



NEWS RELEASE

Tory March to Majority Not Yet Secure *NDP Showing Some Strength in Still Turbulent Electorate*

National Federal Voting Intentions (n=2018)

Conservative Party of Canada	36.9
Liberal Party of Canada	27.2
New Democratic Party	19.6
Bloc Québécois	11.0
Green Party	4.8

Canadians are mulling their voting options, and the undecided are on the rise at a time when you would normally expect them to be falling. There is strong volatility in the electorate for so late in the campaign. While the Conservatives are clearly poised to win the election, and they certainly have a solid shot at a majority government, they have yet to close the deal with many voters. The national numbers disguise a complicated picture in which the Liberals continue to sink in Quebec at the same time as they have begun to rebound somewhat in Ontario.

“As the realization has begun to sink in that Stephen Harper and the Conservatives are the likeliest winners, more and more Quebecers are jumping on the bandwagon,” said Frank Graves, President of EKOS. “However, for some Ontarians, the plausible progression from a minority to majority outcome is producing some misgivings.” Other evidence of ripple effects of the prospects of a Tory majority include rising attention from younger Canadians and an unusual late campaign upward spike in the undecided.

The Conservatives have continued their remarkable climb in support in Quebec, which started at the expense of the BQ, but is now eating away at the Liberals as well. However, the distribution of Tory support in that province may translate to a less efficient return on seats per popular vote. In contrast, even relatively small shifts in popular support in Ontario can produce a cascade effect for one party or another. The Liberals are in a seesaw battle with the Conservatives for Ontario.

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“Right now, the Conservatives remain poised for an election victory,” said Graves. “The NDP have to be pleased that their strength has not slipped as the campaign draws to a near as many had predicted. In fact, if anything they are growing somewhat stronger.”

There is a clear generational dimension to this year’s campaign battle. Older voters – many of them from the so-called Baby Boom generation – are increasingly making their minds up to vote Conservative. The Conservatives can take satisfaction from the fact that these are also the voters most likely to show up at the polls on election day. However, there are signs that previously disengaged younger voters are now waking up to the possibility of a majority Conservative government, and many of them are getting concerned about it.

“What is difficult to say still, is whether these younger voters, who have shunned politics in recent years, actually get out and show their feelings by voting,” said Graves. All in all, we have seen the apparently inexorable march to a Conservative majority victory slowed as English Canada reflects on this prospect. Whether this is just a temporary stall and Tories will plateau or whether they will continue their march to a majority will become clearer in the coming days.

METHODOLOGY

These data are based on telephone interviews conducted January 15 to 17, 2006 with a random sample of 2,018 Canadians aged 18 and over. A sample of this size provides a margin of error of +/- 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as regions).

All the data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample’s regional, gender and age composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.