

## **LIBS EKE OUT LEAD AS TORIES SLUMP**

CANADIANS PULL BACK ON VACATION PLANS DUE TO RECESSION

[Ottawa – July 2, 2009] – After having taken a hit with the public over their election threats at the end of the parliamentary session, the Liberals have rebounded into the narrowest of leads over the ruling Conservative Party. This reversal in fortunes has more to do with the disappearance of a short-term bump in Conservative support that occurred at the end of the session than any change in Liberal fortunes.

“This is a pattern we have seen several times since last October’s election,” said EKOS President Frank Graves. “Purely political events such as the coalition, the budget, the deficit announcement, and now the Liberal-initiated game of chicken over a summer election, may have a temporary, if sometimes dramatic, effect on support for the parties. However, the longer term trends seem to be related more to economic issues.”

“The \$64,000 question for the parties is which of these patterns would hold if an election were called. Perhaps it is the Liberal edge that shows up most weeks. However, it is possible that this pattern reflects a passive uninterested electorate, and that the better predictor of an election result is actually those weeks when the public becomes more interested and engaged, as they apparently did when the Liberals seemed to be ready to force an election.”

So far this year, the Liberals have generally held a lead over the Conservatives, sometimes as high as five to seven percentage points, but usually much narrower. This has been driven mainly by increased strength in Quebec and Ontario since the October 2008 election. However, there have been moments during this period when the Conservatives have threatened to burst the Liberal bubble, usually occasioned by a political or parliamentary crisis of some kind.

Overall, however, the most striking pattern may be one of gridlock, in which neither major party can break through to become an obvious election favourite, much less a contender for a majority government.

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- **National federal vote intention:**
  - **32.2% LPC**
  - **31.0% CPC**
  - **16.2% NDP**
  - **11.5% Green**
  - **9.0% BQ**
- **Vacation spending:**
  - **48% LESS than recent years**
  - **32% about the same**
  - **20% MORE than recent years**

*Please note that the methodology and detailed tables of these and other results discussed in this release are provided at the end of this document.*

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"One peculiar feature of the gridlock is that the Liberals and Conservatives seem to be competing for the same voters: upper middle class white men, for the most part," Graves said. "If you leave aside regional patterns, which of course remain dramatic, the demographic profiles of a Liberal and Conservative voter are remarkably similar."

"Women and younger voters are much less enchanted with the two main parties," he said. "They are more likely to support the smaller parties, or simply remain on the sidelines."

"It is quite striking that among voters under 25 years of age, the Green Party consistently shows up as a leading contender, even as it continues to be no more than a marginal option for baby-boomers."

One indication of the current economic distress is what Canadians had to say about their vacation plans as they approached the July 1 holiday. Across the country, the plurality of Canadians is pulling back on vacation spending. This trend is particularly conspicuous in British Columbia, and, not surprisingly, in Ontario, where there has already been major job loss.

Lower income Canadians are pulling back more than those who are better off, but the pattern is a general one, applying to all social classes.

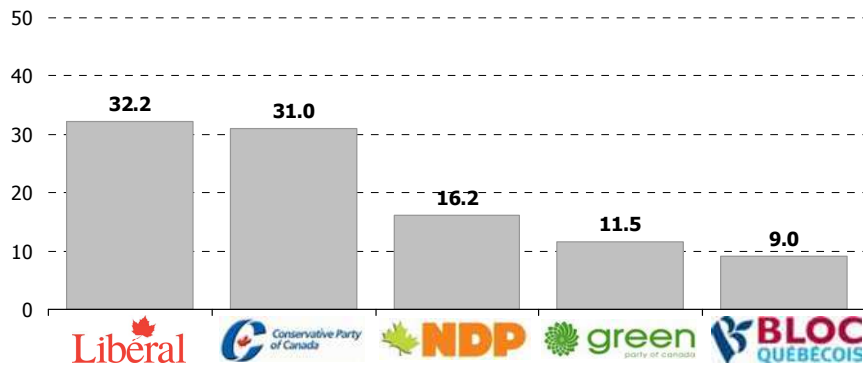
"Like so many patterns in a recession, this has a paradoxical quality," said Graves. "It is obviously sensible from an individual perspective to cut back in hard times. However, this will also make it harder for the economy to emerge from the recession."

"One interesting issue as Canada emerges from the recession will be whether consumers resume their old free-spending ways, or whether there is a longer-term chastening effect, in which Canadians remain cautious for a long time, further dampening recovery."

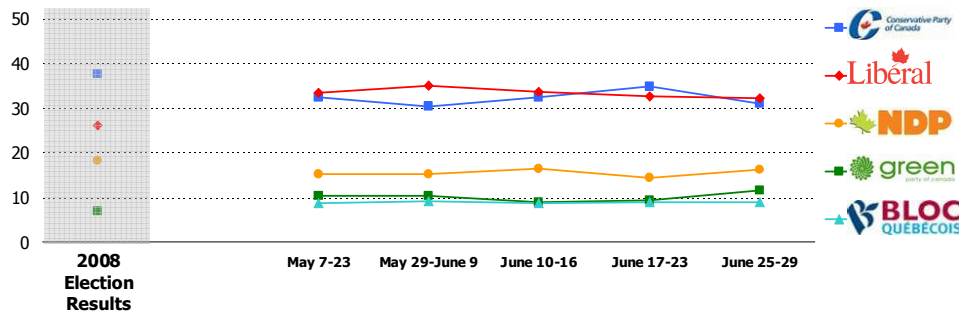
## Top Line Results:

### Federal vote intention

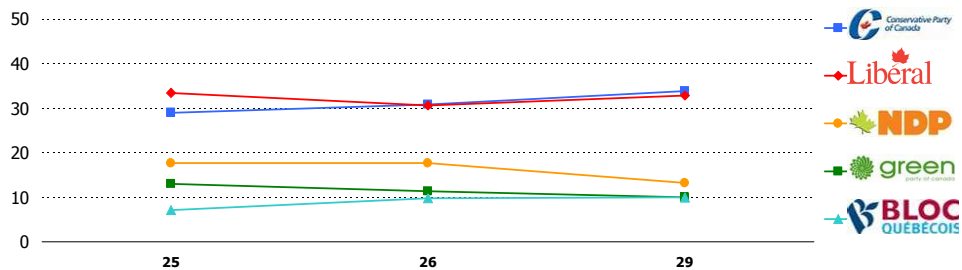
Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?



### Weekly tracking of federal vote intention

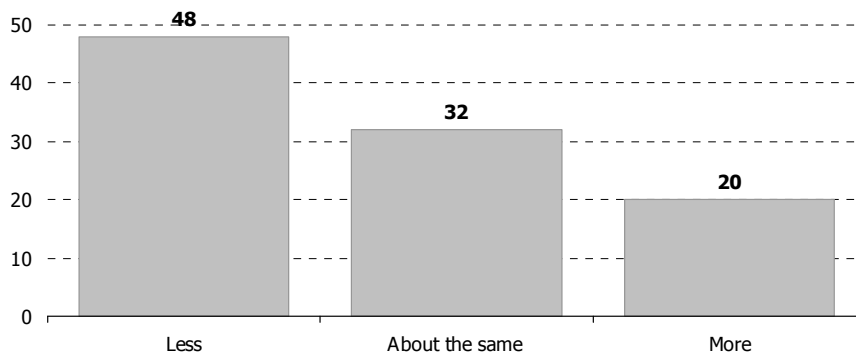


### Daily tracking of federal vote intention (June 25-29)



## Has the economic situation changed summer vacation plans?






Q. Compared with recent years, would you say you are spending more, less, or about the same on vacation plans this summer?



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**BASE:** Canadians; Jun. 25-29 (n=2262)

## Detailed Tables:

<b>National Federal Vote Intention<sup>1</sup></b>							
<i>Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?</i>							
						Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	31.0%	32.2%	16.2%	11.5%	9.0%	1871	2.3
<b>REGION</b>							
British Columbia	33.9%	26.6%	24.3%	15.2%	0.0%	216	6.7
Alberta	58.2%	21.5%	9.4%	11.0%	0.0%	165	7.6
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	44.4%	22.8%	25.1%	7.7%	0.0%	108	9.4
Ontario	32.2%	38.4%	16.5%	12.9%	0.0%	733	3.6
Quebec	16.6%	29.7%	9.1%	8.3%	36.2%	543	4.2
Atlantic Canada	21.1%	43.1%	24.1%	11.7%	0.0%	106	9.5
<b>GENDER</b>							
Male	33.4%	34.4%	12.5%	11.1%	8.6%	890	3.3
Female	28.7%	30.1%	19.8%	11.9%	9.5%	981	3.1
<b>AGE</b>							
<25	18.5%	28.4%	12.9%	28.2%	11.9%	203	6.9
25-44	30.1%	25.6%	19.2%	14.4%	10.6%	602	4.0
45-64	31.9%	35.7%	16.1%	7.9%	8.5%	693	3.7
65+	39.2%	40.8%	12.5%	2.3%	5.2%	373	5.1
<b>EDUCATION</b>							
High school or less	28.0%	31.1%	15.5%	13.6%	11.8%	525	4.3
College or CEGEP	31.6%	28.0%	18.4%	12.4%	9.6%	612	4.0
University or higher	32.9%	36.8%	14.7%	9.2%	6.4%	734	3.6
<b>METROPOLITAN CANADA</b>							
Vancouver	33.6%	33.4%	23.9%	9.1%	0.0%	96	10.0
Calgary	69.1%	17.4%	4.7%	8.8%	0.0%	65	12.2
Toronto	33.6%	45.4%	12.5%	8.6%	0.0%	273	5.9
Ottawa	37.4%	45.3%	8.0%	9.4%	0.0%	179	7.3
Montreal	14.4%	31.5%	9.3%	9.4%	35.4%	253	6.2

<sup>1</sup> The data presented in this and our other tables on federal vote intention are based on decided voters only. Our survey also finds that 16.4% of Canadians say they are undecided.

### **Has the economic situation changed summer vacation plans?**

*Q. Compared with recent years, would you say you are spending more, less, or about the same on vacation plans this summer?*

	Less	About the same	More	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2262</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>REGION</b>					
British Columbia	54%	28%	19%	235	6.4
Alberta	49%	28%	22%	207	6.8
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	40%	40%	19%	135	8.4
Ontario	51%	26%	23%	893	3.3
Quebec	42%	42%	16%	654	3.8
Atlantic Canada	46%	33%	21%	138	8.3
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	49%	30%	22%	1040	3.0
Female	47%	34%	19%	1222	2.8
<b>AGE</b>					
<25	47%	24%	30%	255	6.1
25-44	48%	29%	23%	736	3.6
45-64	49%	34%	16%	834	3.4
65+	45%	39%	16%	437	4.7
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
High school or less	51%	28%	20%	680	3.8
College or CEGEP	48%	31%	22%	756	3.6
University or higher	45%	36%	19%	826	3.4
<b>CURRENT VOTE INTENTION</b>					
Conservative Party of Canada	41%	39%	20%	578	4.1
Liberal Party of Canada	48%	31%	22%	628	3.9
NDP	55%	24%	21%	272	5.9
Green Party	52%	23%	25%	198	7.0
Bloc Québécois	39%	45%	16%	195	7.0
Undecided	52%	31%	16%	313	5.5

## 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 land-line 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 land-line and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and land-line only households. This dual frame yields a near perfect unweighted distribution on age group and gender, something almost never seen with traditional land-line RDD sample or interviewer administered surveys.

The field dates for this survey are June 25-29, 2009.<sup>2</sup> In total, a random sample of 2,262 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey (including a sub-sample of 1,871 decided voters). The margin of error associated with total sample is +/- 2.1 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, income). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that the data collection period for this survey is shorter than our usual tracking polls due to the fact that we did not survey on June 24 (Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day in Quebec) and July 1 (Canada Day). As a result, the total sample size for this week's release is also somewhat smaller than usual. Normal reporting will resume next week (July 9, 2009).