NO PUBLIC BACKLASH YET OVER ROBO-CALLS

...BUT OMINOUS SIGNALS FOR GOVERNMENT AND C-30 SEEN IN URGENT NEED OF REVISIONS

[Ottawa – March 2, 2012] – Having argued that there is little point in focussing on a nonexistent horse race, current events render the obligatory vote intention check up a little more meaningful. While there is no horserace, an occasional glimpse at voter intention can be a useful indicator of moral authority, particularly in a period where a still fairly fresh majority government is being buffeted by rising controversy.

Nearly a year after the election, the Conservative Party is well short of their May 2nd position and is now tied within the margin of error of the leaderless and supposedly floundering NDP. It should be noted, however, that Conservative support may well be understated because this poll covers 100 per cent of eligible voters, not just the 60 per cent who will actually turn out to vote. Nevertheless, with a two-point lead, even allowing for the greater voter turnout among Conservative supporters, it is highly unlikely the Conservative Party would retain its majority in the remotely hypothetical world of another election. Instead, they would be relegated to opposition with an NDP-led coalition. So while the government has not surrendered moral authority at this point, the poll suggests it will need to tread carefully in the current context as it doesn't have oodles of residual political capital available.

The Liberals, meanwhile, have improved slightly from their disastrous May 2nd performance, but remain mired in third place. The Green Party is also up from its May 2nd standing, but this is largely with younger voters who have a much lower propensity to actually vote. The Bloc Quebecois has also improved its standing in Quebec since the election.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **National federal vote intention:**
  - ¤ **31.5% CPC**
  - ¤ **29.2% NDP**
  - ¤ **21.7% LPC**
  - ¤ **8.3% Green**
  - ¤ **6.0% BQ**
  - ¤ **3.3% other**

- **National federal vote intention ("likely" voters only)*:**
  - ¤ **32.1% CPC**
  - ¤ **28.9% NDP**
  - ¤ **22.3% LPC**
  - ¤ **7.6% Green**
  - ¤ **6.1% BQ**
  - ¤ **3.0% other**

- **Direction of country:**
  - ¤ **46.7% right direction**
  - ¤ **42.1% wrong direction**
  - ¤ **11.2% DK/NR**

- **Direction of government:**
  - ¤ **36.5% right direction**
  - ¤ **52.7% wrong direction**
  - ¤ **10.9% DK/NR**

- **Preferred action for Bill C-30:**
  - ¤ **16% proceed with it as is**
  - ¤ **45% make significant changes**
  - ¤ **26% scrap it altogether**
  - ¤ **14% DK/NR**

*"Likely" voters are those respondents who voted in the May 2nd election.

Please note that the methodology is provided at the end of this document.

The Conservative Party is doing extremely well in Alberta and there now appears to be a huge divide now between Alberta at one end of the favourability spectrum and Quebec at the other. The Conservatives also do well with seniors and males but the Liberal Party seems to be improving its standing with seniors. The NDP is doing quite well in second place and is within the margin of error of the Conservative Party and their slide in Quebec with the rise in support for the Bloc Quebecois is offset by better performance in British Columbia where they now lead.

Next, we turn to how Canadians feel about the direction in which the country and its government and heading. Mirroring rising economic anxieties, confidence in national direction continues to fall. It is now on par with the previous historical low seen in October 2010. Even more disconcerting for the government is the steep rise in confidence of the direction of the federal government. A 15-point net deficit has opened up on disapproval which is particularly pronounced in Quebec and among younger, more educated Canada. Albertans and foreign-born Canadians, however, are very happy.

Lastly, we look at the federal government's recently-tabled Bill C-30, colloquially referred to as the Online Surveillance Bill. Only 15 per cent support passing Bill C-30 in its present form. It is decisively rejected everywhere – even Conservative Canada. There is, however, considerable receptivity to "significant changes". Indeed, the plurality of respondents (45 per cent) would be open to an amended version of the bill, but those who would rather kill the bill outright outnumber those who support the current version by a wide margin.

Opposition to the bill is particularly strong among NDP and Green voters and even Conservative supporters would prefer an amended form of the bill over its current version. Men and university graduates are also strongly opposed to the bill, but in an interesting finding, the group most likely to use the internet – those under the age of 25 – are somewhat more amenable to having their internet activities monitored than their parents and grandparents.

All in all, the media frenzy of the previous week over Bill C-30 and Vic Toews seems to have been rapidly displaced by the new frenzy over robo-calls and possible vote suppression. Whether this will fade as rapidly in a public which seen to have collective ADHD remains to be seen. What is clear is that if this latest controversy does take hold and worsen for the government, there is ample evidence that their weakened position from the last election and poor standing in terms of basic directional indicators could see them descend into areas where their legitimacy would be in question.
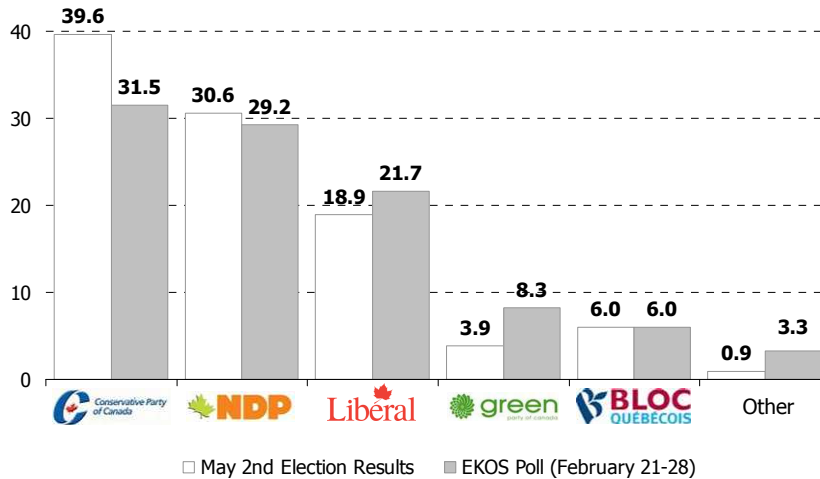
Top Line Results:

Federal vote intention

Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

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informative, insightful, influential

Note: The data on federal vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only. Our survey also finds that 14.2% of Canadians are undecided/ineligible to vote.

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BASE: Decided voters; February 21-28, 2012 (n=3,189)

Federal vote intention by propensity to vote

Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

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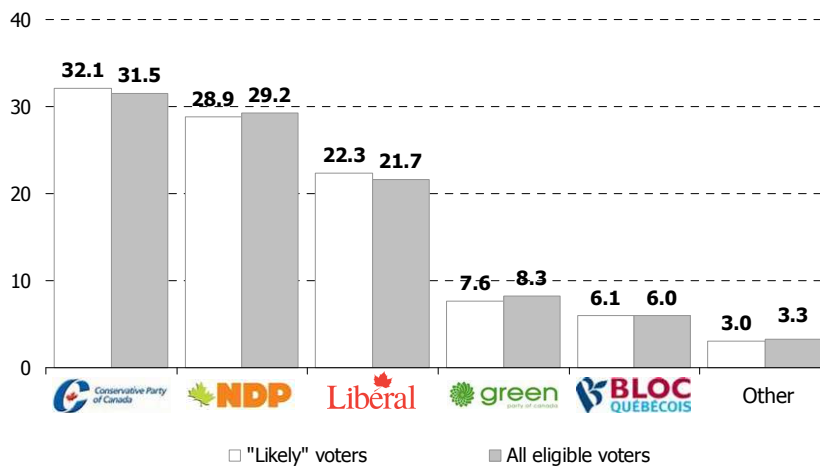
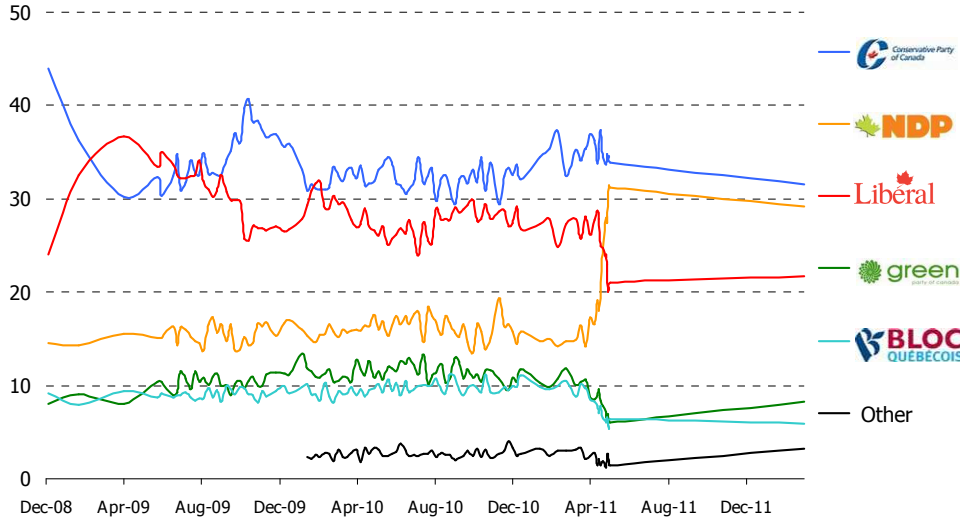Copyright 2012. No reproduction without permission

BASE: Decided voters; February 21-28, 2012 (n=3,189)

Tracking federal vote intention

Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

Note: The data on federal vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only. Our survey also finds that 14.2% of Canadians are undecided/ineligible to vote.

BASE: Decided voters; most recent data point February 21-28, 2012 (n=3,189)

Preferred action on Bill C-30

Q. As you may know, the federal government recently introduced Bill C-30, which would require internet and telecommunications service providers to provide specific information about customers to police upon request and without a warrant. How do you think the government should proceed with this bill?
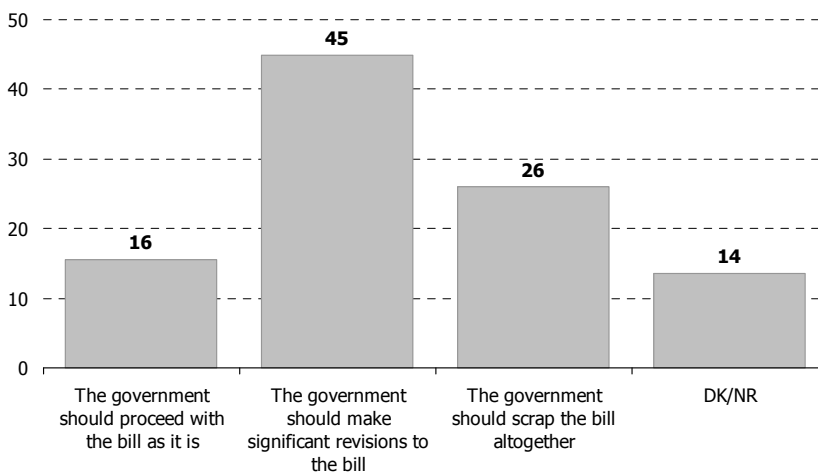
BASE: Canadians; February 21-28, 2012 (n=3,699)

Direction of country

Q. *All things considered, would you say the country is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?*
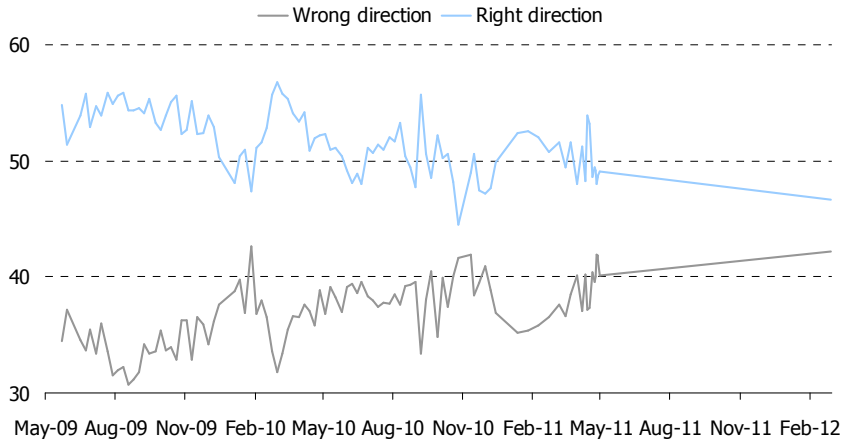
Wrong direction — Right direction

BASE: Canadians; most recent data point February 21-28, 2012 (half-sample) (n=1,800)

Direction of government

Q. *All things considered, would you say the Government of Canada is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?*

Wrong direction — Right direction
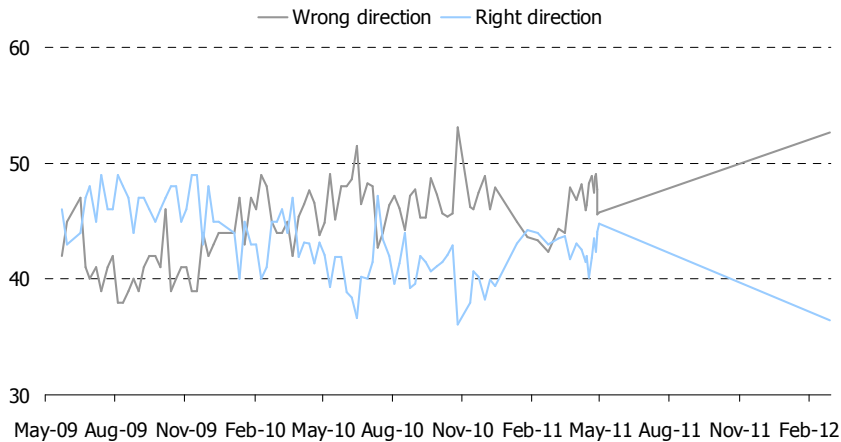
BASE: Canadians; most recent data point February 21-28, 2012 (half-sample) (n=1,899)

Detailed Tables:

National Federal Vote Intention

Q. Which party do you intend to vote for on May 2nd?

	Conservative Party of Canada	Liberal	NDP	green	BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS	Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	**31.5%**	**21.7%**	**29.2%**	**8.3%**	**6.0%**	**3.3%**	**3189**	**1.7**
REGION								
British Columbia	33.3%	17.4%	36.5%	11.0%	0.0%	1.8%	603	4.0
Alberta	53.6%	13.1%	20.4%	9.2%	0.0%	3.7%	422	4.8
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	38.3%	16.8%	34.8%	7.3%	0.0%	2.8%	191	7.1
Ontario	33.2%	26.8%	28.0%	8.2%	0.0%	3.8%	713	3.7
Quebec	17.2%	19.0%	28.3%	7.0%	25.0%	3.5%	811	3.4
Atlantic Canada	27.4%	28.7%	34.1%	7.1%	0.0%	2.7%	449	4.6
GENDER								
Male	34.5%	22.2%	26.7%	7.9%	5.2%	3.5%	1559	2.5
Female	28.6%	21.2%	31.8%	8.7%	6.7%	3.1%	1630	2.4
AGE								
<25	15.5%	18.7%	29.9%	22.2%	7.4%	6.3%	167	7.6
25-44	28.6%	20.2%	31.9%	8.0%	7.7%	3.6%	787	3.5
45-64	34.8%	22.2%	29.3%	6.2%	5.1%	2.3%	1284	2.7
65+	40.9%	25.3%	23.5%	4.3%	3.3%	2.8%	951	3.2
EDUCATION								
High school or less	32.2%	17.0%	29.4%	9.7%	8.6%	3.1%	984	3.1
College or CEGEP	35.8%	17.7%	29.0%	8.2%	5.8%	3.5%	1076	3.0
University or higher	27.0%	29.2%	29.3%	7.2%	4.0%	3.3%	1129	2.9
VOTE IN MAY 2ND ELECTION								
Conservative Party of Canada	75.7%	10.0%	8.6%	3.0%	1.2%	1.6%	1100	3.0
Liberal Party of Canada	7.4%	68.0%	15.8%	6.4%	1.8%	0.6%	590	4.0
NDP	6.4%	11.5%	71.8%	4.2%	3.9%	2.2%	805	3.5
Green Party	12.0%	9.0%	13.4%	57.4%	3.8%	4.3%	134	8.5
Bloc Quebecois	4.1%	2.9%	11.6%	7.1%	72.6%	1.8%	154	7.9
Other	10.3%	11.2%	22.1%	4.8%	4.5%	47.1%	54	13.3

Direction of Country

Q. All things considered, would you say the country is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?

|	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	**46.7%**	**42.1%**	**11.2%**	**1800**	**2.3**
REGION					
British Columbia	45.3%	40.3%	14.4%	322	5.5
Alberta	57.8%	26.2%	16.0%	215	6.7
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	56.5%	34.7%	8.9%	129	8.6
Ontario	49.9%	40.3%	9.8%	403	4.9
Quebec	37.0%	53.1%	9.9%	467	4.5
Atlantic Canada	39.2%	48.0%	12.7%	264	6.0
GENDER					
Male	49.8%	41.4%	8.8%	863	3.3
Female	43.5%	42.9%	13.6%	937	3.2
AGE					
<25	42.0%	47.2%	10.9%	103	9.7
25-44	45.6%	44.3%	10.1%	412	4.8
45-64	47.9%	42.7%	9.5%	729	3.6
65+	49.2%	34.1%	16.7%	556	4.2
EDUCATION					
High school or less	45.6%	41.7%	12.7%	589	4.0
College or CEGEP	52.3%	37.4%	10.3%	598	4.0
University or higher	42.4%	46.9%	10.7%	613	4.0
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	78.4%	12.0%	9.6%	508	4.4
Liberal Party of Canada	38.3%	50.7%	11.0%	347	5.3
NDP	34.1%	57.5%	8.4%	421	4.8
Green Party	32.3%	55.7%	12.0%	110	9.3
Bloc Quebecois	30.3%	63.1%	6.6%	91	10.3
Other	29.0%	60.7%	10.4%	52	13.6
Undecided	36.0%	44.7%	19.3%	228	6.5

Direction of Government

Q. All things considered, would you say the Government of Canada is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?

	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	**36.5%**	**52.7%**	**10.9%**	**1899**	**2.3**
REGION					
British Columbia	36.1%	51.6%	12.3%	356	5.2
Alberta	54.7%	34.6%	10.7%	246	6.3
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	41.9%	45.2%	12.9%	100	9.8
Ontario	37.5%	51.8%	10.7%	418	4.8
Quebec	26.8%	64.2%	9.0%	493	4.4
Atlantic Canada	33.5%	52.7%	13.8%	286	5.8
GENDER					
Male	38.8%	53.6%	7.6%	887	3.3
Female	34.4%	51.9%	13.7%	1012	3.1
AGE					
<25	26.4%	64.3%	9.3%	104	9.6
25-44	35.1%	55.3%	9.6%	520	4.3
45-64	37.7%	51.8%	10.5%	735	3.6
65+	44.1%	40.2%	15.7%	540	4.2
EDUCATION					
High school or less	41.1%	47.0%	11.9%	599	4.0
College or CEGEP	36.2%	51.7%	12.1%	655	3.8
University or higher	32.8%	58.5%	8.7%	645	3.9
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	78.6%	15.0%	6.4%	561	4.1
Liberal Party of Canada	30.3%	62.4%	7.4%	347	5.3
NDP	17.1%	72.8%	10.1%	495	4.4
Green Party	13.3%	77.5%	9.3%	110	9.3
Bloc Quebecois	10.5%	81.0%	8.5%	105	9.6
Other	15.3%	70.6%	14.1%	42	15.1
Undecided	20.2%	54.3%	25.5%	204	6.9

Preferred action on Bill C-30

Q. As you may know, the federal government recently introduced Bill C-30, which would require internet and telecommunications service providers to provide specific information about customers to police upon request and without a warrant. How do you think the government should proceed with this bill?

	The government should proceed with the bill as it is	The government should make significant revisions to the bill	The government should scrap the bill altogether	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	**16%**	**45%**	**26%**	**14%**	**3699**	**1.6**
REGION						
British Columbia	16%	44%	30%	10%	678	3.8
Alberta	18%	46%	26%	10%	461	4.6
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	15%	45%	26%	14%	229	6.5
Ontario	15%	46%	27%	12%	821	3.4
Quebec	15%	44%	21%	19%	960	3.2
Atlantic Canada	15%	42%	26%	16%	550	4.2
GENDER						
Male	15%	43%	32%	9%	1750	2.3
Female	16%	47%	20%	17%	1949	2.2
AGE						
<25	21%	37%	25%	17%	207	6.8
25-44	16%	43%	27%	13%	932	3.2
45-64	14%	48%	27%	11%	1464	2.6
65+	14%	48%	22%	16%	1096	3.0
EDUCATION						
High school or less	19%	39%	24%	18%	1188	2.8
College or CEGEP	17%	45%	23%	15%	1253	2.8
University or higher	11%	51%	30%	8%	1258	2.8
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION						
Conservative Party of Canada	25%	48%	15%	12%	1069	3.0
Liberal Party of Canada	13%	48%	29%	10%	694	3.7
NDP	11%	43%	35%	11%	916	3.2
Green Party	14%	43%	32%	11%	220	6.6
Bloc Quebecois	13%	48%	21%	18%	196	7.0
Other	11%	33%	39%	17%	94	10.1
Undecided	12%	40%	22%	26%	432	4.7

Methodology:

EKOS' weekly tracking polls are conducted using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology, which allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator.

In an effort to reduce the coverage bias of landline only RDD, we created a dual landline/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with a landline and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and landline only households. This dual frame yields a near perfect unweighted distribution on age group and gender, something almost never seen with traditional landline RDD sample or interviewer-administered surveys. This methodology is not to be confused with the increasing proliferation of non-probability opt-in online panels which have recently been incorrectly reported in major national media with inappropriate margin of error estimates.[1]

The field dates for this survey are February 21-28, 2012. In total, a random sample of 3,699 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey (including a sub-sample of 3,189 decided voters). The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-1.6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.

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[1] For further reading, please see "*AAPOR Report on Online Panels*" by the American Association for Public Opinion Research, accessible online at:
http://www.aapor.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=AAPOR_Committee_and_Task_Force_Reports&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=2223