

CANADIAN FEDERAL ELECTION 2011

Tories Ahead in Canada, But NDP Ties Liberals as Layton Connects with Voters

Jack Layton posts the highest approval rating for any Canadian federal leader in the past three years.

[OTTAWA – Apr. 18, 2011] – The Conservative Party is holding on to a double-digit lead in Canada’s federal political scene, but a surging New Democratic Party (NDP) is now tied with the Liberal Party for second place, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 2,032 Canadian adults, 36 per cent of decided voters (-2 since early April) would support the governing Conservative Party in the May 2 federal election.

The Liberals have shown no growth and stand at 25 per cent (-2), but the New Democrats have seen their support increase by four points and are now even with the Grits (25%). The Bloc Québécois is at nine per cent (+1), followed by the Green Party with five per cent (-1).

The NDP’s ascendance is tied to the support of voters in two areas. The party is now second to the Tories in Western Canada. In Quebec, the NDP has become a popular federalist force at 26 per cent, 10 points behind the sovereigntist Bloc. The Tories hold a seven-point lead over the Grits in Ontario.

There appears to be no discernible gender gap, with support for the five parties being relatively stable across male and female decided voters. The NDP, however, is the top choice for voters aged 18 to 34 (30%), and is now second to the Tories among voters aged 35-to-54 (26%). The Conservatives maintain their dominance among Canadians over the age of 55 (43%).

KEY FINDINGS

- **Voting Intention: Con. 36%, Lib. 25%, NDP 25%, BQ 9%, Grn. 5%**
- **Best PM: Harper 28%, Layton 27%, Ignatieff 13%, Duceppe 3%, May 3%**
- **Approval: Layton 50%, Harper 33%, Ignatieff 24%, May 24%, Duceppe 18%**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From April 15 to April 16, 2011, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 2,032 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 2.2%, 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.

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The Conservatives show an impressive retention rate, keeping 84 per cent of their voters in the 2008 federal election. The proportion of electors who are sticking by the Bloc (79%) and the NDP (78%) is also high. Conversely, three-in-ten people (31%) who voted for the Stéphane Dion-led Liberals in 2008 are now looking elsewhere.

Approval, Momentum and Preferred Prime Minister

The performance of NDP leader Jack Layton in the televised debates has led to the highest approval rating recorded by any Canadian federal politician in an Angus Reid Public Opinion poll over the past three years. Half of Canadians (50%) approve of the way Layton is doing his job.

One third of respondents approve of Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper (33%), while one-in-four feel the same way about both Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff (24%) and Green Party leader Elizabeth May (also 24%).

Layton's momentum score stands at +26, with more than a third of Canadians (36%) saying that they now have an improved opinion of the NDP leader. The remaining contenders all posted negative momentum scores.

There is a virtual tie in the preferred Prime Minister question, with large proportions of Canadians choosing either Harper (28%) or Layton (27%) for the country's top political job. Ignatieff is a distant third with 13 per cent, while Duceppe and May are in single digits.

Layton is clearly a popular choice for younger Canadians and Quebecers, while Harper remains dominant in Alberta, the Prairies, and among respondents over the age of 55.

Issues

Harper maintains the upper hand on being the best person to handle the economy (36%) and crime (35%), while Layton is now the clear leader on health care (36%) and ethics and accountability (28%). May is regarded as the best person to handle the environment (32%).

Conservative Majority

Overall, about three-in-ten respondents (28%) believe that the Conservative government has performed well, and deserves a majority in the House of Commons. This notion is most popular in Alberta (53%) and British Columbia (40%). Conversely, 45 per cent of Canadians—including 61 per cent of Quebecers—believe the Tories have performed poorly and do not deserve to form the government after the next election.

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Analysis

The Tories have dropped three points since the start of the campaign. In Quebec, the federal governing party has fallen to fourth place. However, the Tories are keeping solid levels of support in their traditional areas of strength, and remain ahead of the Grits in Ontario.

The Liberals are now sitting slightly behind their 2008 election total under Stéphane Dion, registering below the 20 per cent mark in British Columbia and Quebec. Ignatieff is third when Canadians are asked who they would prefer at 24 Sussex, and he does not garner the backing of one-in-five Canadians on being the best person to handle any one of five key issues. The Grits are losing ground to the NDP, particularly among middle-aged Canadians.

The Bloc is maintaining its frontrunner status in Quebec, as the federalist vote begins to split among three other parties. The Greens, without the benefit of the debate, are floundering. Half of respondents cannot issue judgement on the performance of May as leader, and the party is now at its lowest level in two years.

The biggest winner in the first voting intention survey conducted after debate week is Layton. The NDP leader has successfully connected with voters, providing his party with a marked boost. Layton now commands the approval of half of Canadians, something no other party leader has been able to do in three years.

In the middle of the 2008 campaign, also after the debates, the NDP managed to tie the Liberals in voting intention. Whether this post-debate surge for the NDP continues hinges on voter turnout. Layton has managed to court a large proportion of younger voters, who have traditionally been less likely to cast a ballot on election day. The other complex issue for the NDP is voter softness, as two-in-five current supporters (41%) claim they could change their mind before the election takes place.

The next two weeks will provide some guidance on whether the NDP's popularity can actually become a challenge to the federal two-party hegemony, or remains an ephemeral reaction to a good debate performance.

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About Angus Reid Public Opinion

Angus Reid Public Opinion is a public affairs practice headed by Dr. Angus Reid: an industry visionary who has spent more than four decades asking questions to figure out what people feel, how they think and who they will vote for. A team of talented and experienced practitioners with a unique and profound understanding of global issues conduct high quality research throughout the world on a daily basis for corporations, governments, academic researchers, and non-profit organizations.

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About Vision Critical®

Vision Critical is a global research and technology firm that creates software and services solutions for over 600 clients, including one third of the world's top 100 brands. The company has offices across North America, Europe and Australia as well as a Global Partner Program that provides other research companies and consultants with access to top-of-the-line technology. Its Sparq™ product is the most widely adopted community panel platform on the planet.

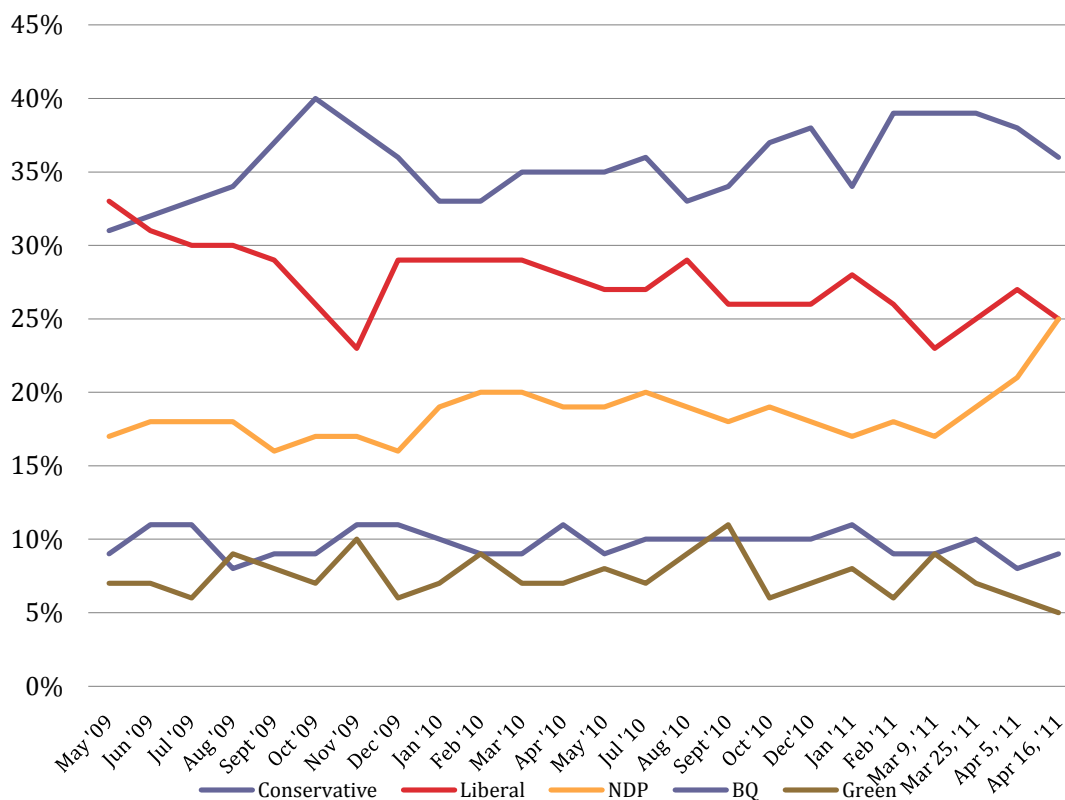
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**For more information, please contact
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If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?



Canadian Political Pulse

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

	Region							
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL	2008 Election
Conservative Party	36%	46%	60%	51%	38%	17%	22%	37.6%
Liberal Party	25%	16%	13%	19%	31%	19%	38%	26.2%
New Democratic Party	25%	28%	22%	27%	24%	26%	32%	18.2%
Bloc Québécois	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	36%	0%	10.0%
Green Party	5%	9%	4%	3%	7%	2%	7%	6.8%
Other party	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1.2%

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Canadian Political Pulse

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

	Gender		
	Total	Male	Female
Conservative Party	36%	36%	35%
Liberal Party	25%	26%	24%
New Democratic Party	25%	24%	26%
Bloc Québécois	9%	9%	9%
Green Party	5%	4%	6%
Other party	0%	0%	0%

Canadian Political Pulse

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

	Age			
	Total	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+
Conservative Party	36%	27%	36%	43%
Liberal Party	25%	26%	23%	24%
New Democratic Party	25%	30%	26%	21%
Bloc Québécois	9%	9%	9%	9%
Green Party	5%	8%	6%	3%
Other party	0%	0%	0%	0%

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Canadian Political Pulse

And, how certain are you that you will vote for this party? – *Decided Voters who expressed a preference*

	Party Support in May 2 Election			
	Con.	Lib.	NDP	BQ
I will definitely vote for this party	74%	72%	59%	76%
I could change my mind before the election takes place	26%	28%	41%	24%

Canadian Political Pulse

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

	Vote in the 2008 Federal Election			
	Con.	Lib.	NDP	BQ
Conservative Party	84%	7%	8%	3%
Liberal Party	5%	70%	11%	4%
New Democratic Party	8%	16%	78%	14%
Bloc Québécois	1%	3%	1%	79%
Green Party	2%	3%	1%	1%
Other party	0%	0%	1%	0%

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Canadian Political Pulse

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following people?

Total Canada					
	Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper	Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff	New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton	Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe	Green Party leader Elizabeth May
Approve	33%	24%	50%	18%	24%
Disapprove	52%	54%	25%	57%	26%
Not sure	15%	22%	26%	25%	50%

Canadian Political Pulse

Over the course of the past month, would you say your opinion of each of the following people has improved, stayed the same or worsened?

Total Canada					
	Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper	Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff	New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton	Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe	Green Party leader Elizabeth May
Improved	13%	21%	36%	8%	8%
Stayed the same	39%	33%	48%	52%	52%
Worsened	43%	40%	10%	29%	14%
Not sure	4%	7%	5%	12%	25%
<i>Momentum Score</i>	<i>-30</i>	<i>-19</i>	<i>+26</i>	<i>-21</i>	<i>-6</i>

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Canadian Political Pulse

Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with each of the following issues?

Total Canada

	Crime	Health Care	Economy	Environment	Ethics / Accountability
Stephen Harper	35%	21%	36%	15%	19%
Michael Ignatieff	15%	14%	18%	9%	13%
Jack Layton	15%	36%	17%	19%	28%
Gilles Duceppe	4%	5%	5%	4%	6%
Elizabeth May	2%	3%	2%	32%	6%
None of them	9%	7%	8%	7%	12%
Not sure	20%	14%	15%	14%	17%

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Canadian Political Pulse

Which of these leaders would make the best Prime Minister of Canada?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Stephen Harper	28%	33%	49%	36%	29%	14%	18%
Jack Layton	27%	26%	19%	24%	23%	38%	26%
Michael Ignatieff	13%	11%	7%	12%	15%	13%	17%
Gilles Duceppe	3%	1%	0%	1%	1%	11%	1%
Elizabeth May	3%	3%	5%	2%	4%	0%	2%
None of them	15%	16%	13%	9%	16%	13%	19%
Not sure	12%	10%	8%	17%	12%	10%	17%

Canadian Political Pulse

Which of these leaders would make the best Prime Minister of Canada?

	Age & Gender					
	Total	Male	Female	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+
Stephen Harper	28%	30%	25%	19%	27%	35%
Jack Layton	27%	28%	26%	29%	26%	26%
Michael Ignatieff	13%	15%	11%	11%	12%	16%
Gilles Duceppe	3%	3%	3%	5%	3%	2%
Elizabeth May	3%	3%	3%	5%	2%	1%
None of them	15%	15%	15%	15%	17%	12%
Not sure	12%	6%	17%	15%	13%	7%

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Canadian Political Pulse

Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
The Conservative government has performed well, and deserves a majority in the House of Commons	28%	40%	53%	37%	27%	14%	19%
The Conservative government has performed adequately, and deserves to stay in office with a minority	14%	10%	12%	16%	18%	14%	7%
The Conservative government has performed poorly, and does not deserve to form a government after the next election	45%	36%	29%	34%	42%	61%	52%
Not sure	13%	14%	6%	13%	12%	12%	22%

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