

Steady Conservatives Lead, Liberals Gain as Dion Improves

Liberal leaders gains on leadership traits, but the party is still below its 2006 total.

[CALGARY – Oct. 4, 2008] – Support for the governing Conservative Party remains high in Canada, a new *Toronto Star* / Angus Reid poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,176 adults, 40 per cent of decided voters would back the Tories in the Oct. 14 federal ballot, exactly the same as a week ago and four points above the party's share of the vote in the 2006 electoral process (36.3%).

The Liberal Party is second with 25 per cent (+4), followed by the New Democratic Party (NDP) with 19 per cent (-2). The Grits are five points below their 2006 total (30.2%) while the New Democrats are still ahead of their last showing in a federal ballot (17.5%). The Bloc Québécois is fourth with 11 per cent, while the Greens fell to six per cent.

As has been the case throughout the entire campaign, the Tories remain dominant in Alberta (60%) and Manitoba and Saskatchewan (51%). In Ontario, the Conservative lead over the Liberals has fallen from 12 points a week ago to six points now (41% to 35%), with the NDP dropping back (18%).

The Bloc keeps a substantial advantage in Quebec (40%), with the Tories in second place (28%). Atlantic Canada gives the Liberals a seven-point lead over the Conservatives. In British Columbia, the Tories are leading the NDP (37% to 31%), with the Liberals (20%) and Greens (11%) far behind.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Voting Intention: Con. 40%, Lib. 25%, NDP 19%, BQ 11%, Grn. 6%**
- **Approval Ratings: Layton 43%, May 38%, Harper 35%, Dion 21%**
- **Momentum Scores: May +9, Layton +6, Dion -3, Harper -18**
- **Bloc retains lead in Quebec; Liberals closer to Conservatives in Ontario**

Full topline results are at the end of this release

From October 2 to October 3, 2008 Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,176 adult Canadians. The margin of error for the total sample is +/-2.8 %, 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.

All interviews for this poll were conducted after the conclusion of the English-language leaders debate.

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Retention Rates

The survey shows the Conservatives holding on to 84 per cent of Canadians who supported them in the 2006 election. The retention rate for the Bloc is equally high at 80 per cent, while the NDP holds lower numbers at 68 per cent. Just 58 per cent of decided voters who backed the Liberals in the last House of Commons ballot are sticking with the same party this time around, with support bleeding to the NDP (22%), the Tories (14%), and the Greens (5%).

Dion Has Best Week of Campaign

As the fourth week of the federal campaign draws to a close, the approval rating for Conservative leader and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper stands at 35 per cent (-1), while his momentum score is -18 (12% of respondents say their opinion of Harper has improved, while 30% say it has worsened).

The approval rating for Liberal Party leader Stéphane Dion improved to its best showing of the campaign (from 12% last week to 21% today). The opposition leader also managed a post a dramatic reduction to his momentum score (from -20 to -3).

NDP leader Jack Layton increased his approval rating by ten points (43%), and kept a positive momentum score (+6). In Quebec, Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe improved to a 49 per cent approval rating, and +4 momentum score. Green Party leader Elizabeth May increased her positive momentum score by 15 points (+17), and her approval rating improved to 38 per cent (+9).

In the preferred prime minister question, Harper remains ahead of his rivals with 32 per cent (-1), followed by Layton with 19 per cent (+1), Dion with 12 per cent (+3), May with four per cent, and Duceppe with three per cent.

Harper continues to get better numbers than his two main rivals in most qualities and characteristics. At least two-in-five respondents think of Harper as a strong and decisive leader (50%), who has a vision for Canada's future (46%), and understands complex issues (45%).

Dion saw a marked improvement on all of these questions, with gains ranging from four to eleven points on the nine qualities that are included in the survey. At least two-in-five Canadians regard the Liberal leader as a person who cares about the environment (57%), has a vision for Canada's future (45%), and is honest and trustworthy (40%).

Layton's numbers remain high, with the NDP leader clearing the 40 per cent mark on five of the issues reviewed, and a seven-point gain on being a strong and decisive leader (42%).

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Still, the three main federal leaders continue to post low numbers on three specific areas. One-in-four Canadians (25%, -2) believe Harper cares about the environment, even fewer (17%, +1) regard Layton as a person who can manage the economy effectively, and less just 13 per cent (+4) perceive Dion as a strong and decisive leader.

The proportion of Canadians who believe the Tories deserve a majority in the House of Commons remains stable at 28 per cent (+1), while 38 per cent (+4) think they do not deserve to form a government after this year's election. One-in-five (20%) would be content with a Conservative minority.






In all, 36 per cent of respondents think Canada is on the right track.

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Voting Intention – Tories Have 15-Point Advantage

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			
	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24 -25, 2008	Sept. 17- 18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008	Sept. 8-9 2008	AUG 2008	2006 Election
	40%	40%	38%	39%	38%	36%	36.3%
	25%	21%	24%	23%	24%	28%	30.2%
	19%	21%	19%	18%	21%	18%	17.5%
	11%	10%	9%	9%	9%	9%	10.5%
	6%	7%	10%	10%	7%	8%	4.5%
Other	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1.0%

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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?

	Latest	Provincial Breakdown					
	Oct. 2-3, 2008	BC	Alta.	Prai.	Ont.	Que.	Atl.
	40%	37%	60%	51%	41%	28%	34%
	25%	20%	15%	14%	35%	13%	41%
	19%	31%	12%	30%	18%	14%	20%
	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	40%	0%
	6%	11%	10%	5%	6%	5%	2%
Other	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%

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Stephen Harper's approval rating at 35%

Do you approve or disapprove of Stephen Harper's performance as leader of the Conservative Party?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24-25, 2008	Sept. 17-18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008	AUG 2008	JUL 2008	JUN 2008
Approve	35%	36%	32%	36%	32%	32%	32%
Disapprove	46%	44%	47%	43%	43%	46%	42%
Not sure	19%	20%	21%	21%	24%	22%	26%

Stephen Harper's momentum score at -18

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					
	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24-25, 2008	Sept. 17-18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008	AUG 2008	JUL 2008	JUN 2008
Improved	12%	12%	11%	12%	11%	10%	10%
Stayed the same	50%	51%	51%	53%	49%	54%	54%
Worsened	30%	30%	32%	30%	31%	31%	29%
Not sure	7%	7%	6%	6%	9%	5%	7%
Momentum Score	-18	-18	-21	-18	-20	-21	-19

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Stéphane Dion's approval rating at 21%

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

	Latest	Past surveys					
	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24-25, 2008	Sept. 17-18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008	AUG 2008	JUL 2008	JUN 2008
Approve	21%	12%	13%	15%	11%	13%	12%
Disapprove	55%	61%	61%	58%	54%	58%	56%
Not sure	24%	27%	26%	27%	35%	30%	33%

Stephane Dion's momentum score at -3

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					
	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24-25, 2008	Sept. 17-18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008	AUG 2008	JUL 2008	JUN 2008
Improved	24%	12%	14%	12%	10%	12%	9%
Stayed the same	39%	47%	43%	48%	46%	47%	44%
Worsened	27%	32%	36%	29%	29%	31%	35%
Not sure	10%	9%	8%	11%	16%	10%	12%
Momentum Score	-3	-20	-22	-17	-19	-19	-26

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Jack Layton's approval rating at 43%

Do you approve or disapprove of Jack Layton performance as leader of the NDP?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24-25, 2008	Sept. 17-18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008	AUG 2008	JUL 2008	JUN 2008
Approve	43%	35%	36%	29%	30%	27%	30%
Disapprove	29%	30%	32%	33%	30%	36%	33%
Not sure	28%	35%	32%	37%	40%	37%	37%

Jack Layton's momentum score at +6

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

	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24-25, 2008	Sept. 17-18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008
Improved	23%	17%	17%	11%
Stayed the same	49%	55%	56%	58%
Worsened	17%	15%	15%	17%
Not sure	12%	13%	11%	14%
Momentum Score	+6	+2	+2	-6

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Gilles Duceppe's approval rating at 49% (Quebec Only)

Do you approve or disapprove of Gilles Duceppe's performance as leader of the Bloc Quebecois?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24-25, 2008	Sept. 17-18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008	AUG 2008	JUL 2008	JUN 2008
Approve	49%	33%	35%	33%	39%	40%	29%
Disapprove	34%	33%	42%	42%	35%	34%	44%
Not sure	17%	33%	23%	25%	27%	26%	27%

Gilles Duceppe's momentum score at +4 (Quebec Only)

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

	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24-25, 2008	Sept. 17-18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008
Improved	17%	12%	11%	10%
Stayed the same	67%	56%	46%	54%
Worsened	13%	18%	27%	24%
Not sure	3%	14%	17%	12%
Momentum Score	+4	-6	-16	-14

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Elizabeth May's approval rating at 38%

Do you approve or disapprove of Elizabeth May's performance as leader of the Green Party?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24-25, 2008	Sept. 17-18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008	AUG 2008	JUL 2008	JUN 2008
Approve	38%	29%	28%	25%	21%	20%	17%
Disapprove	22%	26%	25%	23%	20%	24%	22%
Not sure	40%	45%	47%	52%	59%	56%	61%

Elizabeth May's momentum score at +17

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

	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24-25, 2008	Sept. 17-18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008
Improved	30%	16%	19%	20%
Stayed the same	33%	42%	38%	36%
Worsened	13%	14%	12%	13%
Not sure	23%	29%	31%	32%
Momentum Score	+17	+2	+7	+7

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Preferred Prime Minister – Harper 32%, Layton 19%, Dion 12%

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

	Latest	Past surveys					
	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24 -25, 2008	Sept. 17-18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008	AUG 2008	JUL 2008	JUN 2008
Stephen Harper	32%	33%	32%	36%	36%	36%	37%
Jack Layton	19%	18%	19%	16%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Stéphane Dion	12%	9%	8%	9%	13%	14%	10%
Elizabeth May	4%	2%	5%	3%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Giles Duceppe	3%	3%	4%	4%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
None of these	14%	20%	19%	13%	35%	39%	39%
Not sure	17%	15%	13%	20%	16%	12%	14%

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Qualities and Characteristics - Harper

Thinking about the following qualities and characteristics, please say whether you think they apply to Stephen Harper?

	Apply	Does not apply	Not sure
Is a strong and decisive leader	50% (+2)	30%	20%
Has a vision for Canada's future	46% (-2)	32%	22%
Understands complex issues	45% (+2)	30%	24%
Can manage the economy effectively	39% (-2)	36%	25%
Understands the problems of Canadians	35% (-3)	42%	22%
Inspires confidence	35% (=)	43%	22%
Generally agrees with you on issues you care about	31% (-1)	46%	24%
Is honest and trustworthy	31% (=)	43%	26%
Cares about the environment	25% (-2)	50%	25%

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Qualities and Characteristics - Dion

Thinking about the following qualities and characteristics, please say whether you think they apply to Stéphane Dion?

	Apply	Does not apply	Not sure
Cares about the environment	57% (+5)	16%	26%
Has a vision for Canada's future	45% (+11)	27%	28%
Is honest and trustworthy	40% (+7)	29%	31%
Understands complex issues	37% (+6)	33%	30%
Understands the problems of Canadians	34% (+10)	35%	31%
Generally agrees with you on issues you care about	27% (+6)	42%	31%
Can manage the economy effectively	22% (+6)	39%	40%
Inspires confidence	16% (+6)	57%	27%
Is a strong and decisive leader	13% (+4)	57%	30%

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Qualities and Characteristics

Thinking about the following qualities and characteristics, please say whether you think they apply to Jack Layton?

	Apply	Does not apply	Not sure
Cares about the environment	56% (+3)	14%	30%
Has a vision for Canada's future	49% (+3)	22%	29%
Understands the problems of Canadians	46% (+1)	24%	30%
Is honest and trustworthy	43% (=)	23%	33%
Is a strong and decisive leader	42% (+7)	28%	30%
Inspires confidence	38% (+3)	32%	30%
Understands complex issues	36% (+4)	30%	34%
Generally agrees with you on issues you care about	34% (+1)	35%	31%
Can manage the economy effectively	17% (+1)	42%	42%

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The Conservative Minority Government

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

	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24-25, 2008	Sept. 17-18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008
The Conservative government has performed well, and deserves a majority in the House of Commons	28%	27%	27%	28%
The Conservative government has performed adequately, and deserves to stay in office with a minority	20%	21%	19%	22%
The Conservative government has performed poorly, and does not deserve to form a government after the next election	38%	34%	38%	36%
Not sure	14%	18%	16%	13%

Canada on the Right Track for 36%

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

	Latest	Past surveys					
	Oct. 2-3, 2008	Sept. 24-25, 2008	Sept. 17-18, 2008	Sept. 10-12, 2008	AUG 2008	JUL 2008	JUN 2008
Right track	36%	34%	32%	32%	32%	32%	34%
Wrong track	35%	38%	40%	39%	36%	40%	33%
Not sure	29%	28%	28%	29%	32%	28%	34%

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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
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**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
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