



## NEWS RELEASE

# Canadians Optimistic about Gomery Impact *Blame Liberal Party and Chrétien but not Cutting Martin Much Slack*

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### Impact of Gomery

All Canadians n=1275

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**Q: "Which of the following do you think will be the most likely impact of the Gomery Inquiry?"**

Better, more ethical government operations	60
Worse government operations slowed down by too many rules	24
No real impact (volunteered)	9
DK/NR	6

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Canadians are hopeful that the Gomery report will lead to substantial changes in the operations of government, according to a new EKOS/Toronto Star/La Presse poll. Sixty per cent say that the report will lead to better, more ethical government. However, in Quebec, where the sponsorship scandal was centred, and the controversy has been most intense, the optimism is decidedly more muted, and 31 per cent take the opposite view, that government is likely to be slowed down by more stringent rules which will be adopted in the wake of the report.

Most Canadians say they have been following the sponsorship scandal closely, particularly in Quebec, and they have clearly decided whom they blame for the mess. About half of Canadians say the Liberal Party of Canada is most to blame, twice the number that blame public servants and three times the number that blame crooked businesspeople.

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Of those who point the finger at the Liberal Party, far and away the majority hold the former Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, most to blame. In this respect, they follow Gomery's own lead. Where public opinion seems to diverge from Gomery's report is in his exoneration of the current Prime Minister, Paul Martin. Fifty-nine per cent of Canadians say Martin should be held accountable for the scandal as a member of the Liberal government since 1993, compared with 35 per cent who say he had little to do with it and deserves credit for setting up the Gomery Inquiry.

Interestingly, Martin's attempt to distance himself from the sponsorship scandal seems to have been most successful in Quebec, yet without producing any of the hoped-for political reward for the Liberal Party. Quebecers were more likely than other Canadians to say that Chrétien rather than Martin is the most to blame for the sponsorship scandal, and yet this does not seem to have relieved the downward pressure on the Liberal Party in Quebec.

Although interest in the issue remains high, there is some sign that its impact may be on the wane. Fewer Canadians feel that this is the worst scandal they can recall compared with earlier this year. About half now say it is bad, but no worse than past scandals they recall.

### *METHODOLOGY:*

These data are based on telephone interviews conducted November 7 to November 9, 2005 with a random sample of 1275 Canadians aged 18 and over. A sample of this size provides a margin of error of +/- 2.7 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.