

LIBERALS/TORIES IN DEAD HEAT AS ELECTION LOOMS

MUCH TIGHTER RACE THAN THIS TIME LAST YEAR

[Ottawa – September 3, 2009] – For the second year running, Canadians head into the Labour Day weekend with talk of a federal election in the air. But this time, neither party has reason to feel confident of the outcome.

This week's EKOS Research poll, conducted for the CBC, finds the ruling Conservatives in a dead heat with the Liberals. In each of EKOS's weekly polls through July and August, the race between the two parties has been very, very close. This week, the Liberals have erased a small but persistent lead enjoyed by the Conservatives in recent weeks by improving their fortunes in the crucial battleground of Ontario.

In contrast, in a pre-Labour Day poll EKOS conducted last year, the Conservatives had a big lead: they were at 37% and the Liberals at 24% -- not far off the results on election day in October.

Last year, it was the prime minister, Stephen Harper, who was musing about an election as the long weekend approached; this year, it is the new Liberal leader, Michael Ignatieff's turn.

Based on their current standings, a majority government is a long shot for both parties. The Liberals are set to gain seats, however, even if they do not gain government. And the Conservatives run some danger of losing power if they are forced into an election this fall.

"As the last Parliament drew to a close, the public withdrew a slight but significant advantage that they had bestowed on the Liberals," said EKOS President Frank Graves. "Irritated by the threat of another election, with little prospect of a qualitatively different parliamentary result, the public gave the Conservatives a slight but significant lead. This small lead persisted through most of the summer. Over the past few weeks the Liberals have drawn into a virtual dead heat, however. Notably the Liberals have also re-established an advantage in the crucial Ontario arena."

"So as media interest begins to percolate, and the public inevitably and perhaps reluctantly return their attention again to politics, it appears that the race would now be handicapped as "pick 'em" between the 2 main contenders."

HIGHLIGHTS

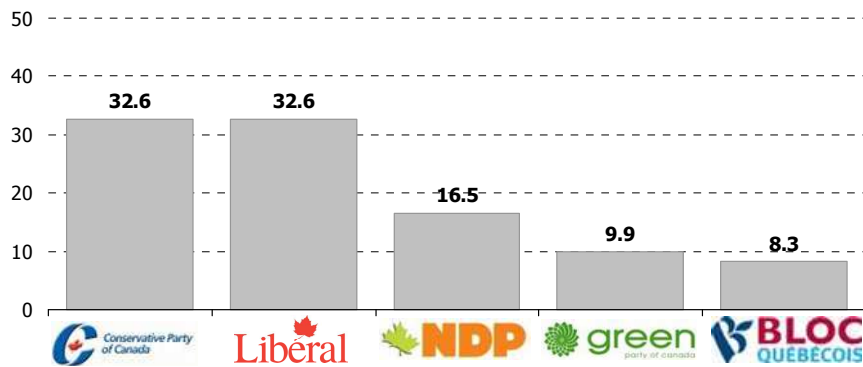
- **National federal vote intention:**
 - ▣ **32.6% CPC**
 - ▣ **32.6% LPC**
 - ▣ **16.5% NDP**
 - ▣ **9.9% Green**
 - ▣ **8.3% BQ**

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

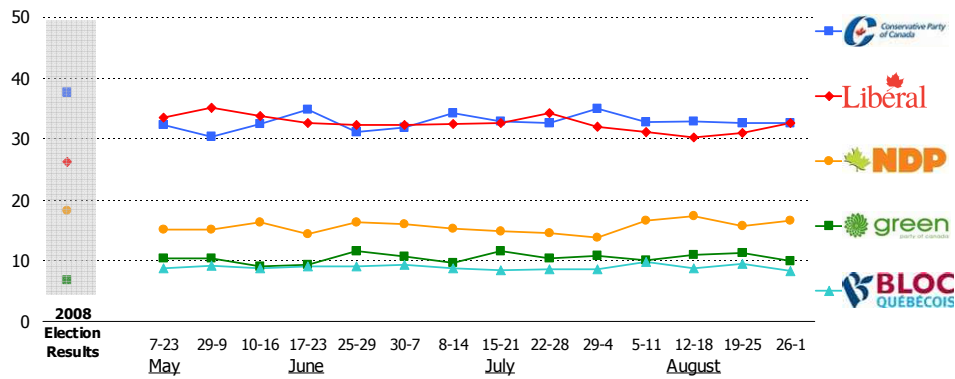
Top Line Results:

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 15.2% of Canadians are undecided/ineligible to vote.

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BASE: Decided voters; most recent data points Aug. 26-Sep. 1 (n=1772)

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 August 26-September 1, 2009.¹ In total, a random sample of 2,118 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey (including a sub-sample of 1,772 decided voters). The margin of error associated with total sample is +/- 2.1 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, income). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.

¹ Please note that these dates are not inclusive of the weekends as we do not survey on Saturday or Sunday.