

ANGUS REID POLITICAL WATCH – MARCH 2008

Conservatives Have Ten-Point Lead as Views on Stéphane Dion Sour

Approval rating for Liberal leader falls to 11 per cent, and only nine per cent of respondents would prefer to have him as Prime Minister.

[VANCOUVER – Apr. 1, 2008] – As the House of Commons reconvenes in Ottawa, the Conservative Party has secured a double-digit advantage in Canada's federal political scene, according to the *Toronto Star* / Angus Reid poll.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,007 adults, 36 per cent of decided voters and leaners say they will cast a ballot for the Tories in the next federal election. Support for the Conservative Party is exactly the same as its share of the actual vote in the January 2006 ballot (36.3%).

The Liberal Party is second with 26 per cent, four points below its 2006 election total (30.2%). The New Democratic Party (NDP) is third with 18 per cent, followed by the Bloc Québécois with nine per cent, and the Green Party also with nine per cent.

Approval Ratings, Momentum and Preferred Prime Minister

Stephen Harper's approval rating as Prime Minister stands at 33 per cent, down one point since February.

The Conservative leader's momentum score for the month of March is -16 (11% of respondents say their opinion of the prime minister has improved, while 27% say it has worsened).

KEY FINDINGS

- » **Voting Intention: Con. 36%, Lib. 26%, NDP 18%, BQ 9%, Grn. 9%**
- » **Approval Ratings: Harper 33%, Dion 11%**
- » **Preferred Prime Minister: Harper 36%, Dion 9%, Neither 42%**
- » **Momentum Score: Harper -16, Dion -32**
- » **Concerns about the Canadian Economy increase. Environment slips behind Health Care as number one issue.**

More results are at the end of this release.

From March 27 to March 28, 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.

Stéphane Dion had the worst month of his tenure. The approval rating for Canada's opposition leader is 11 per cent, down six points since February. More than half of Canadians (57%) disapprove of Dion's performance for the first time.

The Grit leader's momentum score for the month of March is -32 (4% of respondents say their opinion of Dion has improved, while 36% say it has worsened). While Dion's numbers had improved moderately since October, more than a third of Canadians now say their views on the Liberal leader have become negative over the past four weeks.

Canadians appear disappointed with the two main federal party leaders. More than a third of respondents (36%) prefer Harper as Prime Minister, while only nine per cent favour Dion. Still, more than two-in-five Canadians (42%) pick neither man for the job. Dion has fallen below the 10 per cent threshold on the preferred prime minister question, while Harper remains unable to reach the 41 per cent mark he garnered exactly one year ago.

Top Issue Facing Canada

When asked about the most important issue facing the country, Canadians rank health care (25%) as their main concern, followed by the environment (21%) and the economy (16%). The number of respondents who are worried about the economy has doubled since December 2007.

Respondents were also provided with a list of eight issues and asked which one would be the most important if an early federal election were to take place this year. Again, health care was the top option with 29 per cent, followed by the national economy with 19 per cent, the environment with 17 per cent, and tax relief with 11 per cent.

Female respondents are more prone to think about health care (35%) as an electoral issue than male respondents (22%), while men are more worried about the national economy (23%) than women (14%).

The Angus Reid Political Watch is released monthly by Angus Reid Strategies, and includes the following questions:

- Federal Voting Intention
- Approval Rating and Momentum Score for the Prime Minister
- Approval Rating and Momentum Score for the Opposition Leader
- Preferred Prime Minister
- Top Issue Facing Canada
- Right Track / Wrong Track

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Voting Intention – Tories Gain, Liberals Sluggish

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

	Latest	Past surveys					
	MAR 28, 2008	MAR 2, 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007	OCT 2007	AUG 2007	2006 Election
Conservative	36%	34%	34%	33%	34%	33%	36.3%
Liberal	26%	28%	31%	28%	29%	29%	30.2%
New Democratic Party	18%	18%	17%	17%	17%	19%	17.5%
Bloc Québécois	9%	10%	9%	10%	9%	9%	10.5%
Green	9%	9%	8%	10%	9%	9%	4.5%
Other	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1.0%

Voting Intention – Tories Gain, Liberals Sluggish

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

	Latest	Provincial Breakdown					
	MAR 28, 2008	BC	Alta.	Prai.	Ont.	Que.	Atl.
Conservative	36%	39%	63%	46%	35%	26%	35%
Liberal	26%	24%	15%	26%	35%	21%	28%
New Democratic Party	18%	19%	11%	22%	21%	10%	33%
Bloc Québécois	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	36%	0%
Green	9%	16%	11%	6%	8%	6%	4%
Other	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%

Stephen Harper's approval rating at 33%

Do you approve or disapprove of Stephen Harper's performance as Prime Minister?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007	OCT 2007	AUG 2007	JUL 2007	JUN 2007
Approve	33%	34%	30%	29%	31%	29%	31%
Disapprove	44%	46%	45%	45%	42%	47%	47%
Not sure	23%	19%	25%	27%	27%	23%	23%

Stephen Harper's momentum score at -16

Over the course of the past month, would you say your opinion of Stephen Harper has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007	OCT 2007	AUG 2007	JUL 2007	JUN 2007
Improved	11%	10%	11%	13%	12%	11%	9%
Stayed the same	56%	55%	51%	51%	57%	52%	48%
Worsened	27%	28%	31%	23%	25%	28%	37%
Not sure	5%	7%	7%	12%	6%	10%	6%
Momentum Score	-16	-18	-20	-10	-13	-17	-28

Stéphane Dion's approval rating at 11%

Do you approve or disapprove of Stéphane Dion's performance as leader of the opposition?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007	OCT 2007	AUG 2007	JUL 2007	JUN 2007
Approve	11%	17%	14%	11%	14%	14%	15%
Disapprove	57%	50%	51%	46%	40%	43%	47%
Not sure	32%	33%	35%	43%	46%	43%	38%

Stéphane Dion's momentum score at -32

Over the course of the past month, would you say your opinion of Stéphane Dion has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007	OCT 2007	AUG 2007	JUL 2007	JUN 2007
Improved	4%	13%	10%	4%	6%	7%	8%
Stayed the same	48%	50%	53%	46%	60%	53%	55%
Worsened	36%	27%	24%	30%	16%	21%	25%
Not sure	12%	10%	13%	19%	17%	19%	13%
Momentum Score	-32	-14	-14	-26	-10	-14	-17

Preferred Prime Minister – Neither

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

	Latest	Past surveys					
	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007	OCT 2007	AUG 2007	JUL 2007	JUN 2007
Stephen Harper	36%	34%	33%	31%	32%	33%	33%
Stéphane Dion	9%	17%	12%	9%	12%	14%	17%
Neither	42%	37%	41%	46%	41%	40%	38%
Not sure	13%	11%	14%	14%	15%	13%	12%

Canada on the right track for 43%

Overall, do you think Canada is headed in the right track, or the wrong track?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007	OCT 2007	AUG 2007	JUL 2007	JUN 2007
Right track	43%	40%	38%	39%	45%	39%	38%
Wrong track	29%	34%	32%	32%	26%	35%	36%
Not sure	28%	26%	30%	29%	29%	26%	38%

Health Care and Environment are top issues

Q. What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?

	MAR 2008	FEB 2008	DEC 2007
Health Care	25%	20%	19%
Environment	21%	23%	26%
Economy	16%	14%	8%
Poverty	11%	10%	12%
Crime	5%	7%	6%
Tax relief	4%	5%	5%
Ethics / Accountability	4%	4%	5%
Afghanistan	4%	6%	3%
Unemployment	3%	1%	3%
Education	2%	2%	4%
Energy / Electricity	2%	1%	2%
Terrorism	2%	2%	3%
National Unity	1%	1%	1%
Or, some other issue	2%	3%	3%

Health Care is top electoral issue

Q. If an early federal election were to take place this year, which one of the following issues would be the most important when you cast your vote?

	Gender		
	Total	Men	Women
Health Care	29%	22%	35%
The national economy	19%	23%	14%
The environment	17%	20%	14%
Tax relief	11%	13%	10%
The mission in Afghanistan	7%	6%	9%
Financial help for cities	4%	3%	4%
Senate reform	3%	4%	1%
Child care	3%	2%	4%
Other	8%	7%	9%

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