

As Government Falls and Election Ensues...

Contributed by Ipsos
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Half (49%) of Canadians Believe Harper would be Best Prime Minister for Canada, Layton (34%) Bests Ignatieff (17%)

Harper Ahead on all Key Positive Leadership Traits as Canadians Say Healthcare (18%), Economy (15%), Taxes (12%), Jobs (8%) and Trustworthiness (7%) Most Important Issues of the Campaign

Amid an historic moment in Canada that saw the fall of the Government on a vote of non-confidence by the opposition parties, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for Postmedia News and Global National has revealed that, heading into Canada's fourth General Election in seven years, one half (49%, up 1 point since early February) of Canadians believe that Stephen Harper would make the best Prime Minister of Canada.

In second position is NDP leader Jack Layton (34%, down 1 point) who has garnered twice as many votes as Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff (17%, up 1 point).

The Conservatives will hit the campaign trail reminding voters of their track record on the economy, while the Liberals and other opposition parties will try to frame the ballot question around ethics, trust, accountability and transparency.

Asking Canadians what they would say is the most important issue if a local candidate appeared on their doorstep, healthcare and health issues take the top spot with mentions from 18% of Canadians, unaided.

Following closely is the economy (15%) while taxes (12%) are in third place. Unemployment/jobs (8%) and honesty/trust (7%) round out the top-five issues.

Other issues mentioned by Canadians, unaided, include the environment (5%), poverty/low-income Canadians (4%), seniors/the aging population (3%), debt (3%), pensions (3%), immigration (3%), government spending (2%), welfare and social programs (2%), energy costs (2%), and gas prices (2%) among other issues.

Interestingly, 2% of Canadians say they would close the door and tell their local candidate to go away.

Examining key leadership attributes that could be at play during the campaign and in the minds of voters as they decide for whom to vote, the data reveal that Prime Minister Stephen Harper is ahead of his counterparts on every major positive attribute studied. Canadians were asked to pick which of the major leaders is best described by each respective trait:

* Someone you can trust: Stephen Harper (42%, up 6 points since November), Jack Layton (34%, down 1 point), Michael Ignatieff (15%, down 5 points), Gilles Duceppe (9%, up 1 point, 38% in Quebec).

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* Someone who will get things done: Stephen Harper (47%, up 4 points since November), Jack Layton (27%, up 1 point), Michael Ignatieff (17%, down 4 points), Gilles Duceppe (8%, down 1 point, 34% in Quebec).

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* Someone who has what it takes to lead Canada: Stephen Harper (50%, up 7 points since November), Jack Layton (26%, unchanged), Michael Ignatieff (18%, down 8 points), Gilles Duceppe (6%, up 1 point, 24% in Quebec).

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* Someone who is best to manage during tough economic times: Stephen Harper (52%, up 7 points since November), Jack Layton (22%, down 2 points), Michael Ignatieff (18%, down 6 points), Gilles Duceppe (7%, unchanged, 30% in Quebec).

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* Someone who wants to be Prime Minister for the right reasons: Stephen Harper (44%), Jack Layton (34%), Michael Ignatieff (16%), Gilles Duceppe (6%, 25% in Quebec).

* Someone who has a vision of Canada that you can support: Stephen Harper (45%, up 5 points since March), Jack Layton (30%, down 2 points), Michael Ignatieff (18%, down 6 points), Gilles Duceppe (7%, up 3 points, 31% in Quebec).

There remains one leadership attribute where Stephen Harper does not lead, but is in a close second place:

* Someone who has a hidden agenda: Michael Ignatieff (46%, up 9 points since November), Stephen Harper (39%, down 6 points), Jack Layton (10%, down 4 points), Gilles Duceppe (5%, up 1 point, 21% in Quebec).

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between March 21 to 23, 2011, on behalf of Postmedia News and Global National. For this survey, a sample of 1,014 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed

online.

Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and political composition to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe.

A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled.

All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

About Ipsos Reid

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