

Majority (56%) Of Canadians Agree Liberal Party Is A 'Party Of The Past'

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Half (52%) of Canadians Have "Written Off the Liberals"™, Harper Bests all Current Party Leaders in Positive Impressions

A majority (56%) of Canadians "agree"™ (19% strongly/38% somewhat) that they consider "the Liberal Party to be a party of the past, not a party of the future"™, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Postmedia News and Global Television.

Conversely, a minority (44%) "disagrees"™ (12% strongly/32% somewhat) with this sentiment. Among Liberal party supporters, two in ten (21%) believe their own party is a party of the past, while eight in ten (79%) believe it's a party of the future.

If the Liberals are hoping that finding a permanent leader will turn around their party's fortunes, Canadians remain divided on the question. One half (52%) "agree"™ (21% strongly/31% somewhat) that "regardless of who the Liberals choose as their next leader"™, they've "pretty much written off the Liberals"™. The other half (48%) of Canadians "disagree"™ (10% strongly/38% somewhat), believing that the Liberals will once again be a force to be reckoned with. Interestingly, six in ten (61%) current NDP supporters agree that they've written off the Liberals, as have seven in ten (70%) Conservative supporters "and a belief that could come back to bite them."

On the topic of leadership, the data reveal that Stephen Harper bests all current party leaders when it comes to leaving a positive impression on Canadians. Three in ten (28%) have a positive impression of Conservative leader and Prime Minister Stephen Harper, followed in second place by newly-elected NDP leader Thomas Mulcair (19%), despite being in the national spotlight for only a short time. In third place is interim Liberal leader Bob Rae (18%), followed by Elizabeth May (16%). In Quebec, just 8% say that Daniel Paille has left a positive impression on them.

While many have written off the Liberals and seemingly believe they're no longer relevant, three in ten (29%) "agree"™ (10% strongly/19% somewhat) that "of all the federal political parties, the Liberals best represent their personal political values"™. However, most (71%) Canadians "disagree"™ (35% strongly/36% somewhat), suggesting that some other party might best represent their political values.

The Liberal party will likely be pre-occupied in the coming years with trying to lure back their former supporters, many of whom stayed home on Election Day or voted for Jack Layton and the NDP. In fact, three in ten (27%) Canadians, overall, "agree"™ (7% strongly/21% somewhat) that they "mostly voted Liberal in the past federal elections, but have now moved to supporting another party"™. In fact, one in three (35%) current NDP voters agree that they used to primarily support the Liberals, and one quarter (26%) of Conservatives voters say the same thing.

The 2011 election was historic in that the NDP became the official opposition for the first time in Canada, and it appears that Canadians now believe that it is the NDP that has the best shot of defeating the Tories. Just one in three (35%) "agree"™ (6% strongly/29% somewhat) that "the Liberals, not the NDP, have the best chance of defeating Stephen Harper and the Conservatives in the next federal election"™. Conversely, two in three (65%) "disagree"™ (25% strongly/41% somewhat) that the Liberals have the best chance to defeat the Tories.

Some have argued that the only way for any party to defeat the Conservatives is to have a merger of the left "for the NDP and Liberals to join forces. On this point, four in ten (41%) Canadians "agree"™ (11% strongly/30% somewhat) that they would "support the NDP and Liberal Party merging into a single party"™, while six in ten (59%) "disagree"™ (29% strongly/30% somewhat) with a merger. A majority of Liberal (64%) and NDP (57%) voters would support this kind of merger, but Bloc (39%) and especially Tory (20%) voters are not crazy about the idea "not surprisingly since, according to these figures, a merged party would appear to have broad support."

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between June 5 and 7, 2012, on behalf of Postmedia News and Global Television. For this survey, a sample of 1,010 Canadians from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics 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 +/- 3.1 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.

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