

LIBERALS SAGGING AS CONSERVATIVES OPEN UP WIDE LEAD

CANADIANS INCREASINGLY CONTENT WITH NATIONAL DIRECTION

[Ottawa – February 10, 2011] – From a Liberal (or indeed NDP) perspective, this poll can be summarised as nasty, brutish, and short. The opposition is losing touch with an increasingly distant Conservative party. The Conservatives have advanced with virtually all groups and now enjoy a 12.5-point lead (the largest since October 2009).

This dramatically different political landscape is a far cry from the statistical tie that existed only last fall. Put another way, the Conservatives have hit a high at 37.3 points that they haven't seen since October 2009. The Liberals' miserable 24.8 points is below their dismal election performance of 2008 and is the third lowest number they have achieved in our post election polling program. The NDP is below 15 points and the Bloc is the only opposition party that can look with some satisfaction at these numbers.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **National federal vote intention:**
 - ☒ **37.3% CPC**
 - ☒ **24.8% LPC**
 - ☒ **14.2% NDP**
 - ☒ **10.7% Green**
 - ☒ **9.9% BQ**
 - ☒ **3.0% other**

- **Direction of country:**
 - ☒ **52.0% right direction**
 - ☒ **35.8% wrong direction**
 - ☒ **12.2% DK/NR**

- **Direction of government:**
 - ☒ **44.0% right direction**
 - ☒ **43.3% wrong direction**
 - ☒ **12.7% DK/NR**

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

So what on Earth is going on with a supposedly inattentive electorate who now seem to be showing some pretty distinct patterns and trajectory? First of all, the view that this is simply random churning can be dismissed as totally implausible. Since the early November period, there has been a very clear and statistically well-behaved progression where a scant two-point lead has steadily expanded to a very sizable lead of almost 13 points. There are no wild fluctuations that would suggest random play.

So if this is a real effect, what are the causes? We are on shakier ground finding the causal attributes, but there are some suggestions in the data. Before turning to the data, we offer up the reasoned conjecture that the Conservatives are faring better because they are not bearing the brunt of the serial controversies which dogged them from late 2009 up until late 2010. There is no Afghan detainee issue smouldering, Parliament hasn't been prorogued, there are no personal scandals of ex-Conservative MPs, and the long form census controversy has faded out of sight. There is more direct evidence in the survey that may reflect this period of relatively trouble free management for the government. Confidence in both national and federal direction has been improving very significantly over this period. The absence of controversies, coupled with rising confidence in the country (and the economy) may be the key engine of this new large lead.

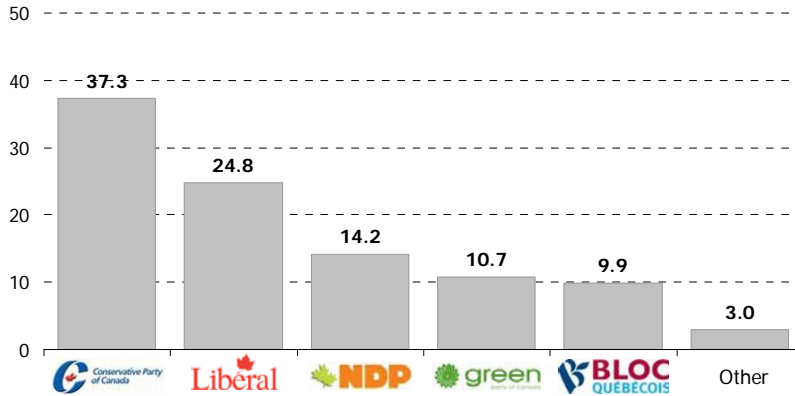
The demographic patterns are also suggestive. While the Conservatives are doing better with most groups, their new found advantage has been built in some specific and important constituencies. The Conservatives have strengthened their lead with boomers who are much more likely to actually vote. The Conservatives now have comfortable lead in seat rich Ontario and even enjoy a very significant lead in the census metropolitan area of Toronto. The Conservatives also now lead the Liberals in Quebec and among those born outside Canada, which is a major turnaround.

Interestingly, the opposition fortunes have taken a decidedly downward pitch since they started talking election. The supposedly somnambulant electorate is clearly underwhelmed with what they are hearing from the Liberals and the NDP and the two parties might want to consider an urgent rethink of their preliminary election framing, or perhaps even the idea of an election at all.

Top Line Results:

Federal vote intention

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



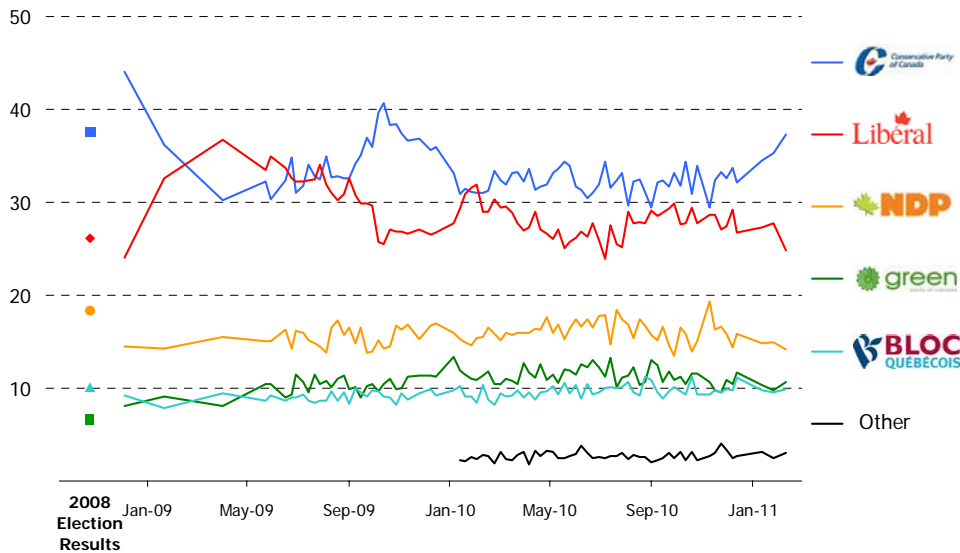
Note: The data on federal vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only. Our survey also finds that 15.7% of Canadians are undecided/ineligible to vote.

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BASE: Decided voters; February 4-9, 2011 (n=1,405)

Weekly tracking of federal vote intention

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



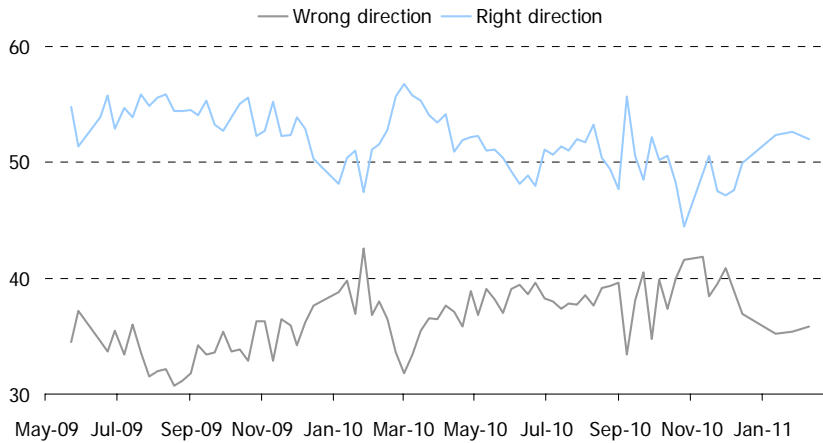
Note: The data on federal vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only. Our survey also finds that 15.7% of Canadians are undecided/ineligible to vote.

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BASE: Decided voters; most recent data point February 4-9, 2011 (n=1,405)

Direction of country

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

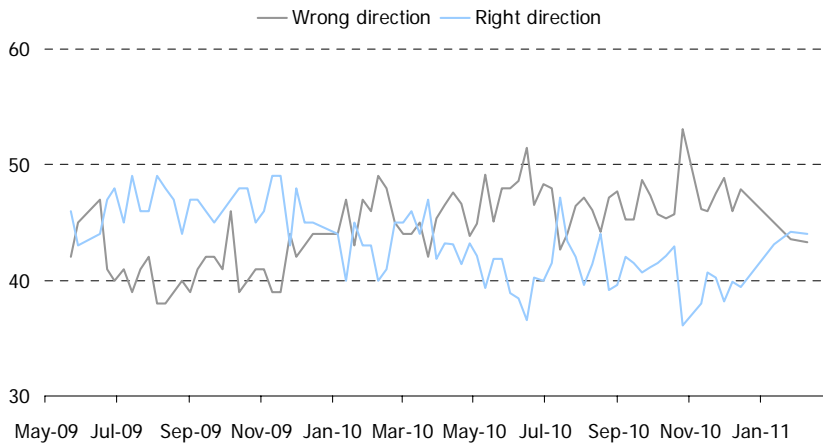


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BASE: Canadians; most recent data point February 4-9, 2011 (n=half sample)

Direction of government

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



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BASE: Canadians; most recent data point February 4-9, 2011 (n=half sample)

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 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 February 4-9, 2011¹. In total, a random sample of 1,652 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey (including a sub-sample of 1,405 decided voters). The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-2.4 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.

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