

FEDERAL POLITICAL SCENE

Leadership Change Would Benefit Liberals in the Next Federal Election

Twenty-point lead for Conservatives drops to five points if Michael Ignatieff leads the Liberal Party instead of Stéphane Dion.

[TORONTO – Dec. 7, 2008] – While the Conservative Party holds a considerable advantage over the Liberal Party across Canada, the federal political scene would change dramatically if Michael Ignatieff becomes the new leader of the main opposition party, a new *Toronto Star* / Angus Reid poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 42 per cent of respondents say they would vote for the governing Tories in the next federal election, followed by the Liberals with 22 per cent, the New Democratic Party (NDP) with 18 per cent, the Bloc Québécois with 10 per cent, and the Green Party with seven per cent.

However, if the Liberals fight the next election with Ignatieff—the current deputy leader—at the helm, the Liberals garner the support of 33 per cent of respondents, five points behind the leading Conservatives (38%) and well ahead of the other opposition parties (NDP 13%, BQ 10%, Green 6%).

Former Ontario premier Bob Rae would not provide the same boost to Liberal fortunes. The Tories hold a 15-point advantage over the Grifts (41% to 26%) if Rae is the leader of the Liberal Party, with the NDP at 15 per cent, and stable support for the Bloc (10%) and Greens (6%).

KEY FINDINGS

- **Voting Intention: Con. 42%, Lib. 22%, NDP 18%, BQ 10%, Grn. 7%**
- **With Ignatieff as leader: Con. 38%, Lib. 33%, NDP 13%, BQ 10%, Grn. 6%**
- **With Rae as leader: Con. 41%, Lib. 26%, NDP 15%, BQ 10%, Grn. 6%**
- **40% support the idea of a pre-election coalition between Liberals and NDP**
- **60% have a worse opinion of Dion, 54% have a worse opinion of Harper**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From December 5 to December 6, 2008 Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among 1,005 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

CONTACT:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

The survey shows that the Liberals would see significant gains in three provinces if Ignatieff serves as leader. In Ontario, Ignatieff makes the Liberals highly competitive, placing his party in a virtual tie with the Tories (40% to 38%). In Quebec, where the Stéphane Dion-led Liberals currently sit in third place with 20 per cent, Ignatieff would take Grit support to 33 per cent. In British Columbia, the Liberals go from a distant third at 17 per cent with Dion, to a strong second at 32 per cent under Ignatieff.

A pre-election coalition?

Respondents were asked to ponder a scenario in which the Liberals and the NDP formed a pre-election coalition that would present a single slate of candidates in the entire country, where Grits and New Democrats would not run against each other in the same riding.

Two-in-five Canadians (40%) like this idea, but 45 per cent are opposed. The highest level of support for this concept comes from respondents who voted for the Liberals (67%), the Bloc (67%) and the NDP (59%) in the last federal election, with Green supporters (36%) and Conservative voters (19%) clearly less enthused.

Effects of the Crisis

The past few weeks of political wrangling in Ottawa have taken a toll on the way Canadians relate to their political leaders. Three-in-five respondents (60%) say their opinion of Liberal leader Stéphane Dion has worsened over the course of the past month, and more than half (54%) feel the same way about Conservative leader and Prime Minister Stephen Harper. NDP leader Jack Layton also posted a negative momentum score nationally (41% worsened, 17% improved).

When it comes to the performance of the political parties, respondents in Quebec are evenly divided in their assessment of the Bloc (40% approve, 40% disapprove) while a majority of Canadians express disappointment with the way the three main federal parties have handled their duties (Liberals 57%, Conservatives 55%, New Democrats 53%).

CONTACT:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

Federal Political Scene

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Conservative Party	42%	51%	70%	42%	42%	28%	31%
Liberal Party	22%	17%	12%	15%	29%	20%	26%
New Democratic Party	18%	25%	14%	31%	17%	10%	34%
Bloc Québécois	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	38%	0%
Green Party	7%	8%	5%	10%	10%	4%	7%
Other	1%	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%	2%

Federal Political Scene

Imagine that Michael Ignatieff is the leader federal Liberal Party. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency? (Decided Voters)

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Conservative Party	38%	47%	68%	41%	40%	17%	32%
Liberal Party	33%	32%	16%	21%	38%	33%	38%
New Democratic Party	13%	16%	10%	25%	12%	8%	24%
Bloc Québécois	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	38%	0%
Green Party	6%	4%	6%	11%	8%	5%	3%
Other	1%	2%	0%	2%	2%	0%	3%

CONTACT:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

Federal Political Scene

Imagine that Bob Rae is the leader federal Liberal Party. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency? (Decided Voters)

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Conservative Party	41%	51%	68%	38%	44%	22%	34%
Liberal Party	26%	25%	15%	21%	32%	19%	32%
New Democratic Party	15%	21%	12%	28%	14%	11%	20%
Bloc Québécois	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	41%	0%
Green Party	6%	4%	5%	10%	8%	6%	4%
Other	2%	0%	0%	2%	2%	1%	10%

Federal Political Scene

A new federal election might take place in 2009. Thinking about that, would you support or oppose the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party (NDP) forming a pre-election coalition that would present a single slate of candidates in the entire country? (That is, Liberal and NDP candidates would not run against each other in the same riding)?

	Party support in 2008 federal election					
	Total	Con.	Lib.	NDP	BQ	Grn.
Support	40%	19%	67%	59%	67%	36%
Oppose	45%	70%	26%	30%	24%	48%
Not sure	15%	11%	7%	12%	8%	17%

CONTACT:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

Federal Political Scene

Over the course of the past month, would you say your opinion of each of the following people has improved, stayed the same or worsened?

	Improved	Stayed the same	Worsened	Not sure
Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper	12%	31%	54%	3%
Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Stéphane Dion	9%	27%	60%	3%
New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton	17%	37%	42%	4%
Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe [Québec Only]	23%	44%	26%	6%
Green Party leader Elizabeth May	9%	55%	20%	17%

Liberal Leadership Race

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following federal political parties?

	Approve	Disapprove	Not sure
Conservative Party	33%	55%	12%
Liberal Party	25%	57%	18%
New Democratic Party (NDP)	29%	53%	19%
Bloc Québécois [Québec Only]	40%	40%	20%
Green Party	30%	34%	37%

CONTACT:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

Angus Reid Strategies is a full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995.

Angus Reid Strategies, along with its sister company, Vision Critical, is now the largest Canadian-owned market research enterprise. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

Angus Reid Strategies, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election.

<http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=349>

Since 2006, Angus Reid Strategies has covered five provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

<http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=194>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

- 30 -

**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
www.angusreidstrategies.com**

CONTACT:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com