



[www.ekospolitics.ca](http://www.ekospolitics.ca)

## ***CONSERVATIVES OPEN UP DAYLIGHT IN THE FIRST WEEK OF CAMPAIGN***

*NDP ADVANCES AS WELL*

[Ottawa – April 1, 2011] – This week, EKOS is entering into the first phase of our election polling program. We will be publishing surveys at the end of each week based on a roll-up of the previous four days. We will be diverting additional resources to these polls to ensure that we are offering the most rigorous coverage of the campaign. This week's poll is based on the responses of nearly 3,000 Canadians collected from Monday to Thursday night.

At the conclusion of the first week of the 41st Federal Election campaign, the Conservatives have modestly widened their lead over the Liberals who have remained stagnant (perhaps even slipped slightly). Joining the Conservative Party in forward movement is the NDP who saw a significant bump up in support, largely at the expense of the Green Party and, to a lesser extent, the Liberals.

So despite a week that much of the media thought went not so well for the ruling party, Stephen Harper's Conservatives find themselves in a significantly more comfortable position today than when the writ was dropped. In fact, their 36.9 to 26.2 advantage over the Liberals may understate their hidden advantage in the regional and demographic patterns underlying this 10.7-point lead. They have opened up a large and meaningful advantage in seat rich Ontario and their constituency is much more weighted to older voters (boomers and seniors who are far more likely to vote than younger voters).

For the Liberals, who seemed to have a good week with the media, these numbers will be quite dispiriting. They really haven't fallen back much, but see themselves making no progress while both the Conservatives on the right and the NDP on the left have advanced somewhat. Their only comfort here is that there has been no improvement in the directional numbers for the federal government and the sense that the country is on the right trajectory is quite low and declining. In fact, outside of Conservative supporters (only 10% of whom are unhappy with federal direction), about 70% of other party supporters are dissatisfied with the direction of the federal government. Somewhat concerning for the Liberal Party, however, is the fact that their supporters show relatively higher levels of ambiguity about national direction.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- **National federal vote intention:**
  - ☒ 36.9% CPC
  - ☒ 26.2% LPC
  - ☒ 17.2% NDP
  - ☒ 8.7% Green
  - ☒ 8.5% BQ
  - ☒ 2.5% other
- **Direction of country:**
  - ☒ 48.0% right direction
  - ☒ 40.1% wrong direction
  - ☒ 12.0% DK/NR
- **Direction of government:**
  - ☒ 43.1% right direction
  - ☒ 46.8% wrong direction
  - ☒ 10.0% DK/NR

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

For the NDP, the results are pretty positive. They have moved up to 17.2 points, which is both statistically and substantively significant. Less auspiciously, for the Green Party, in a week in which Elizabeth May became somewhat of a cause celebre in certain sectors, the Green Party fell back to one of their lowest scores in our recent polling. They are still doing very well among youth, but they are being spurned by older Canada just as this debate has occurred.

The Bloc now seems to be confronting a confused federalist vote that is utterly fractured across the other federalist choices. There would appear to be opportunities for the Liberals and NDP in Quebec, as the confidence in the current federal government has virtually evaporated in the province. But so far, there is little evidence of any rallying hub for federalist forces in Quebec.

As a final note, it is interesting to note that there has been very little variation in support throughout the week. Indeed, the preliminary results tabulated on Tuesday are virtually identical to the results released today. The consistency suggests that the widened advantage of the Conservatives appeared in the first few days of the campaign and has remained stable since.



---

## Strategic Implications for Parties:

**Conservative Party:** The main conclusion for the Conservative Party is that they may want to ponder the gap across the media and pundit account of the first week and the hard empirical results of a 3000-case random sample. The game plan out of the gate seemed to be wrapping the core messages of leadership advantage while rocking the economic boat, and political instability and uncertainty under the oft repeated rubric of "coalition bad". If there was second guessing about the effectiveness of this framing, it doesn't seem to be borne out in the hard numbers. Why second guess a carefully developed script when the first week sees you in a significantly more comfortable position than at the outset? The exposure here is that there is significant concern with both national and federal direction and if those concerns become more focussed they can be a problem. It also appears that the road to majority increasingly lies through Ontario where the party is achieving unprecedented success right now.

**Liberal Party:** No need for panic at this stage as there are often lags between sound performance and returns with vote intention. Their results aren't significantly different from those going in but the gap is now significantly wider, as the Conservatives and the NDP have moved up significantly. Clearly, the three planks of the platform haven't stirred their target constituencies yet. Their best prospects appear to be presenting themselves as the best channel to focus growing concerns amongst non-Conservative supporters about our broad national and federal trajectory. There are opportunities in Quebec right now as the Conservatives have stumbled there and the federalist forces are fragmented ineffectually. The women's and under 45 vote remain crucial and the trends in Ontario have to be reversed quickly.

**New Democratic Party:** The NDP seem to have picked up their game in the first week of the campaign and are capitalizing on some of the leaning support they had going in. They have won from both the Green Party and the Liberal Party, so continued focus on the social and more focus on the environment may secure and advance those gains. They seem to have some live prospects in Quebec as well.

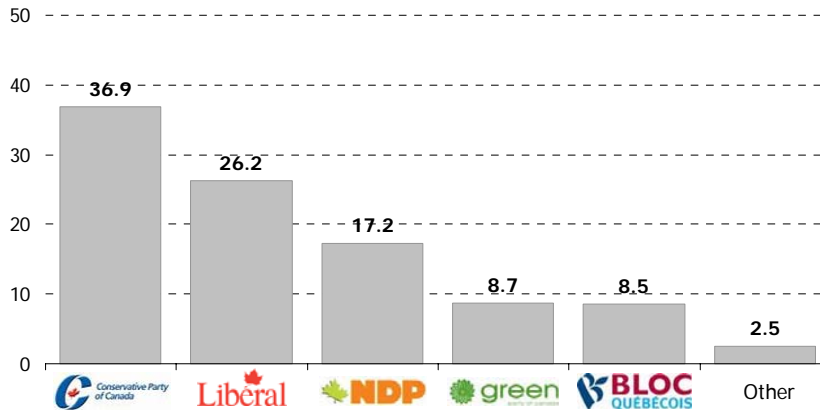
**Bloc Quebecois:** The Bloc is doing very well and seems to have federalist forces in disarray in Quebec. Not much need for advice here other than carry on and continue to ensure that one of the three federalist parties doesn't emerge as a champion to unify that vote in Quebec (so far looking unlikely).

**Green Party:** While these results aren't disastrous, the Green Party has suffered a slight but significant decline at precisely the wrong moment. Just as they are trying to present themselves as part of the mainstream political debate in Canada (and make their case for a seat at the debate table), they have seen their fortunes slide. While the environment has slipped as a dominant issue over the past few years, it is still very important and a politically orphaned issue. They need to refocus their efforts there. Our past research shows that their high speed rail proposal may be enormously resonant but may have slipped under the radar with the noise of the democracy debate which isn't as much their bailiwick.

## Top Line Results:

### Federal vote intention

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



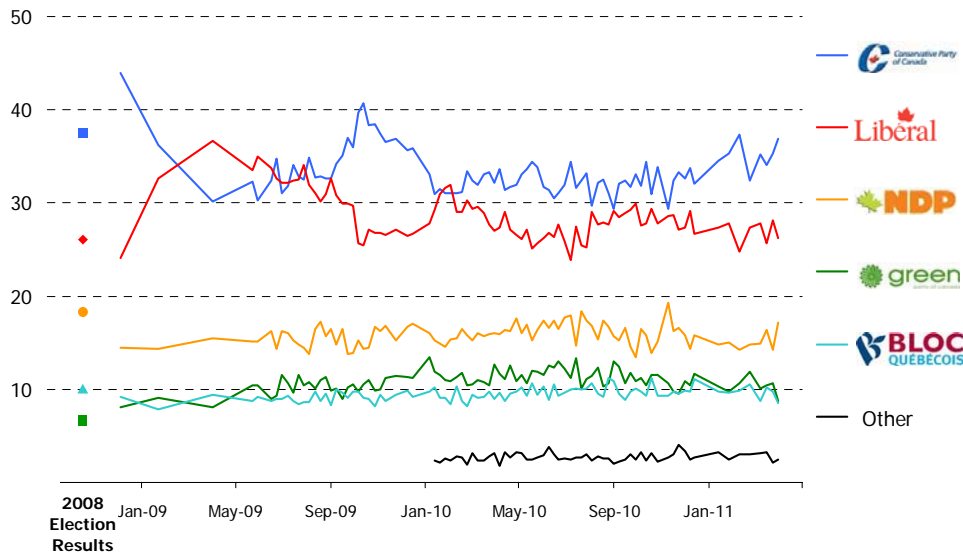
Note: The data on federal vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only. Our survey also finds that 13.1% of Canadians are undecided/ineligible to vote.

Copyright 2011. No reproduction without permission

BASE: Decided voters; March 28-31, 2011 (2,565)

### Weekly tracking of federal vote intention

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



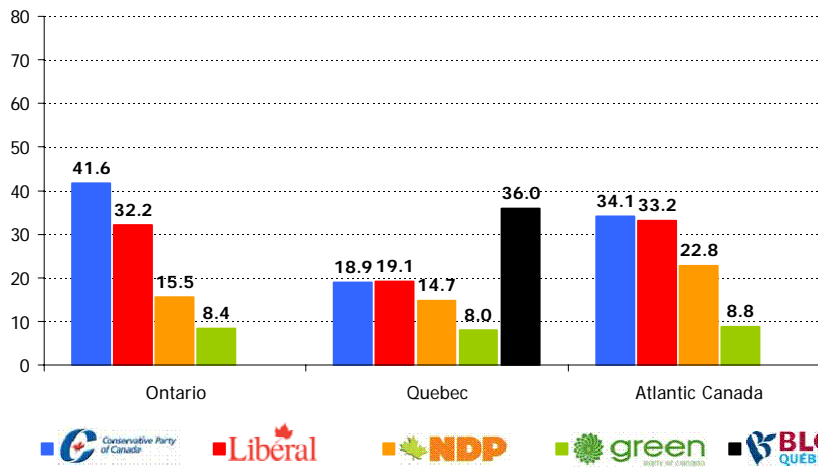
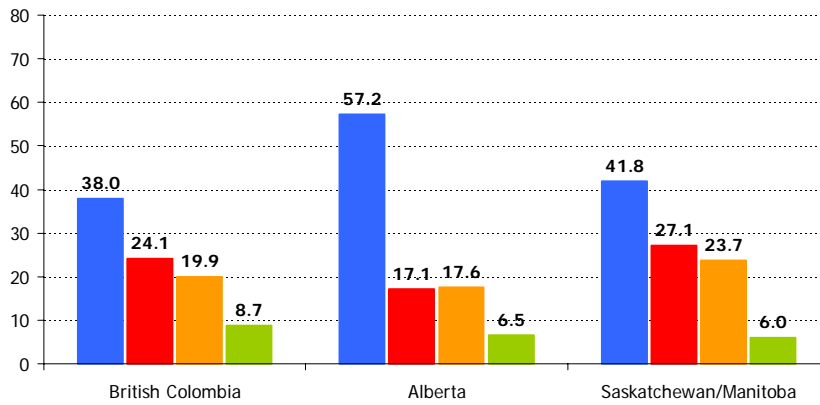
Note: The data on federal vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only. Our survey also finds that 13.1% of Canadians are undecided/ineligible to vote.

Copyright 2011. No reproduction without permission

BASE: Decided voters; most recent data point March 28-31, 2011 (n=2,565)



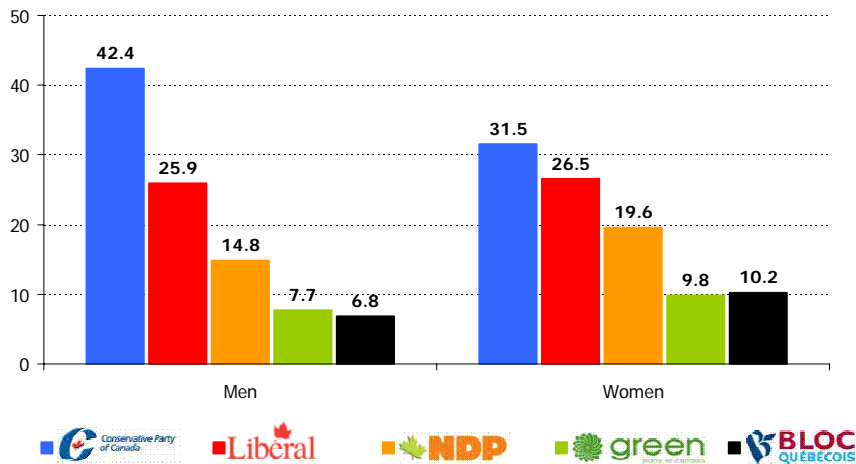
Vote intention by region



Copyright 2011. No reproduction without permission

BASE: Decided voters; March 28-31, 2011 (2,565)

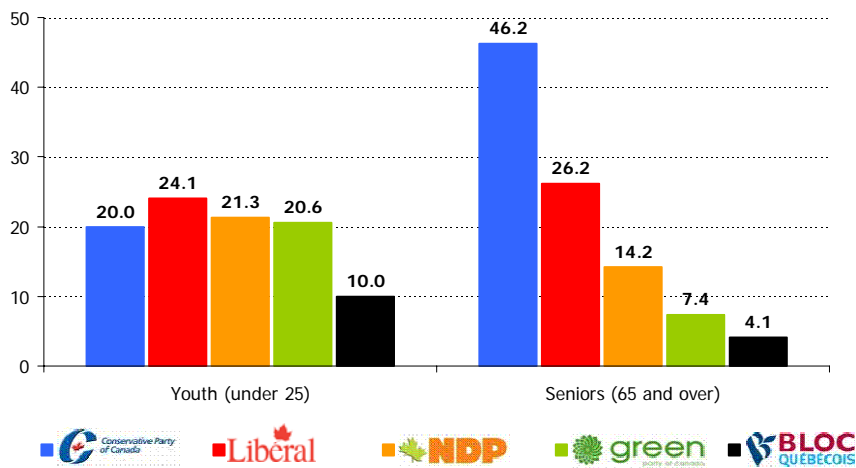
## Vote intention by gender



Copyright 2011. No reproduction without permission

BASE: Decided voters; March 28-31, 2011 (2,565)

## Vote intention by age

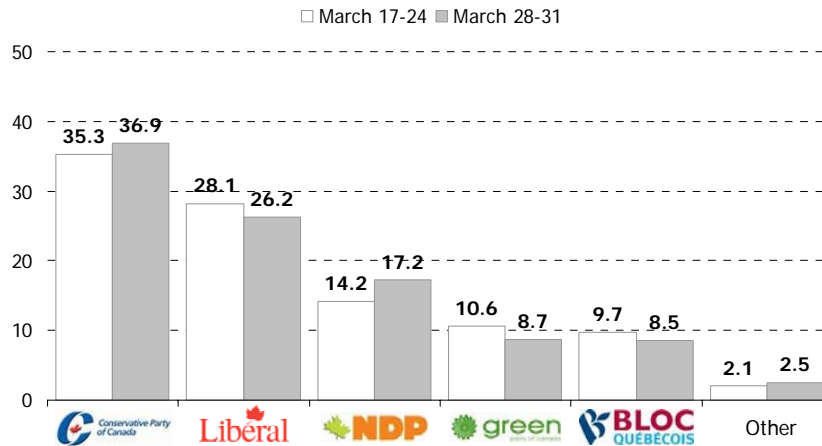


Copyright 2011. No reproduction without permission

BASE: Decided voters; March 28-31, 2011 (2,565)

## Federal vote intention: 2-week comparison

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

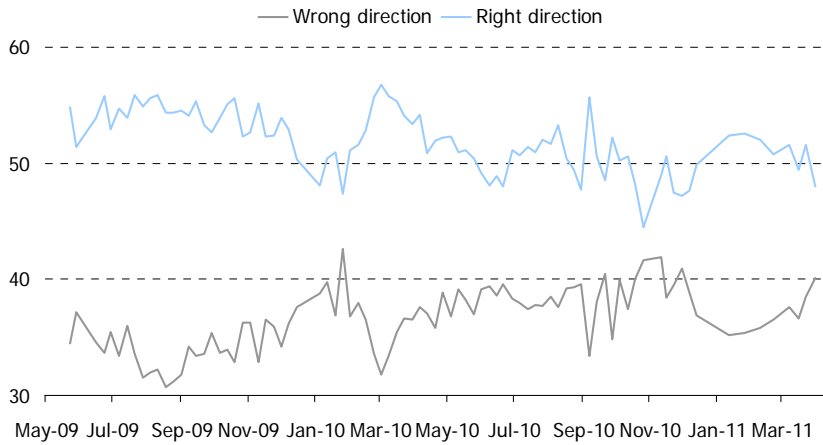


Copyright 2011. No reproduction without permission. **BASE:** Decided voters; **Week 1:** March 17-24, 2011 (n=2,153) / **Week 2:** March 28-31, 2011 (n=2,565)



## Direction of country

*Q. All things considered, would you say the country is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?*

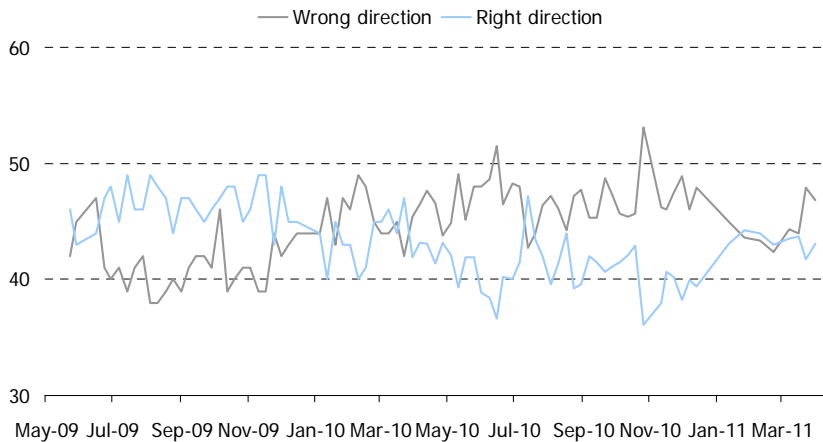


Copyright 2011. No reproduction without permission

BASE: Canadians; most recent data point March 28-31, 2011 (n=half sample)

## Direction of government

*Q. All things considered, would you say the Government of Canada is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?*








Copyright 2011. No reproduction without permission

BASE: Canadians; most recent data point March 28-31, 2011 (n=half sample)








**Detailed Tables:**

<b><u>National Federal Vote Intention</u></b>								
<i>Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?</i>								
						Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>36.9%</b>	<b>26.2%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>2565</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>REGION</b>								
British Columbia	38.0%	24.1%	19.9%	14.0%	0.0%	4.0%	302	5.6
Alberta	57.2%	17.1%	17.6%	6.5%	0.0%	1.7%	236	6.4
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	41.8%	27.1%	23.7%	6.0%	0.0%	1.4%	162	7.7
Ontario	41.6%	32.2%	15.5%	8.4%	0.0%	2.2%	970	3.2
Quebec	18.9%	19.1%	14.7%	8.0%	36.0%	3.3%	717	3.7
Atlantic Canada	34.1%	33.2%	22.8%	8.8%	0.0%	1.0%	178	7.4
<b>GENDER</b>								
Male	42.4%	25.9%	14.8%	7.7%	6.8%	2.5%	1324	2.7
Female	31.5%	26.5%	19.6%	9.8%	10.2%	2.5%	1241	2.8
<b>AGE</b>								
<25	20.0%	24.1%	21.3%	20.6%	10.0%	4.0%	157	7.8
25-44	34.7%	26.3%	17.7%	8.0%	10.2%	3.2%	748	3.6
45-64	39.3%	26.8%	17.0%	6.7%	8.6%	1.6%	1040	3.0
65+	46.2%	26.2%	14.2%	7.4%	4.1%	1.9%	620	3.9
<b>EDUCATION</b>								
High school or less	40.3%	19.4%	15.3%	11.0%	10.7%	3.4%	682	3.8
College or CEGEP	41.0%	21.3%	17.7%	8.0%	9.2%	2.8%	850	3.4
University or higher	31.4%	34.6%	18.0%	7.9%	6.5%	1.6%	1033	3.1
<b>METROPOLITAN CANADA</b>								
Vancouver	41.6%	29.0%	18.6%	5.9%	0.0%	4.8%	86	10.6
Calgary	52.7%	22.3%	17.8%	6.1%	0.0%	1.2%	84	10.7
Toronto	40.9%	34.8%	15.1%	8.3%	0.0%	0.9%	287	5.8
Ottawa	38.4%	43.8%	12.1%	5.0%	0.0%	0.8%	142	8.2
Montreal	16.2%	25.9%	15.5%	5.7%	34.4%	2.3%	268	6.0





### Federal Vote Intention – British Columbia

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

					Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>38.0%</b>	<b>24.1%</b>	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>5.6</b>
<b>GENDER</b>							
Male	38.5%	26.1%	16.3%	13.4%	5.6%	155	7.9
Female	35.4%	22.6%	24.0%	15.0%	2.9%	147	8.1
<b>AGE</b>							
<25	25.9%	25.3%	20.0%	22.9%	5.8%	17	23.8
25-44	32.4%	25.4%	19.7%	15.4%	7.1%	74	11.4
45-64	35.8%	26.4%	23.0%	13.0%	1.8%	118	9.0
65+	54.2%	18.0%	15.4%	9.7%	2.7%	93	10.2
<b>EDUCATION</b>							
High school or less	46.8%	19.9%	15.7%	11.9%	5.8%	88	10.5
College or CEGEP	40.6%	15.3%	25.1%	17.1%	1.9%	99	9.9
University or higher	26.5%	35.3%	19.4%	13.7%	5.1%	115	9.1

### Federal Vote Intention – Alberta





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

					Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>57.2%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>6.4</b>
<b>GENDER</b>							
Male	62.2%	17.9%	13.2%	6.2%	0.5%	139	8.3
Female	49.7%	17.2%	23.1%	6.9%	3.2%	97	10.0
<b>AGE</b>							
<25	35.1%	43.2%	14.7%	7.0%	0.0%	14	26.2
25-44	54.2%	13.3%	20.2%	10.2%	2.0%	68	11.9
45-64	65.0%	11.7%	18.1%	2.6%	2.6%	91	10.3
65+	56.2%	19.0%	16.7%	6.6%	1.5%	63	12.4
<b>EDUCATION</b>							
High school or less	75.5%	11.1%	8.5%	2.2%	2.7%	53	13.5
College or CEGEP	57.1%	14.4%	18.7%	7.8%	2.1%	74	11.4
University or higher	46.2%	22.8%	22.2%	7.6%	1.3%	109	9.4







### **Federal Vote Intention – Saskatchewan/Manitoba**

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

					Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>41.8%</b>	<b>27.1%</b>	<b>23.7%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>7.7</b>
<b>GENDER</b>							
Male	40.7%	31.9%	17.5%	9.0%	0.9%	78	11.1
Female	41.1%	21.2%	30.2%	5.2%	2.4%	84	10.7
<b>AGE</b>							
<25	0.0%	10.9%	39.6%	37.7%	11.7%	8	34.7
25-44	39.6%	31.3%	23.0%	6.0%	0.0%	48	14.1
45-64	48.8%	28.9%	20.7%	1.6%	0.0%	63	12.4
65+	50.9%	20.9%	23.8%	2.2%	2.2%	43	14.9
<b>EDUCATION</b>							
High school or less	46.4%	15.0%	19.0%	15.8%	3.7%	54	13.3
College or CEGEP	44.2%	26.5%	28.0%	0.0%	1.3%	53	13.5
University or higher	32.5%	37.1%	25.1%	5.4%	0.0%	55	13.2

### **Federal Vote Intention – Ontario**






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

					Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>41.6%</b>	<b>32.2%</b>	<b>15.5%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>GENDER</b>							
Male	46.6%	30.8%	13.7%	6.7%	2.1%	520	4.3
Female	36.0%	33.6%	17.6%	10.5%	2.3%	450	4.6
<b>AGE</b>							
<25	25.1%	31.5%	18.3%	21.5%	3.4%	50	13.9
25-44	42.9%	28.5%	19.1%	6.5%	2.9%	274	5.9
45-64	41.6%	35.6%	13.5%	7.5%	1.8%	401	4.9
65+	45.7%	33.3%	11.7%	8.3%	1.1%	245	6.3
<b>EDUCATION</b>							
High school or less	38.6%	26.2%	19.3%	13.4%	2.5%	210	6.8
College or CEGEP	48.7%	27.0%	14.1%	6.7%	3.5%	319	5.5
University or higher	36.9%	39.2%	15.1%	7.7%	1.1%	441	4.7







### Federal Vote Intention – Quebec

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

						Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>36.0%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>3.7</b>
<b>GENDER</b>								
Male	26.8%	17.8%	13.8%	6.3%	32.1%	3.2%	335	5.4
Female	14.1%	20.8%	15.0%	8.7%	38.2%	3.2%	382	5.0
<b>AGE</b>								
<25	11.7%	14.0%	19.5%	16.9%	32.0%	5.9%	53	13.5
25-44	15.7%	20.1%	13.3%	7.5%	39.1%	4.2%	228	6.5
45-64	22.1%	15.2%	15.9%	6.3%	39.2%	1.3%	288	5.8
65+	32.0%	28.3%	10.7%	4.6%	21.0%	3.3%	148	8.1
<b>EDUCATION</b>								
High school or less	25.0%	14.9%	10.2%	8.3%	37.7%	4.0%	233	6.4
College or CEGEP	23.1%	16.0%	13.0%	7.5%	36.7%	3.7%	241	6.3
University or higher	14.0%	26.3%	19.4%	6.8%	31.4%	2.1%	243	6.3

### Federal Vote Intention – Atlantic Canada

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

					Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>34.1%</b>	<b>33.2%</b>	<b>22.8%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>7.4</b>
<b>GENDER</b>							
Male	39.7%	30.9%	20.2%	9.2%	0.0%	97	10.0
Female	29.4%	33.4%	26.1%	9.1%	1.9%	81	10.9
<b>AGE</b>							
<25	15.0%	17.6%	36.3%	31.0%	0.0%	15	25.3
25-44	32.1%	47.1%	15.5%	5.3%	0.0%	56	13.1
45-64	39.4%	31.0%	24.0%	2.9%	2.6%	79	11.0
65+	45.5%	13.8%	26.8%	13.8%	0.0%	28	18.5
<b>EDUCATION</b>							
High school or less	39.8%	22.4%	18.3%	17.7%	1.8%	44	14.8
College or CEGEP	36.8%	24.2%	29.3%	8.5%	1.3%	64	12.3
University or higher	30.1%	45.1%	20.3%	4.5%	0.0%	70	11.7


**Direction of Country**

*Q. All things considered, would you say the country is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?*

	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>48.0%</b>	<b>40.1%</b>	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>1465</b>	<b>2.6</b>
<b>REGION</b>					
British Columbia	48.7%	36.6%	14.7%	158	7.8
Alberta	61.7%	29.1%	9.2%	124	8.8
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	54.9%	34.6%	10.4%	97	10.0
Ontario	50.5%	38.0%	11.4%	528	4.3
Quebec	39.7%	47.2%	13.1%	458	4.6
Atlantic Canada	39.5%	49.3%	11.2%	100	9.8
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	54.9%	36.4%	8.7%	731	3.6
Female	41.5%	43.5%	15.0%	734	3.6
<b>AGE</b>					
<25	47.5%	39.0%	13.5%	106	9.5
25-44	47.3%	42.7%	10.0%	408	4.9
45-64	48.5%	40.6%	10.9%	605	4.0
65+	48.5%	34.5%	17.0%	346	5.3
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
High school or less	45.7%	40.2%	14.1%	418	4.8
College or CEGEP	49.5%	38.7%	11.8%	485	4.5
University or higher	48.4%	41.1%	10.6%	562	4.1
<b>CURRENT VOTE INTENTION</b>					
Conservative Party of Canada	78.9%	13.2%	7.8%	449	4.6
Liberal Party of Canada	41.5%	50.4%	8.1%	339	5.3
NDP	32.8%	56.4%	10.8%	214	6.7
Green Party	33.8%	51.3%	14.9%	100	9.8
Bloc Quebecois	25.7%	62.3%	12.0%	133	8.5
Undecided	28.6%	57.3%	14.1%	30	17.9



### Direction of Government

*Q. All things considered, would you say the Government of Canada is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?*

	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>43.1%</b>	<b>46.8%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>1464</b>	<b>2.6</b>
<b>REGION</b>					
British Columbia	41.3%	48.9%	9.8%	181	7.3
Alberta	60.4%	32.2%	7.3%	130	8.6
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	56.2%	39.6%	4.3%	93	10.2
Ontario	47.1%	43.4%	9.5%	557	4.2
Quebec	29.7%	57.3%	13.0%	398	4.9
Atlantic Canada	32.3%	55.5%	12.2%	105	9.6
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	48.2%	44.4%	7.4%	733	3.6
Female	38.4%	49.2%	12.5%	731	3.6
<b>AGE</b>					
<25	41.7%	46.9%	11.4%	103	9.7
25-44	40.3%	50.8%	8.8%	445	4.7
45-64	45.3%	45.8%	8.9%	573	4.1
65+	45.8%	40.4%	13.9%	343	5.3
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
High school or less	42.9%	45.1%	12.0%	407	4.9
College or CEGEP	47.5%	43.1%	9.4%	485	4.5
University or higher	39.5%	51.3%	9.2%	572	4.1
<b>CURRENT VOTE INTENTION</b>					
Conservative Party of Canada	85.3%	8.9%	5.8%	511	4.3
Liberal Party of Canada	21.1%	69.5%	9.4%	324	5.4
NDP	25.4%	67.4%	7.2%	203	6.9
Green Party	21.9%	64.5%	13.6%	110	9.3
Bloc Quebecois	10.3%	79.9%	9.8%	125	8.8
Undecided	7.7%	75.8%	16.4%	27	18.9

## Methodology:

EKOS' weekly tracking polls are conducted using Interactive Voice Response (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 landline/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 March 28 – March 31, 2011<sup>1</sup>. In total, a random sample of 2,929 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey (including a sub-sample of 2,565 decided voters). The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-1.8 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note that these dates are not inclusive of weekends, as we do not survey on Saturday or Sunday.