

CANADIAN POLITICAL PULSE

Conservatives Keep Four-Point Lead Over Liberals at the Start of Olympic Break

A majority of Canadians believe a federal election this year is “very likely” or “moderately likely”.

[TORONTO – Feb. 16, 2010] – Canada's two main federal parties are still separated by four points, and a majority of Canadians believe that a federal election will take place in 2010, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

Voting Intention

Across the country, 34 per cent of decided voters (+1 since late 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 30 per cent (+1), four points ahead of the proportion of the vote that the party received in the October 2008 federal election.

The New Democratic Party (NDP) is third with 18 per cent (-1), followed by the Bloc Québécois with nine per cent (-1), and the Green Party with eight per cent (+1).

Regional Breakdowns

The Tories remain the most popular party in Alberta (62%) and Manitoba and Saskatchewan (48%).

In British Columbia, the governing party is holding on to the top spot (36%), with the NDP (30%) maintaining its edge over the Liberals (26%).

KEY FINDINGS

- **Voting Intention: Con. 34%, Lib. 30%, NDP 18%, BQ 9%, Grn. 8%.**
- **Approval Rating: Layton 29%, Harper 26%, Ignatieff 15%.**
- **Momentum: Layton -1, Ignatieff -19, Harper -34.**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

Voting Intention: From February 11 to February 13, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 2,003 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 2.2%, 19 times out of 20.

Approval and Momentum: From February 11 to February 12, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,002 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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In Ontario, a tight race continues. The Tories (37%) are barely ahead of the Grits (35%), followed by the NDP with 17 per cent and the Greens at 11 per cent.

In Quebec, the Bloc is first with 35 per cent (-7), followed by the Liberals with 28 per cent (+2), the NDP with 14 per cent (=), and the Conservatives also with 14 per cent (+3).

Approval

Once again, Stephen Harper (26%) was unable to reach the 30 per cent mark in approval rating, and actually lost a point since the last Angus Reid Public Opinion survey conducted in late January. The approval rating for Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff remains low (15%, -2). The NDP's Jack Layton now has the best numbers on this indicator (29%, +2).

Momentum

For the third time this year, Harper posts the worst momentum score of the three leaders. In fact, his score did not move at all since late January and remains 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 (-19) is performing better this year—his score in December 2009 was -33. Layton is very close to posting a positive momentum score (-1).

An Election in 2010?

Once again, a majority of Canadians (57%) think it is "very likely" or "moderately likely" that Canada will have a federal election in 2010, while only 28 per cent deem this possibility as "not too likely" or "not likely at all."

If an election indeed takes place this year, about a quarter of Canadians (26%) say they would prefer to have a Conservative majority government, while nine per cent would rather have a Conservative minority. Conversely, 19 per cent of respondents would like to have a Liberal majority, and an equal proportion (19%) would choose a Liberal minority.

However, when asked about the likely outcome of a federal election, two-in-five Canadians (39%) believe the Conservatives will form a minority government, while nine per cent expect a Conservative majority. Only six per cent of respondents think the Liberals will form a majority government, and 20 per cent predict a Liberal minority.

Analysis

The federal political race has tightened after the government's decision to prorogue parliament. The main parties are separated by four points for the second time this year, and many Canadians believe that a new ballot will be called in 2010.

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With no debates taking place in the House of Commons, public perceptions on the three main party leaders did not go through any severe changes, with the exception of a slight increase for Layton—who recently revealed that he will undergo treatment for prostate cancer—on approval and momentum.

The Conservatives are still leading nationally, but their support is not as strong, particularly in Ontario and British Columbia: two provinces where the governing party used to garner the backing of more than 40 per cent of decided voters just a few weeks ago.

The Liberals have reached the 30 per cent mark nationally, but are stagnant on the questions related to the outcome of the next election. Almost two-in-five Canadians would like to have a Liberal government, but only one-in-four are predicting that this will actually happen. However, some disenchanted voters are definitely taking a second look at the Grits, placing the main opposition party four points ahead of its 2008 electoral result.

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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?

	Feb. 11-13	Jan. 25-26	2008 Election
Conservative Party	34%	33%	37.6%
Liberal Party	30%	29%	26.2%
New Democratic Party	18%	19%	18.2%
Bloc Québécois	9%	10%	10.0%
Green Party	8%	7%	6.8%
Other party	1%	2%	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%	36%	62%	48%	37%	14%	26%
Liberal Party	30%	26%	18%	22%	35%	28%	44%
New Democratic Party	18%	30%	11%	24%	17%	14%	19%
Bloc Québécois	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	35%	0%
Green Party	8%	6%	4%	4%	11%	8%	11%
Other party	1%	1%	5%	1%	1%	2%	0%

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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. 25-26)

	Approve	Disapprove	Not sure
Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper	26% (-1)	51% (+1)	22% (-1)
Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff	15% (-2)	49% (=)	36% (+1)
New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton	29% (+2)	34% (-4)	37% (+1)

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. 25-26)

	Improved	Stayed the same	Worsened	Not sure
Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper	7% (=)	44% (+1)	41% (=)	7% (-1)
Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff	9% (=)	51% (+1)	28% (-1)	12% (-1)
New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton	9% (=)	70% (+4)	10% (-4)	11% (=)

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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	16%	13%	19%	23%	18%	12%	18%
Moderately likely	41%	41%	31%	31%	44%	44%	41%
Not too likely	24%	30%	34%	23%	21%	24%	21%
Not likely at all	4%	2%	5%	8%	4%	2%	6%
Not sure	14%	15%	10%	16%	13%	18%	15%

Canadian Political Pulse - ELECTION IN 2010

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

	Feb. 11-13	Jan. 25-26
Very likely	16%	17%
Moderately likely	41%	40%
Not too likely	24%	20%
Not likely at all	4%	4%
Not sure	14%	19%

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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	26%	32%	50%	36%	27%	9%	25%
A Conservative minority	9%	9%	7%	6%	8%	12%	13%
A Liberal minority	19%	22%	11%	9%	19%	25%	12%
A Liberal majority	19%	16%	15%	19%	20%	16%	31%
Not sure	28%	22%	17%	29%	26%	39%	20%

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	9%	7%	17%	18%	10%	6%	5%
A Conservative minority	39%	54%	51%	38%	39%	28%	43%
A Liberal minority	20%	19%	15%	19%	21%	24%	19%
A Liberal majority	6%	5%	3%	1%	3%	9%	11%
Not sure	25%	15%	14%	25%	27%	33%	21%

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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.

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.

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. More information on our electoral record can be found at:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/record-of-accuracy>

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at
<http://www.visioncritical.com/what-we-do/practices/angus-reid-public-opinion/>

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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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