 2003 to February 2006, half of respondents call it ineffective (50%), two-in-five say it was out of touch with Canadians (43%) and arrogant (40%), and a third perceive it as dishonest (37%) and secretive (32%).

The majority administration headed by Jean Chrétien from November 1993 to December 2003 is perceived as arrogant by a majority of Canadians (51%), and dishonest by more than two-in-five (45%). At least a third of respondents also think the Chrétien government was out of touch with Canadians (37%) and secretive (36%).

KEY FINDINGS

- » **Harper Government: arrogant (51%), secretive (50%), out of touch with Canadians (44%)**
- » **Martin Government: ineffective (50%), out of touch with Canadians (43%), arrogant (40%)**
- » **Chrétien Government: arrogant (51%), dishonest (45%), out of touch with Canadians (37%)**
- » **34% believe the Canadian media is biased against the Conservatives**
- » **27% believe the federal government is entitled to control media access to specific briefings**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From May 9 to May 10, 2008 Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,007 adult Canadians. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1 %, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

A comparison of the results shows that the Harper government is regarded as more secretive (50% for Harper, 32% for Martin, 36% for Chrétien) and uncaring (35% for Harper, 27% for Martin, 27% for Chrétien) than its two predecessors. However, the Tory administration is less likely to be seen as dishonest (29% for Harper, 37% for Martin, 45% for Chrétien) and more likely to be perceived as efficient (24% for Harper, 9% for Martin, 20% for Chrétien).

A separate question asked Canadians to rate the way the current federal government has dealt with four issues. While a majority of respondents (54%) commend the Harper administration for maintaining security and public order, respondents are almost evenly divided on the way the national economy is being handled (46% satisfied, 47% dissatisfied). Less than two-in-five respondents (38%) believe the Tories are ensuring equality of opportunity, and almost three-in-five (58%) are dissatisfied with the way the government has performed in informing Canadians about its policies and plans.

The survey asked Canadians to list all the sources where they get information about the federal government's policies and plans. Four types of media generate the bulk of the attention, with television news at 76 per cent, newspapers at 61 per cent, media websites at 52 per cent, and radio at 44 per cent. Only 17 per cent of respondents visit Official Government of Canada websites, and just one-in-ten reads blogs.

One-third of respondents (34%) believe the Canadian media is biased against the Conservatives, and just one-in-four Canadians (27%) think the federal government is entitled to control media access to specific briefings. Respondents who would vote for the Tories in the next federal election are more likely to point to anti-Conservative predisposition by the media (67%) and side with the government's strategy of limiting access to briefings (49%).

Federal Governments

Here are some words people may use to describe a government. Please select up to six words you think describe the federal government headed by :

- a) Stephen Harper since February 2006.
- b) Paul Martin from December 2003 to February 2006
- c) Jean Chrétien from November 1993 to December 2003

	Stephen Harper	Paul Martin	Jean Chrétien
Arrogant	51%	40%	51%
Secretive	50%	32%	36%
Out of touch with Canadians	44%	43%	37%
Uncaring	35%	27%	27%
Ineffective	34%	50%	31%
Dishonest	29%	37%	45%
Efficient	24%	9%	20%
In touch with Canadians	19%	11%	19%
Sincere	18%	13%	13%
Down to earth	17%	11%	16%
Shame	15%	22%	24%
Open	14%	9%	11%
Pride	14%	11%	21%
Compassionate	10%	9%	13%
Don't know	11%	16%	13%

Federal Governments			
Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the current federal government headed by Stephen Harper has performed in each of the following areas?			
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Not sure
Maintaining security and public order	54%	37%	9%
Handling the national economy	46%	47%	7%
Ensuring equality of opportunity	38%	48%	14%
Informing Canadians about its policies and plans	34%	58%	7%

Federal Governments							
Where do you usually get your information about the federal government's policies and plans? – Select all that apply.							
	Region						
	National	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Television news	76%	82%	66%	74%	77%	75%	74%
Newspapers	61%	59%	54%	64%	62%	64%	60%
Media websites (online versions of newspapers, news wires, etc.)	52%	53%	55%	38%	59%	47%	46%
Radio	44%	41%	58%	50%	43%	40%	44%
Official Government of Canada websites	17%	17%	25%	20%	17%	12%	21%
Blogs	10%	10%	16%	14%	11%	8%	3%
Word of mouth (friends, colleagues, etc)	3%	1%	1%	0%	4%	3%	4%
Other	1%	4%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Nowhere / I don't get information	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%

Federal Governments							
Do you agree or disagree with this statement? – “The Canadian media is biased against the Conservatives.”							
	Party to vote for in next federal election						
	National	Con.	Lib.	NDP	BQ	Grn.	Oth.
Strongly agree	11%	31%	2%	3%	1%	3%	10%
Moderately agree	23%	36%	14%	19%	17%	23%	32%
Moderately disagree	27%	20%	34%	31%	33%	31%	35%
Strongly disagree	22%	5%	37%	31%	35%	28%	15%
Not sure	18%	9%	13%	15%	14%	15%	8%

Federal Governments							
Do you agree or disagree with this statement? – “The federal government is entitled to control media access to specific briefings.”							
	Party to vote for in next federal election						
	National	Con.	Lib.	NDP	BQ	Grn.	Oth.
Strongly agree	7%	15%	2%	3%	5%	2%	0%
Moderately agree	20%	34%	12%	13%	14%	21%	25%
Moderately disagree	23%	28%	23%	15%	18%	13%	49%
Strongly disagree	44%	19%	60%	68%	52%	60%	26%
Not sure	7%	3%	2%	2%	11%	5%	0%

Angus Reid Strategies is a full-service polling and market research firm which 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 Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995.

Angus Reid Strategies, along with its sister company, Vision Critical, is now the largest Canadian-owned market research enterprise. In addition to its four offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices San Francisco, New York and London, England. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

Over the last year, Angus Reid has covered five 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. <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=194>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

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

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
www.angusreidstrategies.com**