



Tories Lead Grits, But Majority Government Clearly Elusive

Stephen Harper now has a larger lead over Michael Ignatieff as the preferred Prime Minister.

[TORONTO – Aug. 28, 2009] – The Canadian Political Pulse, conducted by Angus Reid Strategies in partnership with the *Toronto Star*, finds the governing Conservative Party edging the opposition Liberal Party, and the Green Party surpassing the Bloc Québécois for the first time this year.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 34 per cent of decided voters (+1 since late July) would vote for the Tories, while 30 per cent (-4) would support the Grits. The New Democratic Party (NDP) is third with 18 per cent (+2), followed by the Greens with nine per cent (+2) and the Bloc Québécois with eight per cent (-2).

The Conservatives are retaining their position as clear frontrunners in Alberta (62%) and Manitoba and Saskatchewan (51%), and are holding on to a large level of support in British Columbia (43%).

The Liberals have tied the sovereigntist Bloc in Quebec (33%) and hold a two-point lead over the Tories in Ontario (37% to 35%).

KEY FINDINGS

- **Voting Intention: Con. 34%, Lib. 30%, NDP 18%, Grn. 9%, BQ 8%**
- **Momentum Scores: Ignatieff -17, Layton -19, Harper -19**
- **Preferred PM: Harper 27%, Ignatieff 17%, Layton 12%**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From August 25 to August 26, 2009, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among 1,003 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.

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The NDP, fresh off its convention, reclaimed its place as the second most popular federal party in BC (28%) and Atlantic Canada (33%). The Greens reached the 10 per cent mark in BC, and saw their support soar to 15 per cent in Ontario.

The numbers suggest that the Tories would not earn their coveted majority mandate if an election took place today, and while the Grits are still ahead of their share of the vote in 2008, they are no longer in a statistical tie with the governing party.

Momentum

The country's three main federal leaders hold similar momentum numbers, with Prime Minister Stephen Harper at -19 (9% of respondents say their opinion of Harper has improved, 28% say it has worsened), Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff at -17 (11% of respondents say their opinion of Ignatieff has improved, 28% say it has worsened), and NDP leader Jack Layton at -19 (6% of respondents say their opinion of Layton has improved, 25% say it has worsened).

However, the only one of the three politicians who posted better numbers this month was Harper. His momentum score improved from -28 in late July to -19 in late August. Ignatieff's numbers are stable (from -18 in July to -17 in August) while Layton had a worse showing (from -15 in July to -19 in August).

Preferred Prime Minister

In December 2008, Ignatieff tied Harper as the preferred head of government for Canadians. Now, the sitting prime minister holds a ten-point advantage over the opposition leader (27% to 17%). Layton is third with 12 per cent. In Ontario, Harper's lead over Ignatieff in this question is 13 points.

The Issues

Three-in-ten Canadians (31%) believe Harper is the best person to handle the economy, compared to 21 per cent for Ignatieff, and 10 per cent for Layton.

Last month, Ignatieff emerged as the best suited leader to deal with foreign affairs. This month, Harper edges Ignatieff by two points on this issue (29% to 27%). Layton is still regarded as the best environmental steward (25%), and is trailing Harper on health care (23% to 21%). The Prime Minister continues to dominate on the issue of crime (35%).

Characteristics

As part of this survey, respondents were provided with a list of 18 words people may use to describe Harper and Ignatieff, and asked to choose up to six to define either politician.

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When assessing Harper, 47 per cent of respondents brand him as secretive, 43 per cent believe he is arrogant, 43 per cent regard him as boring, 40 per cent think he is out of touch, 39 per cent say he is uncaring, and 38 per cent believe he is intelligent.

Since July, the list of preferred words to describe Harper has remained similar, with a five-point increase in the proportion of respondents who brand him as boring and uncaring.

As far as Ignatieff, 52 per cent of respondents believe he is intelligent, 40 per cent say he is arrogant, and 37 per cent describe him as out of touch. One-third of Canadians (33%) think the Liberal leader is boring, and lower proportions consider him secretive (23%), uncaring (22%) and inefficient (also 22%).

While "arrogant" is second on the list of characteristics associated with Ignatieff, the proportion of respondents who use this word to describe him has dropped by five points since July. There is also a four-point increase in the number of Canadians who believe Ignatieff is inefficient.

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Canadian Political Pulse - TREND

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

	Aug. 25-26	Jul. 27-28	2008 Election
Conservative Party	34%	33%	37.6%
Liberal Party	30%	34%	26.2%
New Democratic Party	18%	16%	18.2%
Green Party	9%	7%	6.8%
Bloc Québécois	8%	10%	10.0%
Other party	0%	1%	1.2%

Canadian Political Pulse - REGIONS

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	34%	43%	62%	51%	35%	16%	20%
Liberal Party	30%	19%	12%	17%	37%	33%	39%
New Democratic Party	18%	28%	16%	31%	13%	12%	33%
Green Party	9%	10%	9%	1%	15%	6%	4%
Bloc Québécois	8%	--	--	--	--	33%	--
Other party	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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Canadian Political Pulse - MOMENTUM

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	9% (+1)	59% (+9)	28% (-8)	4% (-2)
Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff	11% (-2)	52% (+4)	28% (-3)	9% (=)
New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton	6% (=)	61% (-4)	25% (+4)	8% (=)

Canadian Political Pulse - PREFERRED PRIME MINISTER

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

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Stephen Harper	27%	31%	46%	30%	31%	14%	18%
Michael Ignatieff	17%	8%	7%	21%	18%	20%	29%
Jack Layton	12%	15%	6%	10%	7%	20%	14%
Giles Duceppe	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%
Elizabeth May	2%	5%	5%	3%	1%	1%	2%
None of them	21%	22%	19%	10%	22%	23%	25%
Not sure	18%	15%	17%	25%	20%	17%	11%

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Canadian Political Pulse - ISSUES					
Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with...?					
	Economy	Environment	Health Care	Foreign Affairs	Crime
Stephen Harper	31%	18%	23%	29%	35%
Michael Ignatieff	21%	15%	17%	27%	13%
Jack Layton	10%	25%	21%	9%	13%
Giles Duceppe	4%	4%	5%	4%	3%
Not sure	34%	38%	34%	32%	35%

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Canadian Political Pulse - LEADERS

Here are some words that people may use to describe Stephen Harper / Michael Ignatieff. Please choose up to six words that you think describes him.

	Stephen Harper	Michael Ignatieff
Down to earth	18% (=)	11% (=)
Arrogant	43% (-2)	40% (-5)
Open	8% (=)	16% (-2)
Secretive	47% (-2)	23% (=)
Efficient	21% (+1)	18% (-1)
Inefficient	26% (-3)	22% (+4)
Compassionate	8% (-2)	12% (+2)
Uncaring	39% (+5)	22% (+1)
Honest	20% (+2)	15% (-4)
Dishonest	26% (-1)	18% (-4)
Strong	23% (=)	19% (=)
Weak	20% (+3)	17% (-1)
Exciting	1% (-2)	8% (+1)
Boring	43% (+5)	33% (+3)
In touch	14% (+1)	14% (-2)
Out of touch	40% (-1)	37% (+2)
Intelligent	38% (-2)	52% (+1)
Foolish	15% (=)	14% (-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 (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panels are maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. These premier online survey platforms present 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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