

CANADIAN POLITICAL PULSE

# Conservatives Gain and Now Lead Liberals by Six Points in Canada

*Public perceptions of Stephen Harper and Michael Ignatieff did not go through any considerable shifts in March.*

[TORONTO – Mar. 29, 2010] – The federal budget appears to have helped the governing Conservative Party in Canada, while support for the two main opposition parties remains stagnant, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

## Voting Intention

Across the country, 35 per cent of decided voters (+2 since late February) 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 (=), three 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 20 per cent (=), followed by the Bloc Québécois with nine per cent (=), and the Green Party with seven per cent (-2). The NDP reached the 20 per cent plateau for the second time this year.

## Regional Breakdowns

The Tories remain the most popular party in Alberta (62%) and Manitoba and Saskatchewan (46%), and also have the upper hand in British Columbia (40%). In Ontario, Tories and Grits remain in a virtual dead heat (Con. 36%, Lib. 35%).

## KEY FINDINGS

- **Voting Intention: Con. 35%, Lib. 29%, NDP 20%, BQ 9%, Grn. 7%.**
- **Approval Rating: Layton 32%, Harper 29%, Ignatieff 16%.**
- **Momentum: Layton -6, Harper -24, Ignatieff -26.**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

*From March 25 to March 26, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,004 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 Quebec, the Bloc remains in first place (38%), followed by the Liberals (24%). The Tories and the NDP are tied for third place with 16 per cent.

The NDP is second in British Columbia with 28 per cent, and remains strong in Ontario (22%). The Greens fell to seven per cent in Canada's most populous province, after a particularly good showing late last month,

### **Approval**

The first weeks of activity in the House of Commons after the controversial prorogation did not do much for the three main party leaders. The approval rating for Prime Minister and Conservative leader Stephen Harper remains at 29 per cent, while NDP leader Jack Layton is still the best rated leader at 32 per cent (-4 since last month). Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff—who was coming off the best approval numbers of his tenure in February—is at 16 per cent (-3).

### **Momentum**

Ignatieff posted the worst momentum score this month at -26 (32% of respondents say their opinion of the Liberal leader has worsened, while six per cent report an improvement). Harper was not far behind at -24, while Layton is still the best leader in this category at -6. Last month, Layton had a momentum score of +3.

### **Analysis**

The budget appears to have helped the Conservatives and hurt the Greens. The Liberals and the NDP are still supported by almost half of Canadians, and would increase their share of the popular vote if an election were held tomorrow. The Bloc is down one point from its 2008 total, but still dominates in Quebec.

Public perceptions on the two main leaders have been hard to change. About half of Canadians disapprove of either Harper or Ignatieff, and say that their opinion has not changed over the course of the past month. The two leaders will have opportunities to move the numbers over the next few weeks, with the Prime Minister preparing to host the G8 and G20 Summits and the Official Opposition leader emerging from the three-day "Canada at 150" conference in Montreal.

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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?

|                      | Mar. 25-26 | Feb. 25-26 | 2008 Election |
|----------------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Conservative Party   | 35%        | 33%        | 37.6%         |
| Liberal Party        | 29%        | 29%        | 26.2%         |
| New Democratic Party | 20%        | 20%        | 18.2%         |
| Bloc Québécois       | 9%         | 9%         | 10.0%         |
| Green Party          | 7%         | 9%         | 6.8%          |
| 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   | 35%    | 40% | 62% | 46%   | 36% | 16% | 33% |
| Liberal Party        | 29%    | 24% | 21% | 22%   | 35% | 24% | 34% |
| New Democratic Party | 20%    | 28% | 6%  | 20%   | 22% | 16% | 28% |
| Bloc Québécois       | 9%     | 0%  | 0%  | 0%    | 0%  | 38% | 0%  |
| Green Party          | 7%     | 8%  | 11% | 12%   | 7%  | 6%  | 4%  |
| Other party          | 0%     | 1%  | 0%  | 0%    | 0%  | 0%  | 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 Feb. 25-26)

|   | Approve  | Disapprove | Not sure |
|---|----------|------------|----------|
| <b>Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader<br/>Stephen Harper</b>    | 29% (=)  | 49% (+1)   | 22% (-1) |
| <b>Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader<br/>Michael Ignatieff</b> | 16% (-3) | 50% (+2)   | 34% (+1) |
| <b>New Democratic Party (NDP) leader<br/>Jack Layton</b>                  | 32% (-4) | 31% (+1)   | 37% (+3) |

### 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 Feb. 25-26)

|   | Improved | Stayed the same | Worsened | Not sure |
|---|----------|-----------------|----------|----------|
| <b>Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader<br/>Stephen Harper</b>    | 9% (+1)  | 50% (+2)        | 33% (-4) | 8% (+1)  |
| <b>Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader<br/>Michael Ignatieff</b> | 6% (-3)  | 52% (=)         | 32% (+4) | 11% (=)  |
| <b>New Democratic Party (NDP) leader<br/>Jack Layton</b>                  | 7% (-5)  | 70% (+2)        | 13% (+4) | 10% (=)  |

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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*

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*Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum ([www.angusreidforum.com](http://www.angusreidforum.com)), Springboard America ([www.springboardamerica.com](http://www.springboardamerica.com)) and Springboard UK ([www.springboarduk.com](http://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.*

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*More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at*  
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- 30 -

**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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