EKOS POLITICS

CONSERVATIVES OPEN UP THEIR LEAD

CANADIANS SAY THEY ARE MORE INTERESTED IN PARTY PLATFORMS THAN CANDIDATES OR LEADERS

[Ottawa – September 17, 2009] – The federal Conservatives have continued to build their lead over the Liberal Party, which opened up after the possibility of a fall election triggered by the withdrawal of Liberal support was first raised a little more than two weeks ago.

Significantly, the Conservatives have established a lead over the Liberals in battleground Ontario at a time when Canadians in general are expressing somewhat more confidence in the direction of the country.

Contrary to some reports, the New Democrats are holding up reasonably well as they face increasing media attention, as one of the parties that will determine whether the Harper government stands or falls in the next few weeks.

"We have found that the NDP does relatively better among people in cellphone-only households," said Frank Graves, President of EKOS, "while the Conservatives do much worse. This may account for some of the discrepancy among recent polls with regard to the party."

"Both the NDP and the BQ currently enjoy public support within a percentage point or two of where they finished in the last election," said Graves. "So, their motivation for avoiding an election may have more to do with conserving energy and resources, as well as their balance of power in Parliament, than with fear of the results of another vote."

"While the smaller parties may have an interest in continued minority government," said Graves, "support for a majority is quite high and rising slightly. However, this support is almost exactly polarized between those who favour a majority Conservative government and those supporting a majority Liberal government. That polarization renders the prospect of it happening quite remote."

HIGHLIGHTS

- **National federal vote intention:**
  - ¤ **35.1% CPC**
  - ¤ **29.9% LPC**
  - ¤ **16.5% NDP**
  - ¤ **9.0% Green**
  - ¤ **9.6% BQ**

- **Most important factor in voting:**
  - ¤ **42% party platform**
  - ¤ **22% party leader**
  - ¤ **17% local candidate**
  - ¤ **19% none of the above**

- **Preferred election outcome:**
  - ¤ **14% minority LPC gov't**
  - ¤ **25% majority LPC gov't**
  - ¤ **8% minority CPC gov't**
  - ¤ **28% majority CPC gov't**
  - ¤ **25% none of the above**

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

"This irony may actually underpin the public's aversion to yet another election: an election is unlikely to yield the more stable majority parliament Canadians are increasingly seeking."
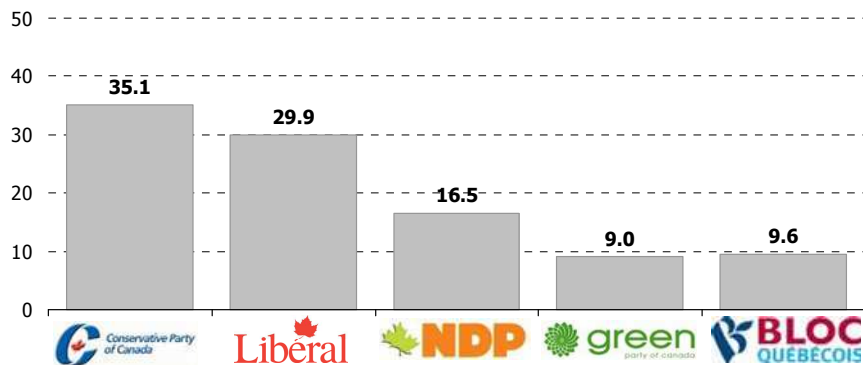
Meanwhile Canadians say they are more concerned with party platforms than they are with candidates or leaders, when they come to making their decision about how to vote.

"Given that Ontario may be the crucial arena in the next election, it is interesting that the parties' platforms are particularly important there," said Graves. "Could the campaign actually revolve around policies and ideas? Certainly that's what the voters would prefer. Perhaps the most positive interpretation of this poll is that Canadians ultimately want a plan for the country to be the paramount factor shaping the next election."
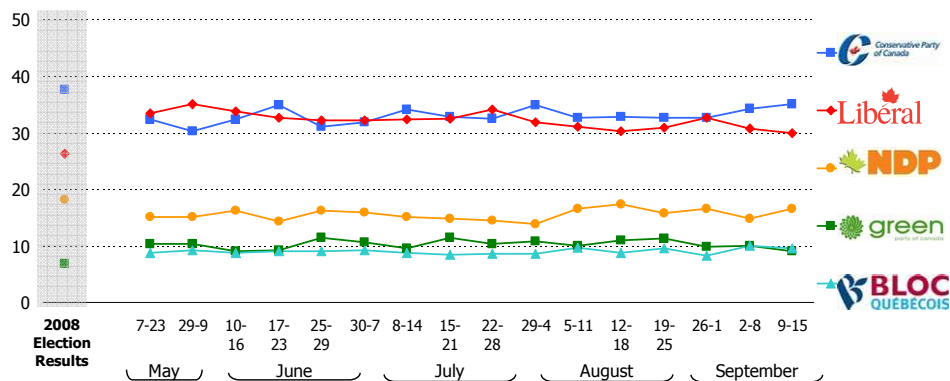
Top Line Results:

Federal vote intention

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

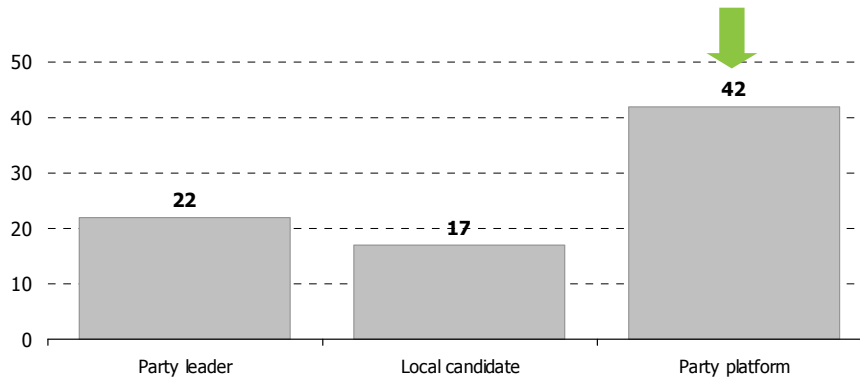**Weekly tracking of federal vote intention**

Note: The data on federal vote intention are based on decided voters only. Our survey also finds that 13.3% of Canadians are undecided/ineligible to vote.

BASE: Decided voters; most recent data points Sep. 9-15 (n=2703)

Most important factor in vote intention

Q. *Which of the following is the most important factor for you when it comes to determining which party you will vote for in the next federal election? 1) The party leader; 2) The local candidate; 3) The party platform; or 4) None of these?*
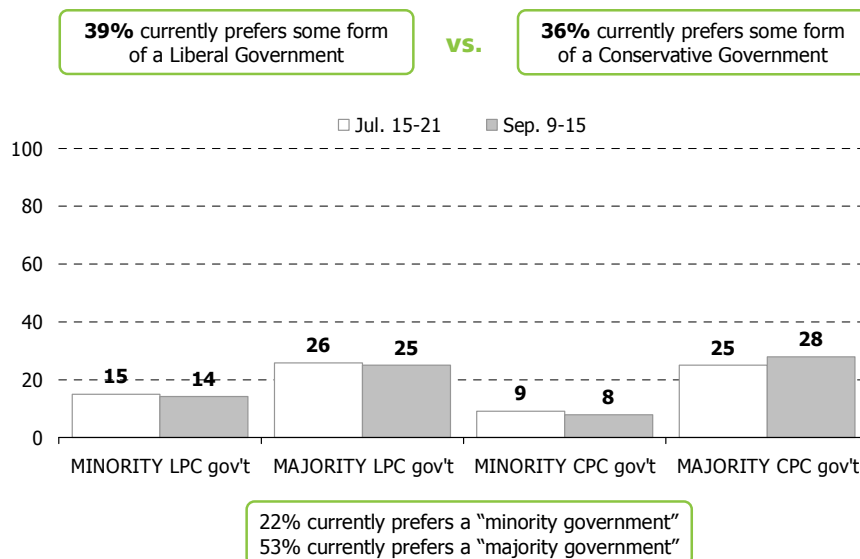

NOTE: There is also 19% that says "none of the above"

BASE: Canadians; Sep. 9-15 (n=1533)

Preferred outcome for next election

Q. *Which of the following potential outcomes of the next federal election do you think would be BEST?*

39% currently prefers some form of a Liberal Government **vs.** **36%** currently prefers some form of a Conservative Government

☐ Jul. 15-21   ▨ Sep. 9-15

22% currently prefers a "minority government"
53% currently prefers a "majority government"

NOTE: There is also 25% that "prefers none of the above" options

BASE: Canadians; most recent data point Sep. 9-15 (n=2395)

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	**35.1%**	**29.9%**	**16.5%**	**9.0%**	**9.6%**	**2703**	**1.9**
REGION							
British Columbia	36.0%	25.0%	26.7%	12.3%	0.0%	309	5.6
Alberta	60.1%	18.6%	11.4%	9.9%	0.0%	244	6.3
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	43.9%	26.6%	20.1%	9.4%	0.0%	197	7.0
Ontario	40.1%	35.5%	15.4%	9.0%	0.0%	1045	3.0
Quebec	16.0%	27.1%	10.5%	7.6%	38.9%	688	3.7
Atlantic Canada	28.7%	37.5%	28.2%	5.5%	0.0%	220	6.6
GENDER							
Male	40.4%	29.7%	13.2%	7.6%	9.2%	1298	2.7
Female	29.7%	30.1%	19.9%	10.4%	9.9%	1405	2.6
AGE							
<25	22.1%	26.9%	20.0%	18.4%	12.7%	256	6.1
25-44	30.2%	28.9%	19.1%	9.9%	11.9%	866	3.3
45-64	38.5%	29.5%	16.4%	7.0%	8.6%	1084	3.0
65+	45.5%	34.5%	9.5%	5.3%	5.1%	497	4.4
EDUCATION							
High school or less	33.5%	24.9%	18.9%	9.8%	12.9%	666	3.8
College or CEGEP	41.7%	24.5%	18.0%	7.0%	8.8%	924	3.2
University or higher	30.5%	37.4%	13.8%	10.1%	8.2%	1113	2.9
METROPOLITAN CANADA							
Vancouver	37.8%	28.6%	21.4%	12.2%	0.0%	110	9.3
Calgary	59.9%	23.3%	9.7%	7.1%	0.0%	73	11.5
Toronto	36.7%	39.7%	13.6%	10.0%	0.0%	313	5.5
Ottawa	42.9%	42.9%	10.5%	3.7%	0.0%	162	7.7
Montreal	13.5%	31.0%	8.9%	8.5%	38.1%	288	5.8

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	**36.0%**	**25.0%**	**26.7%**	**12.3%**	**309**	**5.6**
GENDER						
Male	41.9%	27.4%	19.6%	11.1%	135	8.4
Female	30.3%	23.0%	32.6%	14.0%	174	7.4
AGE						
<25	26.3%	20.9%	21.3%	31.5%	23	20.4
25-44	24.7%	31.2%	32.2%	11.9%	96	10.0
45-64	44.9%	18.7%	24.5%	11.9%	130	8.6
65+	46.1%	28.8%	19.8%	5.2%	60	12.7
EDUCATION						
High school or less	30.5%	17.4%	35.0%	17.1%	79	11.0
College or CEGEP	38.1%	23.6%	27.7%	10.6%	112	9.3
University or higher	38.2%	32.0%	18.4%	11.3%	118	9.0

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	**60.1%**	**18.6%**	**11.4%**	**9.9%**	**244**	**6.3**
GENDER						
Male	65.7%	16.2%	8.5%	9.6%	128	8.7
Female	54.2%	21.3%	14.8%	9.7%	116	9.1
AGE						
<25	47.3%	20.1%	12.3%	20.3%	25	19.6
25-44	50.6%	20.2%	13.3%	16.0%	83	10.8
45-64	62.4%	19.5%	14.0%	4.1%	97	10.0
65+	81.5%	13.2%	2.7%	2.6%	39	15.7
EDUCATION						
High school or less	59.6%	16.6%	12.7%	11.1%	65	12.2
College or CEGEP	73.0%	15.0%	9.8%	2.2%	88	10.5
University or higher	48.1%	23.8%	12.6%	15.6%	91	10.3

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 party of canada	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
OVERALL	**43.9%**	**26.6%**	**20.1%**	**9.4%**	**197**	**7.0**
GENDER						
Male	49.5%	25.2%	18.8%	6.6%	93	10.2
Female	39.1%	24.0%	24.3%	12.5%	104	9.6
AGE						
<25	20.1%	32.3%	27.7%	19.9%	15	25.3
25-44	39.0%	20.6%	32.3%	8.0%	49	14.0
45-64	55.2%	23.9%	12.2%	8.7%	89	10.4
65+	43.2%	29.2%	18.4%	9.2%	44	14.8
EDUCATION						
High school or less	48.8%	13.9%	23.6%	13.7%	47	14.3
College or CEGEP	51.4%	17.4%	22.7%	8.6%	62	12.5
University or higher	36.4%	35.5%	19.9%	8.2%	88	10.5

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 party of canada	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
OVERALL	**40.1%**	**35.5%**	**15.4%**	**9.0%**	**1045**	**3.0**
GENDER						
Male	45.2%	36.5%	10.9%	7.5%	532	4.3
Female	34.1%	34.1%	20.7%	11.1%	513	4.3
AGE						
<25	29.0%	30.4%	20.3%	20.3%	92	10.2
25-44	38.3%	33.5%	18.1%	10.1%	321	5.5
45-64	38.5%	37.6%	17.0%	6.9%	430	4.7
65+	50.8%	36.9%	6.6%	5.7%	202	6.9
EDUCATION						
High school or less	35.8%	32.3%	21.1%	10.8%	209	6.8
College or CEGEP	51.7%	25.4%	16.8%	6.0%	338	5.3
University or higher	32.9%	43.5%	12.7%	10.8%	498	4.4

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 party of canada	BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
OVERALL	**16.0%**	**27.1%**	**10.5%**	**7.6%**	**38.9%**	**688**	**3.7**
GENDER							
Male	20.2%	26.2%	10.0%	5.9%	37.6%	322	5.5
Female	12.8%	28.9%	10.6%	8.6%	39.1%	366	5.1
AGE							
<25	6.6%	21.1%	16.3%	14.4%	41.7%	78	11.1
25-44	15.0%	24.9%	10.0%	7.5%	42.5%	251	6.2
45-64	19.8%	23.0%	11.6%	5.7%	39.9%	247	6.2
65+	19.6%	46.3%	4.3%	5.3%	24.5%	112	9.3
EDUCATION							
High school or less	20.4%	22.7%	8.0%	4.9%	44.0%	203	6.9
College or CEGEP	17.9%	28.5%	10.7%	9.0%	33.9%	241	6.3
University or higher	12.1%	30.6%	11.8%	7.5%	38.1%	244	6.3

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 party of canada	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
OVERALL	**28.7%**	**37.5%**	**28.2%**	**5.5%**	**220**	**6.6**
GENDER						
Male	32.1%	30.3%	31.9%	5.7%	88	10.5
Female	26.7%	42.6%	25.3%	5.4%	132	8.5
AGE						
<25	11.8%	39.2%	40.2%	8.8%	23	20.4
25-44	22.7%	32.5%	37.1%	7.7%	66	12.1
45-64	33.6%	41.7%	20.7%	4.0%	91	10.3
65+	45.0%	32.4%	20.3%	2.2%	40	15.5
EDUCATION						
High school or less	34.6%	33.4%	26.3%	5.6%	63	12.4
College or CEGEP	26.3%	30.9%	37.6%	5.2%	83	10.8
University or higher	28.6%	44.8%	20.8%	5.8%	74	11.4

Most important factor in vote intention?

Q. Which of the following is the most important factor for you when it comes to determining which party you will vote for in the next federal election? Is it 1) The party leader; 2) The local candidate; or 3) The party platform?

	Party leader	Local candidate	Party platform	None of the above	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	**22%**	**17%**	**42%**	**19%**	**1533**	**2.5**
REGION						
British Columbia	21%	13%	44%	23%	179	7.3
Alberta	21%	15%	43%	21%	151	8.0
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	21%	27%	36%	17%	108	9.4
Ontario	23%	16%	45%	16%	554	4.2
Quebec	24%	14%	41%	21%	410	4.8
Atlantic Canada	19%	32%	32%	17%	131	8.6
GENDER						
Male	24%	15%	44%	17%	719	3.7
Female	21%	19%	40%	20%	814	3.4
AGE						
<25	20%	14%	42%	25%	143	8.2
25-44	22%	15%	45%	19%	515	4.3
45-64	24%	19%	42%	15%	596	4.0
65+	22%	18%	37%	23%	279	5.9
EDUCATION						
High school or less	24%	18%	31%	27%	394	4.9
College or CEGEP	23%	20%	36%	22%	516	4.3
University or higher	20%	14%	54%	11%	623	3.9
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION						
Conservative Party of Canada	26%	15%	44%	14%	469	4.5
Liberal Party of Canada	26%	20%	42%	13%	397	4.9
NDP	19%	16%	47%	18%	221	6.6
Green Party	22%	13%	42%	23%	124	8.8
Bloc Québécois	21%	18%	40%	22%	132	8.5
Undecided	11%	16%	34%	40%	171	7.5

Preferred Outcome of Next Election

Q. Which of the following potential outcomes of the next federal election do you think would be BEST?

	Minority LPC govt'	Majority LPC govt'	Minority CPC govt'	Majority CPC govt'	None of the above	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	**14%**	**25%**	**8%**	**28%**	**25%**	**2395**	**2.0**
REGION							
British Columbia	16%	21%	8%	28%	27%	190	7.1
Alberta	9%	16%	6%	51%	18%	213	6.7
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	10%	23%	11%	36%	19%	176	7.4
Ontario	15%	27%	8%	30%	19%	972	3.1
Quebec	15%	28%	9%	14%	34%	660	3.8
Atlantic Canada	9%	28%	7%	23%	32%	184	7.2
GENDER							
Male	15%	24%	9%	33%	19%	1109	2.9
Female	13%	26%	8%	23%	30%	1286	2.7
AGE							
<25	19%	23%	10%	15%	33%	253	6.2
25-44	14%	25%	9%	24%	28%	800	3.5
45-64	14%	25%	8%	31%	22%	929	3.2
65+	9%	29%	7%	38%	17%	413	4.8
EDUCATION							
High school or less	12%	20%	10%	27%	32%	629	3.9
College or CEGEP	13%	20%	9%	31%	27%	852	3.4
University or higher	16%	34%	7%	25%	18%	914	3.2
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION							
Conservative Party of Canada	3%	3%	13%	77%	4%	711	3.7
Liberal Party of Canada	22%	66%	4%	3%	5%	629	3.9
NDP	20%	15%	6%	7%	51%	309	5.6
Green Party	17%	18%	6%	7%	52%	173	7.5
Bloc Québécois	19%	15%	10%	8%	49%	218	6.6
Undecided	9%	13%	9%	12%	56%	249	6.2

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 the September 9-15, 2009.[1] In total, a random sample of 3,164 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey (including a sub-sample of 2,703 decided voters). The margin of error associated with total sample is +/-1.7 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.