

FEDERAL ELECTION

Liberal, NDP Leaders Improve Image While Tories Maintain Significant Lead

Harper's momentum score drops as races in Ontario and Quebec tighten.

[OTTAWA – Apr. 7, 2011] – Canadians' evaluation of their political leaders has changed significantly in the first 10 days of the campaign, though overall vote intention remains largely unchanged according to findings of a recent Angus Reid / Toronto Star / La Presse survey.

Momentum Shifts for Leaders

The online survey of a representative sample of 2,031 Canadian adults shows that Prime Minister Stephen Harper's momentum score, which measures the difference between those who feel their perception of a leader has improved since the start of the election and those who feel it has worsened since the start of the election, has fallen sharply. It now stands at -31, a seven-point drop from March 24. In contrast, Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff has seen his momentum score climb from -30 to -14 and NDP leader Jack Layton's score has improved from -2 to +10.

Approval Ratings and Issue Management

The increased momentum scores for Ignatieff and Layton are accompanied by a significant increase in approval ratings for both leaders. Ignatieff's rating is now at its highest point since August 2009, though despite this increase (25%, +6), he is still well back of Harper (34%, -3) and Layton (43%, +6).

Despite a dip in his approval rating, Harper still holds a considerable edge over his opponents in terms of who Canadians believe would make the best Prime Minister (30% Harper, 14% Ignatieff, 21% Layton) as well as handling the economy (36% Harper, 20% Ignatieff, 13% Layton) and crime (37% Harper, 15% Ignatieff, 12% Layton). Layton continues to lead on who would best handle health care (20% Harper, 14% Ignatieff, 33% Layton), ethics (19% Harper, 12% Ignatieff, 24% Layton) and the environment (14% Harper, 7% Ignatieff, 17% Layton).

Despite some improvement for Ignatieff in handling these policy areas, relatively few Canadians see Ignatieff as being better than Harper or Layton at handling the economy, health care, crime, the

KEY FINDINGS

- **Vote intention among decided voters: Con. 38% (-1); Lib. 27% (+2); NDP 21% (+2); BQ 8% (-2); Green 6% (-1)**
- **Momentum Score: Harper -31 (-7), Ignatieff -14 (+16), Layton +10 (+12)**
- **Approval: Harper 34% (-3); Ignatieff 25% (+6); Layton 43% (+6)**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From April 4 to April 5, 2011, Vision Critical / Angus Reid conducted an online survey among 2,031 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, language 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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environment and ethics. Indeed, less than one fifth of Canadians (18%) think they would be better off with Ignatieff in office (just less than half of Liberals at 45%) while 40 per cent feel they would be worse off than they are now if Ignatieff were to become Prime Minister.

Vote Intention

Despite the significant changes in the past two weeks in how Canadians perceive the federal leaders, there has been relatively little movement in vote intention. The Conservative lead has narrowed but remains significant at 38 per cent (-1) to the Liberals' 27 per cent (+2) and the NDP's 21 per cent (+2). This may be due, in part, to the cohesion of the Conservative base; although Harper's momentum score is down, vote retention remains higher for the Tories than the other parties (86 per cent of respondents who said they voted Conservative in 2008 say they would do so again now). Moreover, 70 per cent of Conservative voters say they are certain they won't change their mind before the election compared to 66 per cent for the Liberals and half of NDP voters (50%).

Regionally however, Harper's early struggles in the campaign have helped contribute to a narrowing of the lead enjoyed by the Conservatives in Ontario (down from 15 points to eight points). In Quebec, the NDP has outpaced the Liberals and Conservatives as the first choice among federalist parties (24% NDP, 18% Liberal and 19% Conservative) though they still trail the Bloc (34%).

British Columbia continues to be a Conservative stronghold with 42 per cent of decided voters (+2). The Liberal Party has lost one point (21%) and support for the NDP remains unchanged at 28 per cent.

Leadership Attributes

When asked about personal attributes for the main political leaders, Stephen Harper's image is one of stark contrasts. A majority of Canadians agree that Stephen Harper is a strong, decisive leader (52%) with a vision for the future of Canada (54%) yet fewer than one-in-three believes he inspires confidence (31%) or is honest and trustworthy (26%). In contrast, these attributes are clear strengths for Jack Layton (57% think he is honest and trustworthy, 46% think he inspires confidence) who also scores far better than any other leader in terms of understanding the problems of Canadians (61%). Michael Ignatieff fares worse than both leaders in each category, particularly in terms of inspiring confidence (22%) and being a strong and decisive leader (24%).

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Vote intention											
As you may know, a federal election is scheduled for May 2nd. If the federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support?											
Decided Voters	Region							Past Fed Vote			
	Canada	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL	LIB	CONS	NDP	BLOC
The Conservative Party	38%	42%	61%	42%	41%	19%	34%	10%	86%	8%	2%
The Liberal Party	27%	21%	16%	25%	33%	18%	48%	75%	6%	18%	3%
The New Democratic Party (NDP)	21%	28%	16%	25%	19%	24%	14%	12%	6%	68%	14%
The Bloc Québécois	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	34%	0%	0%	0%	2%	82%
The Green Party	6%	8%	6%	8%	6%	4%	3%	2%	1%	4%	0%
Other party	1%	3%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%

Vote intention								
As you may know, a federal election is scheduled for May 2nd. If the federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support?								
Decided Voters	Age				Gender		Language	
	Canada	18-34	35-54	55+	Male	Female	FR	ENG
The Conservative Party	38%	32%	37%	43%	42%	33%	19%	43%
The Liberal Party	27%	29%	25%	27%	27%	26%	14%	30%
The New Democratic Party (NDP)	21%	23%	22%	19%	19%	24%	24%	20%
The Bloc Québécois	8%	9%	8%	8%	7%	10%	38%	0%
The Green Party	6%	6%	8%	2%	5%	6%	3%	6%
Other party	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%

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Vote intention

As you may know, a federal election is scheduled for May 2nd. If the federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support?

Decided Voters	Canada		Region											
	April 5 2011	March 24 2011	BC April 5 2011	BC March 24 2011	AB April 5 2011	AB March 24 2011	SK/MB April 5 2011	SK/MB March 24 2011	ON April 5 2011	ON March 24 2011	QC April 5 2011	QC March 24 2011	ATL April 5 2011	ATL March 24 2011
The Conservative Party	38%	39%	42%	40%	61%	62%	42%	51%	41%	46%	19%	18%	34%	39%
The Liberal Party	27%	25%	21%	22%	16%	15%	25%	24%	33%	31%	18%	20%	48%	36%
The New Democratic Party (NDP)	21%	19%	28%	28%	16%	11%	25%	20%	19%	16%	24%	20%	14%	19%
The Bloc Québécois	8%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	34%	36%	0%	0%
The Green Party	6%	7%	8%	10%	6%	12%	8%	5%	6%	7%	4%	5%	3%	6%
Other party	1%	1%	3%	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%

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Momentum		
Since the beginning of the election, would you say your opinion of each of the following people has improved, stayed the same or worsened		
Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper ?		
	Canada	
	April 5 2011	March 24 2011
Improved	12%	15%
Stayed the same	40%	41%
Worsened	43%	39%
Not sure	5%	6%

Momentum		
Since the beginning of the election, would you say your opinion of each of the following people has improved, stayed the same or worsened		
Liberal and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff?		
	Canada	
	April 5 2011	March 24 2011
Improved	23%	12%
Stayed the same	33%	38%
Worsened	37%	42%
Not sure	7%	8%

Momentum		
Since the beginning of the election, would you say your opinion of each of the following people has improved, stayed the same or worsened		
New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton?		
	Canada	
	April 5 2011	March 24 2011
Improved	25%	17%
Stayed the same	52%	55%
Worsened	15%	19%
Not sure	8%	9%

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Approval of party leaders							
Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following people-							
Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper ?							
	Canada	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
Approve	34%	39%	52%	37%	39%	20%	25%
Disapprove	51%	50%	30%	51%	49%	63%	61%
Not sure	14%	11%	17%	13%	12%	18%	15%

Approval of party leaders		
Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following people-		
Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper ?		
	Total April 5 2011	Total March 24 2011
Approve	34%	37%
Disapprove	51%	48%
Not sure	14%	15%

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Approval of party leaders							
Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following people-							
Liberal and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff ?							
	Canada	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
Approve	25%	22%	13%	26%	28%	24%	38%
Disapprove	52%	56%	70%	65%	53%	41%	43%
Not sure	23%	22%	17%	9%	19%	35%	19%

Approval of party leaders		
Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following people-		
Liberal and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff ?		
	Total April 5 2011	Total March 24 2011
Approve	25%	19%
Disapprove	52%	57%
Not sure	23%	24%

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Approval of party leaders							
Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following people-							
New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton ?							
	Canada	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
Approve	43%	41%	29%	43%	38%	57%	43%
Disapprove	31%	34%	49%	38%	33%	15%	30%
Not sure	27%	25%	22%	19%	28%	28%	26%

Approval of party leaders		
Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following people-		
New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton ?		
	Total April 5 2011	Total March 24 2011
Approve	43%	37%
Disapprove	31%	33%
Not sure	27%	29%

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Prime Minister		
Which of these leaders would make the best Prime Minister of Canada?		
	Canada	
	April 5 2011	March 24 2011
Stephen Harper	30%	32%
Michael Ignatieff	14%	11%
Jack Layton	21%	17%
Gilles Duceppe	3%	3%
Elizabeth May	3%	3%
None of them	16%	19%
Not sure	14%	15%

Issues		
Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with each of the following issues		
Crime ?		
	Canada	
	April 5 2011	March 24 2011
Stephen Harper	37%	37%
Michael Ignatieff	15%	11%
Jack Layton	12%	12%
Gilles Duceppe	4%	3%
Elizabeth May	2%	1%
None of them	9%	11%
Not sure	22%	26%

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Issues		
Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with each of the following issues		
Healthcare?		
	Canada	
	April 5 2011	March 24 2011
Stephen Harper	20%	22%
Michael Ignatieff	14%	11%
Jack Layton	33%	28%
Gilles Duceppe	5%	4%
Elizabeth May	3%	2%
None of them	8%	9%
Not sure	17%	23%

Issues		
Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with each of the following issues		
Economy?		
	Canada	
	April 5 2011	March 24 2011
Stephen Harper	36%	39%
Michael Ignatieff	20%	17%
Jack Layton	13%	11%
Gilles Duceppe	4%	3%
Elizabeth May	2%	1%
None of them	8%	9%
Not sure	17%	20%

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Issues		
Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with each of the following issues		
Environment?		
	Canada	
	April 5 2011	March 24 2011
Stephen Harper	14%	15%
Michael Ignatieff	7%	6%
Jack Layton	17%	16%
Gilles Duceppe	4%	3%
Elizabeth May	33%	33%
None of them	8%	8%
Not sure	17%	19%

Issues		
Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with each of the following issues		
Ethics / Accountability?		
	Canada	
	April 5 2011	March 24 2011
Stephen Harper	19%	18%
Michael Ignatieff	12%	12%
Jack Layton	24%	21%
Gilles Duceppe	6%	5%
Elizabeth May	7%	5%
None of them	14%	16%
Not sure	19%	23%

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Personal Situation											
Thinking about your personal situation, would you be personally better off, about the same, or worse off, if each of the following leaders were to become Prime Minister											
Stephen Harper?											
	Region							Past Fed Vote			
	Canada	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL	LIB	CONS	NDP	BLOC
Better off	15%	14%	28%	19%	16%	8%	13%	4%	38%	1%	2%
About the same	45%	51%	49%	40%	46%	42%	34%	36%	53%	42%	39%
Worse off	34%	30%	17%	39%	32%	42%	46%	56%	7%	52%	52%
Not sure	6%	4%	6%	2%	7%	9%	7%	4%	2%	4%	7%

Personal Situation											
Thinking about your personal situation, would you be personally better off, about the same, or worse off, if each of the following leaders were to become Prime Minister											
Michael Ignatieff?											
	Region							Past Fed Vote			
	Canada	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL	LIB	CONS	NDP	BLOC
Better off	18%	16%	8%	23%	19%	15%	32%	45%	4%	21%	12%
About the same	29%	30%	20%	20%	28%	37%	24%	35%	18%	41%	42%
Worse off	40%	43%	60%	51%	43%	26%	34%	14%	70%	26%	27%
Not sure	13%	11%	12%	6%	10%	22%	10%	7%	8%	11%	18%

Personal Situation											
Thinking about your personal situation, would you be personally better off, about the same, or worse off, if each of the following leaders were to become Prime Minister											
Jack Layton?											
	Region							Past Fed Vote			
	Canada	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL	LIB	CONS	NDP	BLOC
Better off	27%	27%	13%	34%	22%	38%	29%	30%	10%	58%	47%
About the same	30%	26%	19%	25%	30%	36%	31%	36%	26%	26%	34%
Worse off	28%	35%	50%	28%	32%	10%	24%	23%	55%	8%	5%
Not sure	15%	12%	18%	13%	15%	16%	16%	11%	9%	8%	14%

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Leader Attributes												
Thinking about the following qualities and characteristics, please say whether you think they apply to												
Stephen Harper												
	Region							Past Fed Vote				
	Canada	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL	LIB	CONS	NDP	BLOC	Did not vote
Has a vision for the future of Canada	54%	55%	68%	58%	59%	44%	44%	39%	83%	42%	36%	47%
Is a strong and decisive leader	52%	57%	62%	55%	54%	45%	39%	37%	82%	39%	42%	39%
Understands the problems of Canadians	37%	38%	55%	43%	41%	25%	29%	19%	72%	17%	12%	34%
Generally agrees with you on issues you care about	32%	31%	50%	38%	38%	17%	23%	10%	74%	12%	4%	23%
Inspires confidence	31%	34%	49%	34%	35%	19%	24%	12%	67%	10%	7%	26%
Is honest and trustworthy	26%	24%	43%	26%	28%	19%	16%	8%	58%	7%	8%	20%

Leader Attributes												
Thinking about the following qualities and characteristics, please say whether you think they apply to												
Michael Ignatieff												
	Region							Past Fed Vote				
	Canada	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL	LIB	CONS	NDP	BLOC	Did not vote
Has a vision for the future of Canada	43%	47%	26%	42%	45%	44%	52%	70%	26%	53%	44%	34%
Is a strong and decisive leader	24%	25%	19%	20%	28%	17%	28%	42%	11%	25%	15%	25%
Understands the problems of Canadians	34%	33%	15%	29%	36%	36%	44%	61%	16%	45%	38%	20%
Generally agrees with you on issues you care about	29%	34%	16%	26%	33%	24%	38%	65%	10%	41%	18%	16%
Inspires confidence	22%	19%	9%	25%	25%	23%	29%	45%	9%	25%	25%	16%
Is honest and trustworthy	26%	20%	12%	24%	27%	31%	34%	51%	13%	29%	31%	12%

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Leader Attributes

Thinking about the following qualities and characteristics, please say whether you think they apply to

Jack Layton

	Region							Past Fed Vote				
	Canada	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL	LIB	CONS	NDP	BLOC	Did not vote
Has a vision for the future of Canada	58%	60%	48%	59%	56%	65%	61%	70%	44%	80%	70%	46%
Is a strong and decisive leader	43%	43%	33%	52%	44%	41%	46%	51%	34%	65%	43%	36%
Understands the problems of Canadians	61%	62%	42%	60%	62%	67%	59%	73%	47%	85%	73%	50%
Generally agrees with you on issues you care about	46%	47%	28%	48%	44%	54%	53%	52%	27%	83%	56%	37%
Inspires confidence	46%	37%	25%	45%	38%	72%	44%	51%	32%	71%	78%	34%
Is honest and trustworthy	57%	51%	35%	53%	53%	76%	62%	69%	45%	80%	84%	35%

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About Vision Critical®

Vision Critical is a global research and technology firm that creates software and services solutions for over 600 clients, including one-in-four of the world's top 100 brands. The company has offices across North America, Europe and Australia as well as a Global Partner Program that provides other research companies and consultants with access to top-of-the-line technology. Its Sparq™ product is the most widely adopted community panel platform on the planet.

About the Vision Critical Public Affairs practice

The Vision Critical Public Affairs practice is headed by Dr. Angus Reid: an industry visionary who has spent more than four decades asking questions to figure out what people feel, how they think and who they will vote for. A team of talented and experienced practitioners with a unique and profound understanding of global issues conduct high quality research throughout the world on a daily basis for corporations, governments, academic researchers, and non-profit organizations.

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**For more information, please contact
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