

AMERICAN HEALTH CARE: NO WAY; U.S TWO-PARTY SYSTEM: MAYBE; U.S. PRESIDENT: YES!

CANADIAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE CONTINUES TO FLAT LINE

[Ottawa – August 13, 2009] – Although the political landscape in Canada looks significantly different from the election last year, it has more or less flat lined since the spring.

“If our vote intention tracking chart was a national cardiogram, it might be time to pull the plug,” said EKOS President Frank Graves. “The only really notable change is that the NDP are up slightly from recent weeks, which may reflect the discussion about a possible name change.”

There are some other revealing findings from this poll that may signal future prospects for the different parties.

“Surprisingly, there is considerable receptivity to a proposal to radically reform the parliamentary system into a two-party system akin to the American system,” said Graves. “This finding is reflective of several factors: growing fatigue with the gridlocked and fractious multi-party system, declining U.S. antipathy, and loose fealty to the current system of parliamentary democracy.”

“There are some interesting splits on this issue along party lines,” said Graves. “Liberal supporters are not very receptive to the idea – perhaps because they’ve enjoyed years of hegemony based on pluralities – whereas Conservative supporters *are* receptive to the idea – perhaps due to their frustration at being unable to secure a majority mandate. Bloc supporters are actually the most in favour of this change, which is somewhat ironic given that it is unlikely that the BQ would be one of the parties in a two-party system.”

HIGHLIGHTS

- **National federal vote intention:**
 - ☐ **32.7% CPC**
 - ☐ **31.0% LPC**
 - ☐ **16.5% NDP**
 - ☐ **10.1% Green**
 - ☐ **9.7% BQ**
- **Job approval ratings:**
 - ☐ **73% Barack Obama**
 - ☐ **36% Stephen Harper**
 - ☐ **34% Jack Layton**
 - ☐ **29% Michael Ignatieff**
- **Support for a two-party system in Canada:**
 - ☐ **44% yes**
 - ☐ **56% no**
- **Better health care:**
 - ☐ **87% Canada**
 - ☐ **7% the United States**
 - ☐ **6% do not know/no response**

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

“There is an alarming trend line emerging for Michael Ignatieff on the job approval front,” notes Graves. “When we first asked the question in January his scores amounted to a net positive of over 20 points; he now sits at a net negative of about nine points. Essentially, his negatives have doubled over the past 6 months.” Indeed, with an approval rating of just 29%, Ignatieff now trails both Stephen Harper (36% approve) and Jack Layton (34% approve). While Harper still has the highest negatives, his positive ratings have improved modestly over the same timeframe, whereas Ignatieff’s have fallen precipitously.

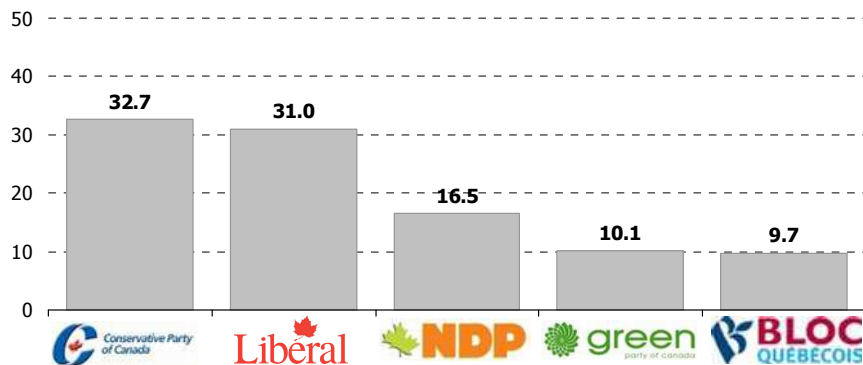
The poll also found, however, that none of the Canadian leaders even comes close to the approval ratings given to U.S. President Obama. “Disapproval of 11 per cent is insignificant, and approval of 73 per cent more than eclipses the other three,” said Graves. “It is difficult to imagine another period in Canadian history when the public looked so warmly on the American presidency, while summoning such tepid responses to their own leaders.”

While Canadians may envy the U.S. leadership, almost no one covets the American health care system. “Whatever pitfalls of Canada’s system, it is seen as dramatically better in serving the needs of its overall citizenry,” said Graves.

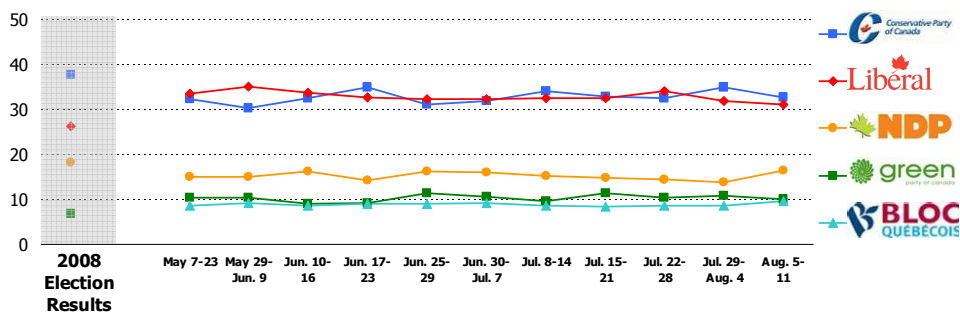
Top Line Results:

Federal vote intention

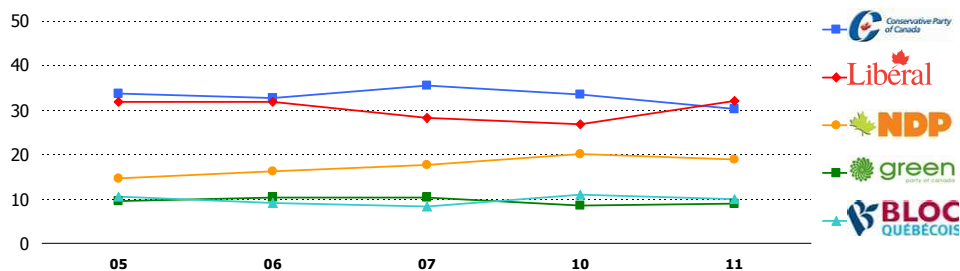
Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?



Weekly tracking of federal vote intention



Weekday tracking of federal vote intention (August 5-11)



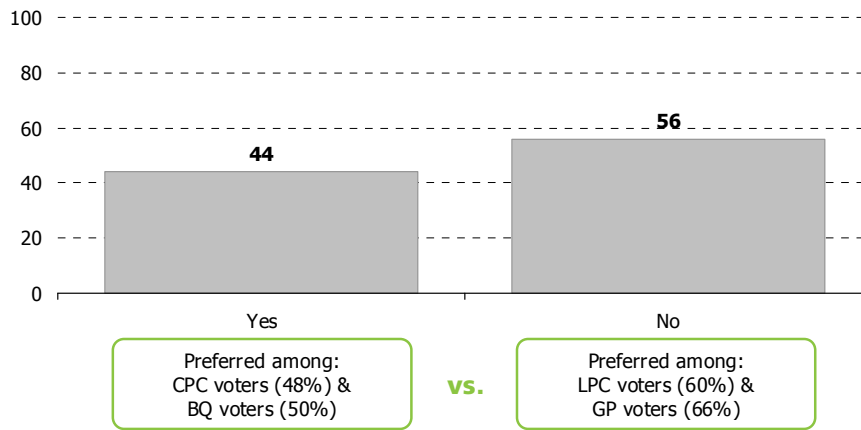
Note: The data on federal vote intention are based on decided voters only. Our survey also finds that 15.4% of Canadians say they are undecided.

Copyright 2009. No reproduction without permission

BASE: Decided voters; most recent data points Aug. 5-11 (n=2511)

Preference for a Two-Party System?

Q. Given the current political gridlock in Canada and the recent inability of any party to secure a majority government, do you think Canadians would be better served by a two-party system, similar to the United States?

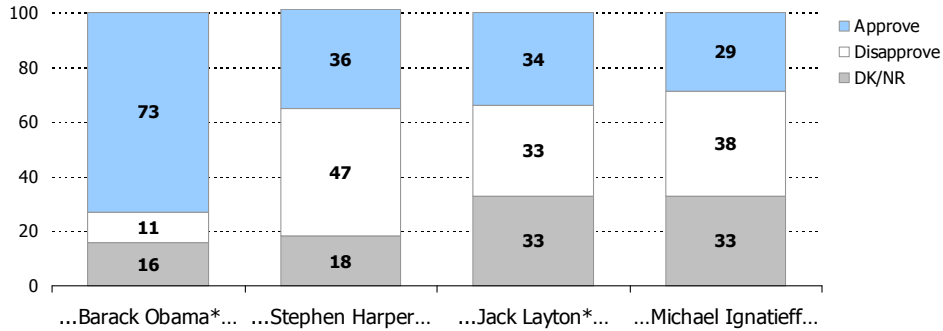


Copyright 2009. No reproduction without permission

BASE: Canadians; Aug. 5-11 (n=2985)

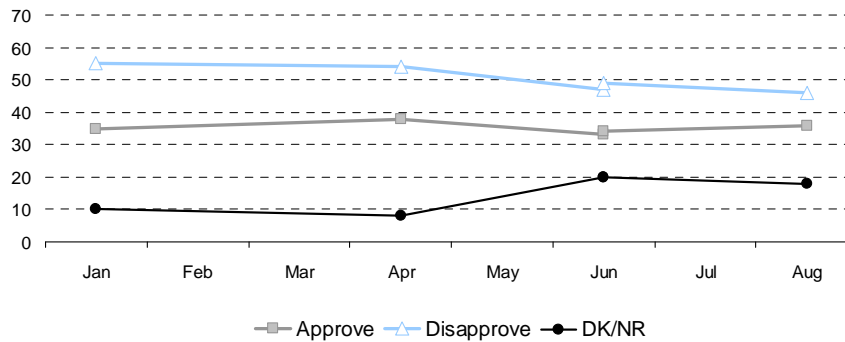
Job approval ratings

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the way ... is handling his job?

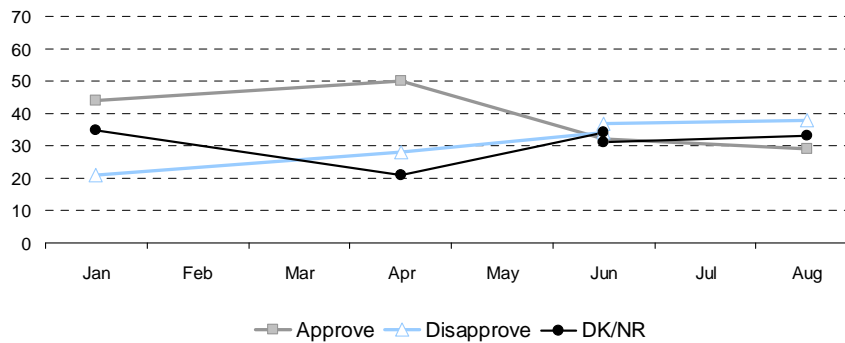


*Field dates are split for these samples: Obama (Aug. 7, 10 & 11; n=1666) and Layton (Aug. 5 & 6; n=1319)

Tracking job approval ratings for Stephen Harper

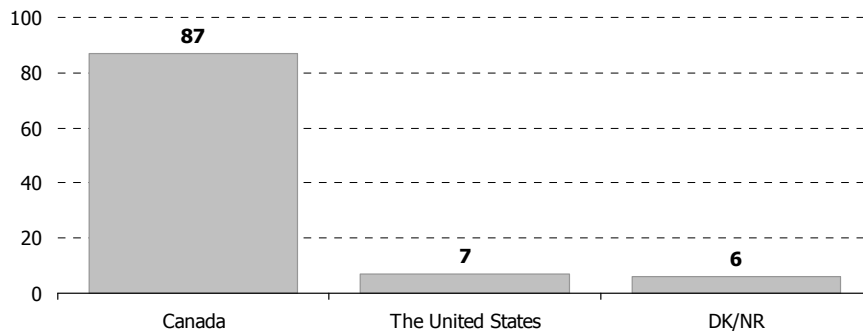


Tracking job approval ratings for Michael Ignatieff



Better Health Care System

Q. Based on the overall needs of its citizens, which country do you think has the better system of health care: Canada or the United States?



Copyright 2009. No reproduction without permission

BASE: Canadians; Aug. 5-11 (n=2985)

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 5-11, 2009.¹ In total, a random sample of 2,985 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey (including a sub-sample of 2,511 decided voters). The margin of error associated with total sample is +/- 1.8 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.