

CANADIAN POLITICAL PULSE

# Tories Keep Lead, But Liberal-NDP Merger Could Change Status Quo

*A single centre-left party would provide a real challenge to the Conservatives, but only if it is led by Jack Layton or Bob Rae.*

[TORONTO – May 31, 2010] – The Conservative Party is holding on to a comfortable lead in Canada's political scene, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

The online survey of a representative national sample of 2,022 Canadians also looked at the way the electorate would behave in the event of a merger between the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party (NDP) under three different prospective leaders.

## Voting Intention

Across the country, 35 per cent of decided voters (unchanged since late April) 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 27 per cent (-1), just one point 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 19 per cent (-1), followed by the Bloc Québécois with nine per cent (-2), and the Green Party with eight per cent (+1). One per cent of decided voters would support other parties.

## KEY FINDINGS

- **Voting Intention: Con. 35%, Lib. 27%, NDP 19%, BQ 9%, Grn. 8%.**
- **Scenarios with a merged Liberal / NDP: Six-point lead over the Tories under Layton, Tie under Rae, Second place under Ignatieff**
- **Approval Rating: Layton 30%, Harper 29%, Ignatieff 13%.**
- **Momentum: Layton -3, Harper -24, Ignatieff -28.**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

*From May 25 to May 27, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 2,022 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. 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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## Regional Breakdowns

The Tories remain the most popular party in Alberta (61%) and Manitoba and Saskatchewan (48%), and are still first in British Columbia (43%). In Ontario, the Conservatives are virtually tied with the Liberals (35% to 34%).

In Quebec, the Bloc is at 37 per cent (-4) and has a 14-point advantage over the Liberals (23%). The Tories are third with 18 per cent, followed by the NDP with 16 per cent.

## Approval

For the third consecutive month, the approval rating for Prime Minister and Conservative leader Stephen Harper is 29 per cent, while NDP leader Jack Layton is barely the best rated leader at 30 per cent (-1). Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff is at 13 per cent (-1).

## Momentum

Ignatieff posted the worst momentum score in May at -28 (32% of respondents say their opinion of the Liberal leader has worsened, while four per cent report an improvement). Harper was not far behind at -24, while Layton is still the best leader in this category at -3.

## A Liberal-NDP Merger?

The discussions about the Liberals and the NDP working together have intensified in recent days, partly due to the formation of a coalition government in the United Kingdom and statements made by former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. The survey presented voters with the possibility of a federal election with a merged centre-left party under three different leaders.

Under current Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff, the merged party would attract 34 per cent of decided voters, six-points below the Conservatives (40%). However, the status quo across the country would prevail. There would be a virtual tie between the Tories and the new party in Ontario, the Conservatives would remain ahead in Western Canada, and the new party would trail the Bloc in Quebec.

Under former Ontario Premier Bob Rae, the merged party would be tied with the Conservatives at the national level (both at 38%). Rae garners better numbers than Ignatieff in British Columbia and holds a six-point edge over the Tories in Ontario. However, the gap between the Bloc and the merged-party in Quebec would grow to 15 points.

Under current NDP leader Jack Layton, the merged party would become the most popular in the country (43%), with the Conservatives six points behind (37%). Layton gives the new party an eight-point lead in Ontario, and fares better than Ignatieff in Western Canada. The surge in support for the merged party

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would come from Quebec, where Layton would have the backing of 44 per cent of decided voters—a ten-point lead over the sovereignist Bloc.

### **Analysis**

There was little fluctuation in the level of support for the federal parties, and the assessment of the population about the three party leaders remains virtually unchanged.

The prospect of a centre-left merger—similar to the one that allowed the Conservative Party to challenge and ultimately break the Liberal hegemony—is not greeted with the same enthusiasm by voters when the leader is revealed.

Ignatieff would not provide the new party with a shot at victory. Rae's popularity in Ontario, and to a lesser extent in British Columbia, would turn the next election into a tight contest. But Layton would immensely help the new party with good numbers in Ontario and a remarkable showing in Quebec, pushing the Bloc to second place for the first time in years.

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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?

	May 25-27	Apr. 28-29	2008 Election
Conservative Party	35%	35%	37.6%
Liberal Party	27%	28%	26.2%
New Democratic Party	19%	19%	18.2%
Bloc Québécois	9%	11%	10.0%
Green Party	8%	7%	6.8%
Other party	1%	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%	43%	61%	48%	35%	18%	32%
Liberal Party	27%	16%	16%	25%	34%	23%	40%
New Democratic Party	19%	29%	14%	19%	20%	16%	22%
Bloc Québécois	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	37%	0%
Green Party	8%	11%	6%	7%	10%	4%	4%
Other party	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	2%	2%

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### Canadian Political Pulse - APPROVAL

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following people?  
(Change since Apr. 28-29)

	Approve	Disapprove	Not sure
<b>Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper</b>	29% (=)	50% (-2)	21% (-1)
<b>Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff</b>	13% (-1)	56% (+1)	31% (-1)
<b>New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton</b>	30% (-1)	34% (-1)	36% (+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 Apr. 28-29)

	Improved	Stayed the same	Worsened	Not sure
<b>Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper</b>	8% (-2)	53% (+3)	32% (+2)	8% (-1)
<b>Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff</b>	4% (-2)	54% (+5)	32% (+1)	10% (-3)
<b>New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton</b>	7% (-1)	72% (+3)	10% (=)	12% (-1)

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### Canadian Political Pulse - COALITION SCENARIOS

Suppose the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party (NDP) merged and had **Michael Ignatieff** as leader. 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
<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Merged Liberal / NDP Party led by Ignatieff</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Bloc Québécois</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Green Party</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Other party</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>5%</b>

### Canadian Political Pulse - COALITION SCENARIOS

Suppose the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party (NDP) merged and had **Bob Rae** as leader. 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
<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Merged Liberal / NDP Party led by Rae</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>Bloc Québécois</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Green Party</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Other party</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>6%</b>

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### Canadian Political Pulse - COALITION SCENARIOS

Suppose the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party (NDP) merged and had **Jack Layton** as leader. 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
<b>Merged Liberal / NDP Party led by Layton</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Bloc Québécois</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Green Party</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Other party</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>5%</b>

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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](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.*

*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:*  
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<http://www.visioncritical.com/what-we-do/practices/angus-reid-public-opinion/>

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our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:**  
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