

FEDERAL POLITICAL SCENE

Tight Race Continues, as Ignatieff Fails to Close Gap on Economy

All federal party leaders post a negative momentum score after days filled with election speculation.

[TORONTO – Jun. 24, 2009] – With Canadians seemingly assured that no election will take place over the summer, the main political parties are essentially tied, but both emerge from the recent stand-off with explicit weaknesses, a new *Toronto Star* / Angus Reid poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 32 per cent of decided voters (+1) would cast a ballot for the governing Conservatives, while 31 per cent (-2) would support the opposition Liberals. The New Democratic Party (NDP) is third with 18 per cent (+1), followed by the Bloc Québécois with 11 per cent (+2), and the Green Party with seven per cent (=).

The Tories are barely ahead of the Grits in Ontario (37% to 35%), and are still leading in Alberta. The Liberals are still the main federalist party in Quebec, but the sovereigntist Bloc now has a 13-point lead (42% to 29%). British Columbia has emerged as a key battleground, with the Conservatives now holding a three-point edge over the Liberals (36% to 33%).

The past month was not particularly kind to any of the five federal party leaders. The momentum score for Prime Minister and Conservative leader Stephen Harper is by far the worst at -28 (11% of respondents say their opinion of Harper improved in the past months, 39% say it worsened). NDP leader Jack Layton (-17) and Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe (-15 in Quebec) also posted negative numbers, along with Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff (-10) and Green leader Elizabeth May (also -10).

KEY FINDINGS

- **Voting Intention: Con. 32%, Lib. 31%, NDP 18%, BQ 11%, Grn. 7%**
- **Momentum Scores: Ignatieff -10, May -10, Duceppe -15, Layton -17, Harper -28**
- **34% say Harper best suited to handle economy; 20% pick Ignatieff**
- **40% believe the Conservative government has done a poor job and a new party should be elected into power**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From June 17 to June 18, 2009, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among 1,005 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—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.

CONTACT:

Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

A third of respondents (34%) believe Harper is best suited to deal with the economy, followed by Ignatieff with 20 per cent, and Layton with 10 per cent. The bulk of support for Harper's economic management comes from respondents in the West.

Respondents were also asked whether they would be better off or worse off under a federal government headed by Harper, Ignatieff or Layton. Once again, the momentum was negative for the three party leaders (-12 for Harper, -15 for Ignatieff, -23 for Layton).

Two-in-five Canadians (40%) believe the Conservative government has done a poor job, and that a new party should be elected into power, while five per cent criticize the Tories, but believe they should still be re-elected. In addition, 11 per cent of respondents commend the Tories but call for a change in Ottawa, while one-in-four (26%) unreservedly believe that the Tories should be re-elected.

Qualities and Characteristics

In the poll, respondents were provided with nine qualities and characteristics usually associated with politicians, and asked to state whether each of them applied to Canada's two main federal party leaders.

Harper remains ahead of Ignatieff on being a strong and decisive leader (43% to 28%), having a vision for Canada's future (42% to 35%), managing the economy effectively (32% to 22%), and being honest and trustworthy (28% to 25%). Ignatieff leads on caring about the environment (28% to 21%). The two leaders are virtually tied on inspiring confidence, understanding the problems of Canadians, understanding complex issues, and generally agreeing with Canadians on issues they care about.

Harper managed to expand on his April numbers on the leadership and vision questions, while Ignatieff underwent a marked decline on inspiring confidence.

Analysis

While the election was averted, the stalemate between the two main parties persists. The negative momentum score for all five leaders suggests that nobody connected with the public during the standoff.

For the governing Tories, the economy remains a good file. The prime minister is clearly ahead of his opponents as an economic manager, and Canadians do not automatically assume they would be better off under a Liberal administration at this point. However, the party has lost its stranglehold on British Columbia and Harper keeps the worst momentum score of all leaders. Also, the level of strong support for the Conservatives (26%) is clearly lower than the percentage who express disappointment and call for change (40%).

For the opposition Grits, the situation is also murky. While support in BC is reaching one of the highest points in years, the party has dropped back in Quebec and Ontario. Ignatieff remains unable to wrestle the economic manager mantle from Harper, and continues to trail on this question.

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Federal Political Scene - TREND

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

	Jun. 17-18	May 29-30	2008 Election
Conservative Party	32%	31%	37.6%
Liberal Party	31%	33%	26.2%
New Democratic Party	18%	17%	18.2%
Bloc Québécois	11%	9%	10.0%
Green Party	7%	7%	6.8%
Other	2%	2%	1.2%

Federal Political Scene

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
Conservative Party	32%	36%	57%	43%	37%	13%	33%
Liberal Party	31%	33%	12%	39%	35%	29%	25%
New Democratic Party	18%	20%	19%	16%	20%	8%	34%
Bloc Québécois	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	42%	0%
Green Party	7%	10%	6%	2%	8%	6%	7%
Other	2%	1%	6%	0%	1%	2%	1%

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Federal Political Scene

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?

	Improved	Stayed the same	Worsened	Not sure
Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper	11%	44%	39%	6%
Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff	23%	34%	33%	10%
New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton	7%	60%	24%	9%
Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe [Québec Only]	7%	62%	22%	10%
Green Party leader Elizabeth May	4%	57%	14%	24%

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Federal Political Scene

Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with the economy?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Stephen Harper	34%	42%	52%	56%	38%	15%	30%
Michael Ignatieff	20%	23%	9%	14%	21%	23%	19%
Jack Layton	10%	6%	9%	7%	11%	9%	20%
Gilles Duceppe	5%	1%	0%	1%	0%	16%	0%
Elizabeth May	1%	3%	0%	0%	2%	1%	0%
Not sure	29%	24%	30%	22%	28%	35%	31%

Federal Political Scene

Thinking now about your personal financial situation, would you and your family personally be better off, about the same, or worse off, if each of the following leaders and parties were in power?

	Better off	About the same	Worse off	Not sure
Stephen Harper and the Conservatives	10%	57%	22%	11%
Michael Ignatieff and the Liberals	11%	42%	26%	20%
Jack Layton and the NDP	15%	30%	38%	17%

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Federal Political Scene

Thinking about federal politics, which one of the following statements comes closest to your own point of view?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
The Conservative government has done a good job and deserves to be re-elected	26%	33%	45%	38%	30%	10%	24%
The Conservative government has done a good job, but a new party should be elected into power	11%	7%	12%	21%	8%	12%	11%
The Conservative government has done a poor job, but still should be re-elected	5%	6%	12%	0%	5%	3%	5%
The Conservative government has done a poor job, and a new party should be elected into power	40%	38%	23%	20%	39%	54%	37%
Not sure	18%	15%	8%	22%	18%	20%	23%

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Federal Political Scene

Thinking about the following qualities and characteristics, do you think they apply to Stephen Harper / Michael Ignatieff?

("Apply" listed)

	Stephen Harper	Michael Ignatieff
Is honest and trustworthy	28% (-1)	25% (-2)
Has a vision for Canada's future	42% (+3)	35% (=)
Understands the problems of Canadians	32% (+1)	31% (+1)
Can manage the economy effectively	32% (+1)	22% (-2)
Is a strong and decisive leader	43% (+4)	28% (-3)
Understands complex issues	40% (+1)	41% (+2)
Generally agrees with you on issues you care about	26% (-1)	25% (+3)
Inspires confidence	25% (-1)	26% (-6)
Cares about the environment	21% (-1)	28% (-1)

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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 five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. 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.

Angus Reid Strategies, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election.

http://angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/2008.10.15_Election.pdf

Since 2006, Angus Reid Strategies has covered eight provincial 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.

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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**

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Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com