

CANADIAN POLITICAL PULSE

With Parliament Prorogued, Liberals Get Closer to Conservatives

The Tories hold a four-point advantage nationally over the Grits, who have turned Ontario into a tight battleground.

[TORONTO – Jan. 28, 2010] – Public support for the Conservatives continues to erode in Canada, and the opposition Liberals have moved to within four points of the governing party, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

The online survey of a representative national sample of 1,005 adults also shows that Stephen Harper has the worst momentum score of the three main party leaders, while Michael Ignatieff continues to gain points on this indicator.

Voting Intention

Across the country, 33 per cent of decided voters (-1 since mid-January) would cast a ballot for the Conservative candidate in their riding if a new federal election took place today.

The Liberal Party is second with 29 per cent (+1), ahead of the proportion of the vote that the party received in the October 2008 federal election. The New Democratic Party (NDP) remains a strong third with 19 per cent (=), followed by the Bloc Québécois with 10 per cent (+1), and the Green Party with seven per cent (-1).

Regional Breakdowns

Clear majorities of decided voters in Alberta (54%) and Manitoba and Saskatchewan (59%) would vote for the Tories. In British Columbia, the

KEY FINDINGS

- **Voting Intention: Con. 33%, Lib. 29%, NDP 19%, BQ 10%, Grn. 7%.**
- **Approval Rating: Harper 27%, Layton 27%, Ignatieff 17%.**
- **Momentum: Layton -5, Ignatieff -20, Harper -34.**
- **61% disagree with the government's decision to prorogue Parliament**
- **57% believe a federal election in 2010 is "very likely" or "moderately likely"**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From January 25 to January 26, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion 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.

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governing party remains on top, but has lost five points in two weeks (35%). The NDP (30%) is now ahead of the Liberals (25%) in BC.

In Ontario, where the Conservatives enjoyed a comfortable lead for most of 2009, the state of affairs has shifted dramatically. The Tories (36%) and the Grits (35%) are now virtually tied, followed by the NDP with 19 per cent and the Greens with eight per cent.

In Quebec, the Bloc is still first with 42 per cent (+5), followed by the Liberals with 26 per cent (-2), the NDP with 14 per cent (+1), and the Conservatives with 11 per cent (-5), and

Approval

While Stephen Harper closed the year with an approval rating that surpassed the 30 per cent mark, he has been unable to reach the same plateau this year. Only 27 per cent of respondents approve of the performance of the Prime Minister and Conservative leader (-1 since mid-January), and half of them (50%) disapprove. The approval rating for NDP leader Jack Layton stands at 27 per cent (+1), while Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff is stable at 17 per cent.

Momentum

For the second time this year, Harper posts the worst momentum score of the three leaders at -34 (7% of Canadians report an improvement in their opinion of the Prime Minister over the past month, while 41% say their views have worsened). Ignatieff continues to perform better on this indicator, and is now at -20 (compared to -26 in mid-January and -33 in December 2009). Layton still has the best showing of the three main federal leaders at -5.

Prorogation

Following the weekend protests against prorogation in various cities across Canada, the level of interest in this issue remains high. Almost half of Canadians (48%) are following the prorogation story "very closely" or "moderately closely", and 31 per cent are following the story "not too closely." Just 21 per cent of respondents have not followed this story at all.

Less than one-in-five Canadians (18%) agree with the government's decision to prorogue Parliament, while three-in-five (61%) disagree. The numbers are consistent with the findings of a similar Angus Reid Public Opinion survey conducted two weeks ago.

An Election in 2010?

A majority of Canadians (57%) think it is "very likely" or "moderately likely" that Canada will have a federal election in 2010, while only 24 per cent deem this possibility as "not too likely" or "not likely at all." As was

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the case in mid-January, the views on the likelihood of an election are lower among Conservative voters (55%) than among Liberal voters (72%).

If an election indeed takes place this year, one-in-four Canadians (24%) say they would prefer to have a Conservative majority government, while 10 per cent would rather have a Conservative minority. Conversely, 20 per cent of respondents would like to have a Liberal majority, and 16 per cent would choose a Liberal minority.

However, when asked about the likely outcome of a federal election, two-in-five Canadians (38%) believe the Conservatives will form a minority government, while 10 per cent expect a Conservative majority. Only seven per cent of respondents think the Liberals will get to form a majority government, and 19 per cent predict a Liberal minority.

Analysis

The interest in prorogation did not recede over the past couple of weeks—which featured the government’s reaction to the earthquake in Haiti—and a majority of Canadians remain opposed to the decision to suspend Parliament. The Conservatives are still ahead at the national level, but are locked in a tight battle in Ontario and have lost points in British Columbia and Quebec.

The Liberals are now three points ahead of their total in the 2008 federal election, and while the recovery for Ignatieff has not appeared yet on the approval question, the official opposition leader has clearly improved on momentum. The NDP maintains the pace and remains closer to the 20 per cent mark, aided by the superior momentum score for Layton.

Despite the fact that the opposition is not threatening to topple the government at this time, a majority of Canadians expect to head to the ballot box before the end of the year. Still, the divide between expectation and reality continues. While more than a third of Canadians would like the Liberals to form the government after the next election, only one-in-four believe this prediction will actually come true. In fact, the outcome that Canadians think is most likely is the same one that the last two federal ballots have brought: a Conservative minority.

In 2010, the rise in Liberal support has been slow but constant, and is reminiscent of a scenario that has ensued in each of the past three summers, when the House of Commons was not in session. Voter support for the Tories receded to the low-30s, as the Grits have closed in on the governing party. The race between the two main forces could potentially become tighter as the impasse in Ottawa continues, but the return to the House in March is expected to change the dynamic, depending on the government’s ability to push its new budget through and the opposition’s appetite for an early election.

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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?

	Jan. 25-26	Jan. 12-13	2008 Election
Conservative Party	33%	34%	37.6%
Liberal Party	29%	28%	26.2%
New Democratic Party	19%	19%	18.2%
Bloc Québécois	10%	9%	10.0%
Green Party	7%	8%	6.8%
Other party	2%	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	33%	35%	54%	59%	36%	11%	31%
Liberal Party	29%	25%	17%	12%	35%	28%	31%
New Democratic Party	19%	30%	7%	22%	19%	14%	33%
Bloc Québécois	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	42%	0%
Green Party	7%	6%	13%	4%	8%	4%	4%
Other party	2%	3%	9%	3%	1%	0%	1%

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Canadian Political Pulse - APPROVAL

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following people?
(Change since Jan. 12-13)

	Approve	Disapprove	Not sure
Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper	27% (-1)	50% (-1)	23% (+2)
Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff	17% (=)	49% (-1)	35% (+3)
New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton	27% (+1)	38% (+5)	36% (-4)

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?
(Change since Jan. 12-13)

	Improved	Stayed the same	Worsened	Not sure
Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper	7% (-2)	43% (+4)	41% (-3)	8% (=)
Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff	9% (+2)	50% (+2)	29% (-4)	13% (+1)
New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton	9% (+4)	66% (-4)	14% (=)	11% (=)

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Prorogation

As you may know, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has prorogued Parliament, that is, suspended all activities and delayed the return of MPs and Senators by 22 sitting days. Have you followed this story in the media?

Region							
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Yes, very closely	19%	21%	18%	16%	22%	16%	14%
Yes, moderately closely	29%	29%	34%	20%	28%	28%	39%
Yes, but not too closely	31%	35%	38%	35%	33%	23%	29%
No, I have not followed this story at all	21%	15%	10%	30%	17%	32%	18%

Prorogation

As you may know, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has prorogued Parliament, that is, suspended all activities and delayed the return of MPs and Senators by 22 sitting days. Have you followed this story in the media?

	Jan. 25-26	Jan. 12-13	Jan. 5-6
Yes, very closely	19%	20%	11%
Yes, moderately closely	29%	28%	23%
Yes, but not too closely	31%	30%	31%
No, I have not followed this story at all	21%	22%	34%

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Prorogation							
Do you agree or disagree with the decision to prorogue Parliament?							
Region							
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Strongly agree	5%	3%	10%	5%	5%	4%	7%
Moderately agree	13%	15%	20%	15%	14%	9%	7%
Moderately disagree	16%	19%	26%	18%	16%	10%	18%
Strongly disagree	45%	44%	31%	25%	47%	53%	44%
Not sure	21%	20%	12%	37%	18%	24%	25%

Prorogation			
Do you agree or disagree with the decision to prorogue Parliament?			
	Jan. 25-26	Jan. 12-13	Jan. 5-6
Strongly agree	5%	5%	7%
Moderately agree	13%	14%	12%
Moderately disagree	16%	17%	15%
Strongly disagree	45%	44%	38%
Not sure	21%	19%	28%

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Canadian Political Pulse - ELECTION IN 2010

How likely is it that Canada will have a federal election in 2010?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Very likely	17%	9%	19%	8%	19%	19%	18%
Moderately likely	40%	39%	33%	46%	43%	34%	44%
Not too likely	20%	24%	22%	15%	18%	22%	22%
Not likely at all	4%	5%	8%	0%	2%	5%	4%
Not sure	19%	23%	18%	32%	17%	20%	11%

Canadian Political Pulse - ELECTION IN 2010

How likely is it that Canada will have a federal election in 2010?

	Party Preference					
	Total	Con.	Lib.	NDP	BQ	Grn.
Very likely	17%	15%	18%	17%	16%	20%
Moderately likely	40%	40%	54%	50%	33%	35%
Not too likely	20%	30%	20%	16%	28%	22%
Not likely at all	4%	6%	3%	1%	7%	0%
Not sure	19%	9%	5%	15%	17%	24%

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Canadian Political Pulse - OUTCOME

If a federal election takes place in 2010, which of these outcomes would you personally prefer?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
A Conservative majority	24%	22%	51%	30%	27%	9%	26%
A Conservative minority	10%	15%	5%	9%	9%	13%	5%
A Liberal minority	16%	22%	7%	13%	14%	20%	15%
A Liberal majority	20%	14%	14%	3%	23%	24%	23%
Not sure	30%	26%	23%	45%	26%	34%	31%

Canadian Political Pulse - OUTCOME

And if a federal election takes place in 2010, which of these outcomes do you think is most likely?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
A Conservative majority	10%	11%	17%	14%	9%	9%	12%
A Conservative minority	38%	43%	42%	39%	42%	30%	34%
A Liberal minority	19%	20%	15%	10%	20%	20%	20%
A Liberal majority	7%	5%	2%	2%	6%	14%	6%
Not sure	26%	21%	24%	35%	24%	28%	28%

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical 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 Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. 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 Public Opinion 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 carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Angus Reid, 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://bit.ly/4zxf1S>

Since 2006, Angus Reid 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.

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at

<http://bit.ly/3z0u1l>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

Copies of this poll are available on our website:

<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>

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