HARPER, "YUCK"; IGNATIEFF, "MEH"

HARPER'S MANY DETRACTORS CAN'T FIND A CHAMPION

[Ottawa – February 25, 2010] - Stephen Harper has a couple of things going for him, according to a new EKOS poll on political leadership: Conservative supporters approve strongly of his job performance, and though most other Canadians may not, they haven't found anyone to rally around.

The poll, conducted for release by the CBC program Power and Politics, shows that more than half of Canadians disapprove of the way the prime minister is doing his job. That's substantially worse than the last time EKOS asked the question in mid-autumn.

Just 33% of Canadians approve of the job he is doing – not entirely coincidentally, about the same support his party currently has. Indeed, Harper is a deeply polarizing figure: He gets overwhelming approval from Conservative supporters but almost as strong disapproval from everyone else. Even those who are undecided as to which party they support generally don't approve of the job he's doing.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Approval rating – Harper:**
  - ¤ **33% approve**
  - ¤ **52% disapprove**
  - ¤ **15% do not know/no response**

- **Approval rating – Ignatieff:**
  - ¤ **22% approve**
  - ¤ **48% disapprove**
  - ¤ **30% do not know/no response**

- **Approval rating – Layton:**
  - ¤ **40% approve**
  - ¤ **29% disapprove**
  - ¤ **31% do not know/no response**

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

That might be a recipe for Liberal ascension, except that Michael Ignatieff is not exactly grabbing voters either. As Harper's approval has fallen, Ignatieff's has failed to rise. Ignatieff's disapproval rating is almost as high as Harper's, and his approval is even weaker. Strangely, nearly a third of Canadians won't express an opinion about him – almost as many as when he took over as leader just over a year ago.

However, Ignatieff's situation is quite different than Harper's. He does not inspire anything like the degree of approval that Harper does among his own supporters. On the other hand, nor does he inspire anywhere near the level of disapproval among the supporters of other parties that Harper does.

Jack Layton, meanwhile is the only national leader with a positive rating, and one that is improving. However, his party, despite being a strong second-choice for many voters on the centre-left, hasn't budged from its third-place spot, far behind the front-runners.
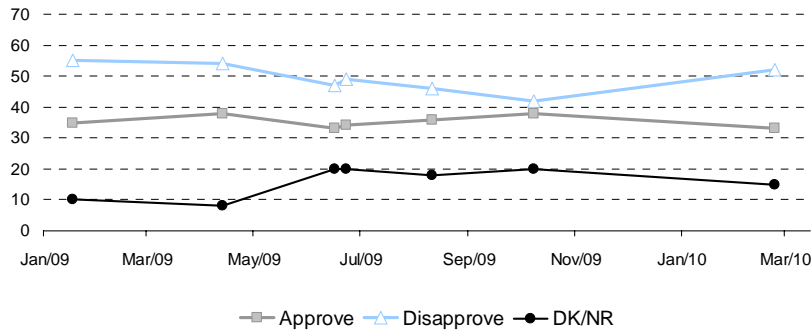
EKOS POLITICS

Top Line Results:

Job approval ratings

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the way ... is handling his job?
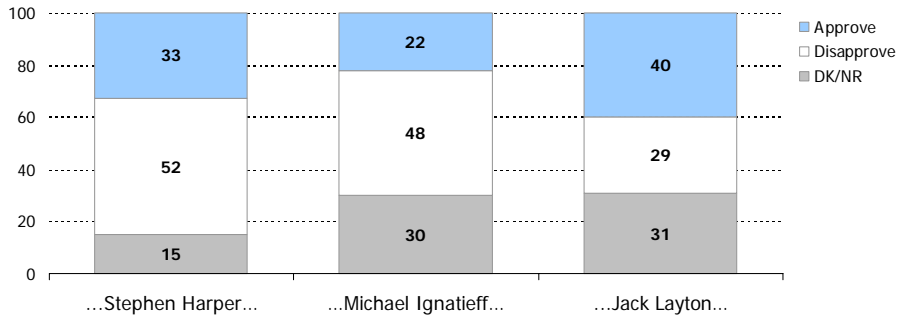
BASE: Canadians; Feb. 10-23 (n=6553)

Tracking job approval ratings for Stephen Harper

Approve — Disapprove — DK/NR

Tracking job approval ratings for Michael Ignatieff

Approve — Disapprove — DK/NR
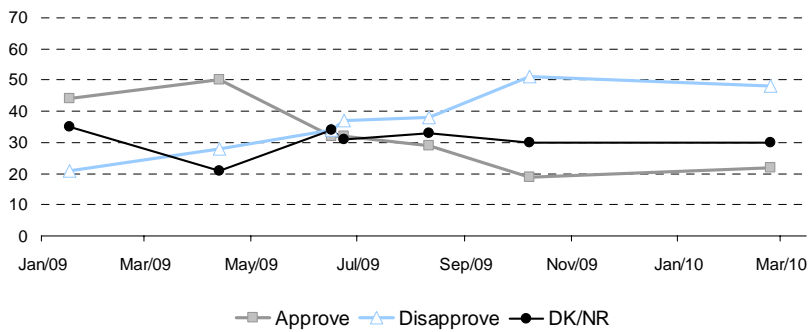
Tracking job approval ratings for Jack Layton

Approve — Disapprove — DK/NR

BASE: Canadians; most recent data point Feb. 10-23 (n=6553)
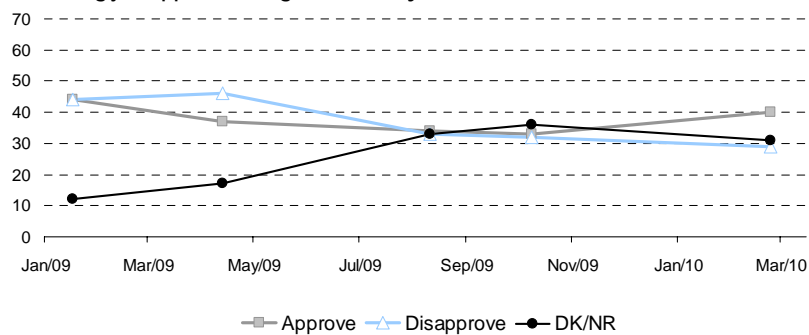
Detailed Tables:

Job approval ratings — Stephen Harper

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Stephen Harper, Prime Minister and leader of Conservative Party of Canada is handling his job?

	Approve	Disapprove	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	**33%**	**52%**	**15%**	**6553**	**1.2**
REGION					
British Columbia	33%	54%	13%	763	3.6
Alberta	53%	33%	14%	678	3.8
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	40%	44%	16%	440	4.7
Ontario	33%	53%	14%	2448	2.0
Quebec	24%	57%	18%	1705	2.4
Atlantic Canada	28%	55%	18%	519	4.3
GENDER					
Male	37%	52%	11%	3259	1.7
Female	29%	52%	19%	3294	1.7
AGE					
<25	32%	50%	18%	585	4.1
25-44	32%	53%	16%	2101	2.1
45-64	31%	56%	13%	2588	1.9
65+	40%	43%	17%	1279	2.7
EDUCATION					
High school or less	34%	46%	20%	1920	2.2
College or CEGEP	35%	49%	16%	2204	2.1
University or higher	31%	58%	11%	2429	2.0
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	77%	13%	10%	1924	2.2
Liberal Party of Canada	16%	72%	12%	1713	2.4
NDP	15%	72%	12%	912	3.3
Green Party	15%	70%	15%	594	4.0
Bloc Quebecois	12%	73%	15%	516	4.3
Undecided	17%	64%	20%	134	8.5

Job approval ratings – Michael Ignatieff

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Michael Ignatieff, leader of the Official Opposition and leader of the Liberal Party of Canada is handling his job?

	Approve	Disapprove	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	**22%**	**48%**	**30%**	**6553**	**1.2**
REGION					
British Columbia	23%	49%	29%	763	3.6
Alberta	17%	59%	25%	678	3.8
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	21%	50%	28%	440	4.7
Ontario	22%	49%	29%	2448	2.0
Quebec	23%	44%	33%	1705	2.4
Atlantic Canada	25%	36%	39%	519	4.3
GENDER					
Male	25%	52%	23%	3259	1.7
Female	19%	44%	37%	3294	1.7
AGE					
<25	25%	38%	37%	585	4.1
25-44	22%	47%	31%	2101	2.1
45-64	22%	50%	28%	2588	1.9
65+	21%	51%	28%	1279	2.7
EDUCATION					
High school or less	18%	44%	38%	1920	2.2
College or CEGEP	19%	52%	29%	2204	2.1
University or higher	28%	47%	25%	2429	2.0
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	10%	71%	18%	1924	2.2
Liberal Party of Canada	45%	25%	29%	1713	2.4
NDP	20%	50%	30%	912	3.3
Green Party	16%	49%	35%	594	4.0
Bloc Quebecois	19%	50%	31%	516	4.3
Undecided	14%	57%	30%	134	8.5

Job approval ratings – Jack Layton

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Jack Layton, Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada is handling his job?

	Approve	Disapprove	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	**40%**	**29%**	**31%**	**6553**	**1.2**
REGION					
British Columbia	40%	33%	27%	763	3.6
Alberta	26%	46%	28%	678	3.8
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	40%	31%	29%	440	4.7
Ontario	40%	30%	30%	2448	2.0
Quebec	47%	17%	36%	1705	2.4
Atlantic Canada	41%	26%	33%	519	4.3
GENDER					
Male	44%	32%	23%	3259	1.7
Female	37%	25%	38%	3294	1.7
AGE					
<25	36%	27%	37%	585	4.1
25-44	40%	28%	33%	2101	2.1
45-64	43%	29%	28%	2588	1.9
65+	39%	30%	31%	1279	2.7
EDUCATION					
High school or less	35%	29%	36%	1920	2.2
College or CEGEP	40%	30%	30%	2204	2.1
University or higher	46%	27%	28%	2429	2.0
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	28%	46%	26%	1924	2.2
Liberal Party of Canada	46%	24%	30%	1713	2.4
NDP	71%	12%	17%	912	3.3
Green Party	36%	29%	35%	594	4.0
Bloc Quebecois	49%	17%	33%	516	4.3
Undecided	30%	39%	31%	134	8.5

Methodology:

EKOS' weekly tracking polls are conducted using Interactive Voice Recognition (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 land-line/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with both 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.

The field dates for this survey are February 10 – February 23, 2010.[1] In total, a random sample of 6,553 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-1.2 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] Please note that these dates are not inclusive of the weekends, as we do not survey on Saturday or Sunday.