TORIES' OPEN UP COMFORTABLE LEAD; TORY VOTERS "MOST COMMITTED"

NDP SAG ON SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT?

[Ottawa – September 24, 2009] – The federal Conservatives, who were locked in a dead heat with the Liberals just three weeks ago, have edged steadily into a comfortable lead nationally, according to the weekly EKOS poll conducted for the CBC. The Conservatives now appear to be competitive even among some groups, such as young voters and Toronto voters, once largely beyond their reach.

The Liberals meanwhile have lost their secure hold on Ontario, and are increasingly the party of the university educated.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **National federal vote intention:**
  - ¤ **37.0% CPC**
  - ¤ **29.9% LPC**
  - ¤ **13.8% NDP**
  - ¤ **10.2% Green**
  - ¤ **9.1% BQ**

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

The New Democrats appear to be in a slump following their decision to back the government – at least for the moment – and avoid an election in the very near term.

More ominous for the opposition parties is the startling difference in the composition of the most committed voters. Right now, Tory supporters outnumber the other parties in the "fully committed" voter segment by a margin of more than three to one.

"What this means," said EKOS President Frank Graves, "is that the significant advantage that Stephen Harper's Conservatives now have in public opinion may actually understate their potential strength in an election."

EKOS has created a "commitment index" to distinguish voters who are the most committed to their parties and thus most likely to show up and vote for their choice. The index combines intentions, attitudes, and past behaviour.

The index suggests that commitment rises with education and age. It varies regionally: for example, Albertans and Ontarians are most committed, while residents of British Columbia are the least. Men are more committed than women.

Of the metropolitan centres, Ottawa, the hub of government, has the most committed voters (perhaps reflecting the greatest level of vested interest).

But in sum, the commitment index suggests the Conservatives are even stronger at the moment that they superficially appear.

"If we restrict our analysis to the most committed portion of the electorate – about 60%, and not far off the actual voter turn out in 2008 – it suggests that it will be quite difficult to dislodge the Tories. Moreover, their aspiration for a majority may be tantalizingly close," said Graves.

"Fewer than six in ten Canadians eligible to vote turned out in the last election, which had a considerable impact on the outcome," he said. "Because the Conservatives had a more committed following, they came very close to achieving their quest for a majority government. In contrast, lack of enthusiasm contributed both to the scale of the Liberals' historic defeat and to Green Party's failure to realize its apparent potential."
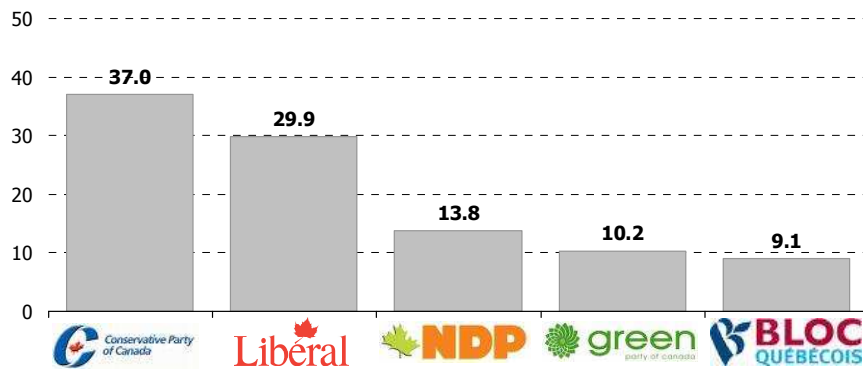
"Although the Liberals seem to inspire both more support and more enthusiasm under Michael Ignatieff than they did under Stéphane Dion, they still lag the Conservatives," he said. "Meanwhile, the NDP and the Greens appear to be in real trouble because of the tepidness of their support. There is a real possibility that these parties will have trouble getting their supporters out to the polls, or will lose them to the larger parties."

It is also notable is that many of those most staunchly opposed to national and federal direction do not seem to be channelling their disagreement into political activity, but rather decide to opt-out. "It is quite interesting that comfort with the country and government has alloyed intense motivation amongst Tory voters, while dissatisfaction has produced apathy and disengagement among others," notes Graves.
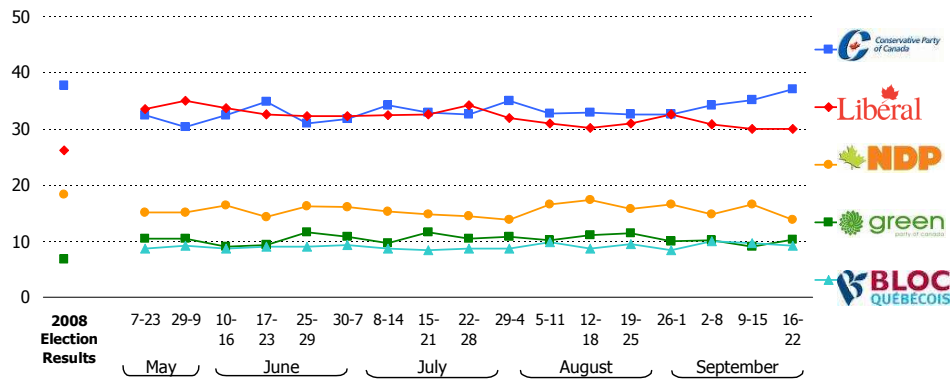
Top Line Results:

Federal vote intention

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

Weekly tracking of federal vote intention

Note: The data on federal vote intention are based on decided voters only. Our survey also finds that 15.6% of Canadians are undecided/ineligible to vote.
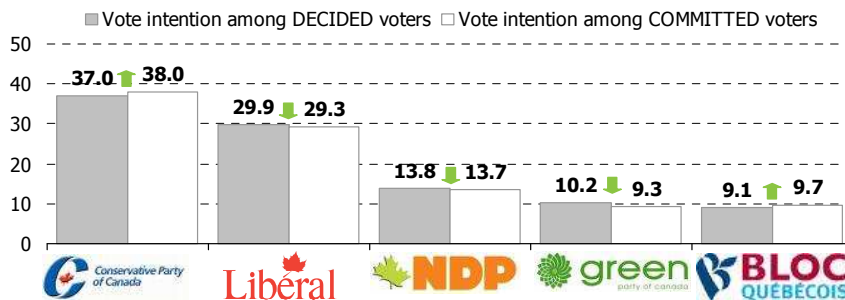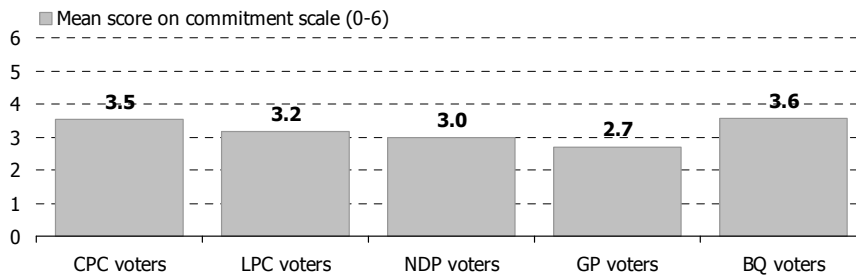
BASE: Decided voters; most recent data points Sep. 16-22 (n=2,266)

Commitment Index

Our commitment index is a cumulative, multiple indicator model of voter commitment. It measures both party commitment and likelihood of voting based on a number of variables (e.g., enthusiasm for vote choice, certainty of voting). This week's profile of voter commitment is outlined in the table below.

Level of commitment	Score on commitment scale (0-6)	% of Canadians	Profile
Not committed	0, 1	27%	*More likely to be*: Undecided/ineligible to vote; residents of BC & Vancouver CMA; women; youth (i.e., <25); lower socioeconomic standing
Loosely committed	2, 3	34%	
Moderately committed	4, 5	33%	
Fully committed	6	7%	*More likely to be*: CPC voters; residents of Alberta, Ontario, & Ottawa CMA; men; those that support the direction of the Government of Canada

Mean score on commitment scale (0-6)

CPC voters	LPC voters	NDP voters	GP voters	BQ voters
3.5	3.2	3.0	2.7	3.6

Vote intention among DECIDED voters / **Vote intention among COMMITTED voters**

	Conservative Party of Canada	Liberal	NDP	green party of canada	BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS
Decided	37.0	29.9	13.8	10.2	9.1
Committed	38.0	29.3	13.7	9.3	9.7

BASE: Canadians; Sep. 16-22 (decided voters n=2266; committed voters n=1969)

Detailed Tables:

National Federal Vote Intention

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

	Conservative Party of Canada	Liberal	NDP	green	BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	**37.0%**	**29.9%**	**13.8%**	**10.2%**	**9.1%**	**2266**	**2.1**
REGION							
British Columbia	34.2%	24.1%	24.1%	17.6%	0.0%	281	5.9
Alberta	62.6%	19.1%	8.4%	9.9%	0.0%	206	6.8
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	47.1%	20.7%	23.8%	8.4%	0.0%	146	8.1
Ontario	41.8%	35.1%	11.9%	11.2%	0.0%	941	3.2
Quebec	19.4%	28.6%	9.3%	6.2%	36.4%	552	4.2
Atlantic Canada	31.7%	41.1%	19.2%	7.9%	0.0%	140	8.3
GENDER							
Male	39.5%	30.1%	12.0%	9.4%	8.9%	1131	2.9
Female	34.5%	29.7%	15.6%	11.1%	9.2%	1135	2.9
AGE							
<25	24.0%	28.7%	18.8%	20.1%	8.3%	251	6.2
25-44	34.4%	28.2%	14.3%	11.1%	12.0%	821	3.4
45-64	39.5%	30.0%	12.6%	8.6%	9.3%	815	3.4
65+	45.1%	33.8%	12.1%	5.7%	3.2%	379	5.0
EDUCATION							
High school or less	38.3%	24.1%	13.7%	12.5%	11.4%	561	4.1
College or CEGEP	42.2%	25.7%	13.3%	8.8%	9.9%	780	3.5
University or higher	31.5%	37.5%	14.3%	10.0%	6.7%	925	3.2
METROPOLITAN CANADA							
Vancouver	34.3%	25.2%	24.2%	16.2%	0.0%	99	9.9
Calgary	57.7%	31.4%	3.2%	7.7%	0.0%	64	12.3
Toronto	41.9%	37.2%	11.4%	9.5%	0.0%	253	6.2
Ottawa	55.0%	28.3%	9.8%	6.8%	0.0%	144	8.2
Montreal	16.3%	29.5%	9.5%	8.2%	36.5%	232	6.4

Federal Vote Intention – British Columbia

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

	Conservative Party of Canada	Liberal	NDP	green party of canada	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
OVERALL	**34.2%**	**24.1%**	**24.1%**	**17.6%**	**281**	**5.9**
GENDER						
Male	38.0%	25.9%	23.0%	13.1%	136	8.4
Female	30.2%	22.6%	25.0%	22.2%	145	8.1
AGE						
<25	21.8%	25.6%	23.9%	28.6%	37	16.1
25-44	27.9%	25.3%	23.7%	23.1%	89	10.4
45-64	39.8%	22.9%	24.5%	12.8%	97	10.0
65+	42.1%	23.8%	23.7%	10.3%	58	12.9
EDUCATION						
High school or less	44.4%	17.4%	23.6%	14.7%	74	11.4
College or CEGEP	34.4%	18.3%	28.8%	18.5%	91	10.3
University or higher	27.5%	32.8%	20.7%	19.0%	116	9.1

Federal Vote Intention – Alberta

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

	Conservative Party of Canada	Liberal	NDP	green party of canada	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
OVERALL	**62.6%**	**19.1%**	**8.4%**	**9.9%**	**206**	**6.8**
GENDER						
Male	63.4%	19.0%	6.8%	10.8%	100	9.8
Female	62.1%	18.5%	10.5%	8.9%	106	9.5
AGE						
<25	51.6%	6.0%	24.7%	17.7%	21	21.4
25-44	63.6%	15.7%	9.9%	10.8%	77	11.2
45-64	59.6%	26.3%	4.0%	10.1%	76	11.2
65+	74.1%	18.0%	5.1%	2.7%	32	17.3
EDUCATION						
High school or less	62.6%	14.9%	4.6%	17.9%	53	13.5
College or CEGEP	67.9%	16.7%	10.8%	4.7%	84	10.7
University or higher	56.3%	24.6%	9.1%	10.0%	69	11.8

Federal Vote Intention – Saskatchewan/Manitoba

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

	Conservative Party of Canada	Liberal	NDP	green	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
OVERALL	**47.1%**	**20.7%**	**23.8%**	**8.4%**	**146**	**8.1**
GENDER						
Male	51.4%	21.6%	20.2%	6.7%	70	11.7
Female	42.1%	18.7%	27.7%	11.5%	76	11.2
AGE						
<25	50.0%	0.0%	20.3%	29.6%	14	26.2
25-44	49.3%	17.7%	22.3%	10.7%	51	13.7
45-64	33.4%	31.1%	30.2%	5.3%	57	13.0
65+	67.9%	12.3%	17.0%	2.8%	24	20.0
EDUCATION						
High school or less	51.2%	14.5%	22.8%	11.4%	45	14.6
College or CEGEP	58.6%	17.8%	17.0%	6.6%	47	14.3
University or higher	31.0%	27.1%	32.1%	9.8%	54	13.3

Federal Vote Intention – Ontario

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

	Conservative Party of Canada	Liberal	NDP	green	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
OVERALL	**41.8%**	**35.1%**	**11.9%**	**11.2%**	**941**	**3.2**
GENDER						
Male	43.8%	34.4%	10.7%	11.1%	495	4.4
Female	39.2%	35.7%	13.4%	11.8%	446	4.6
AGE						
<25	25.3%	34.0%	16.2%	24.5%	97	10.0
25-44	39.9%	34.2%	13.2%	12.7%	330	5.4
45-64	44.6%	35.4%	10.7%	9.2%	342	5.3
65+	47.4%	36.4%	10.1%	6.1%	172	7.5
EDUCATION						
High school or less	45.1%	25.8%	12.4%	16.7%	170	7.5
College or CEGEP	47.6%	30.7%	11.7%	10.0%	317	5.5
University or higher	35.6%	41.9%	12.2%	10.4%	454	4.6

Federal Vote Intention – Quebec

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

	Conservative Party of Canada	Liberal	NDP	green	BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
OVERALL	**19.4%**	**28.6%**	**9.3%**	**6.2%**	**36.4%**	**552**	**4.2**
GENDER							
Male	21.2%	28.1%	9.3%	5.5%	35.8%	261	6.1
Female	18.2%	31.7%	8.7%	6.4%	35.0%	291	5.7
AGE							
<25	15.0%	34.0%	13.4%	10.7%	27.0%	70	11.7
25-44	17.2%	24.9%	10.2%	5.4%	42.3%	221	6.6
45-64	24.0%	24.4%	7.1%	5.8%	38.7%	197	7.0
65+	19.3%	48.5%	7.6%	4.5%	20.2%	64	12.3
EDUCATION							
High school or less	20.2%	26.9%	9.2%	7.6%	36.1%	172	7.5
College or CEGEP	21.2%	29.4%	7.6%	4.3%	37.6%	193	7.1
University or higher	17.6%	33.4%	10.4%	6.1%	32.5%	187	7.2

Federal Vote Intention – Atlantic Canada

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

	Conservative Party of Canada	Liberal	NDP	green	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
OVERALL	**31.7%**	**41.1%**	**19.2%**	**7.9%**	**140**	**8.3**
GENDER						
Male	36.5%	44.5%	10.0%	8.9%	69	11.8
Female	25.9%	37.5%	29.3%	7.3%	71	11.6
AGE						
<25	6.6%	41.2%	33.3%	18.8%	12	28.3
25-44	28.7%	42.9%	20.4%	8.0%	53	13.5
45-64	40.2%	36.6%	16.4%	6.8%	46	14.5
65+	37.6%	45.8%	13.4%	3.3%	29	18.2
EDUCATION						
High school or less	32.4%	40.1%	18.9%	8.6%	47	14.3
College or CEGEP	41.7%	26.8%	20.5%	11.1%	48	14.1
University or higher	19.0%	57.8%	18.8%	4.4%	45	14.6

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 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 the September 16-22, 2009.[1] In total, a random sample of 2,706 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey (including a sub-sample of 2,266 decided voters). The margin of error associated with total sample is +/-1.9 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.