



# Conservative Lead Narrows as Liberals Bounce Back

*Grit and NDP supporters are open to establishing a formal agreement to form a coalition government, if the opportunity arises.*

[TORONTO – Dec. 14, 2009] – The governing Conservative Party is still leading in Canada, but the Liberal Party has gained support, according to the Canadian Political Pulse, conducted by Angus Reid Public Opinion in partnership with the *Toronto Star*.

The online survey of a representative national sample of 1,000 adults also shows that some Liberal and New Democratic Party (NDP) voters express varying levels of support to three scenarios geared at creating a “unite the left” movement in Canada.

## Voting Intention

Across the country, 36 per cent of decided voters (-2 since mid-November) would cast a ballot for the Conservative candidate in their riding if a new federal election took place today.

The Liberals have clearly made gains and now stand at 29 per cent (+6), above the proportion of the vote that the party received in the October 2008 federal election.

## KEY FINDINGS

- **Voting Intention: Con. 36%, Lib. 29%, NDP 16%, BQ 11%, Grn. 6%**
- **Approval Rating: Harper 32%, Layton 29%, Ignatieff 15%,**
- **Momentum: Layton -6, Harper -24, Ignatieff -33**
- **42% would support a formal agreement between the Liberals and NDP to share power in a coalition government**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

*From December 9 to December 10, 2009, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among 1,000 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:

Jodi Shanoff, Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, [jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com](mailto:jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com)

The New Democratic Party (NDP) is third with 16 per cent (-1), followed by the Bloc Québécois with 11 per cent (=), and the Green Party with six per cent (-4).

### **Regional Breakdowns**

In a trend that was consistent throughout the year, a majority of decided voters in Alberta (55%) and Manitoba and Saskatchewan (54%) voice support for the Tories. In British Columbia, the governing party remains on top (42%), with the NDP (26%) barely ahead of the Liberals (23%).

In Ontario, 41 per cent of decided voters would vote for the Conservatives, but the Liberals (34%) have narrowed the gap from 14 points in mid-November to seven points this time around. In Quebec, the Bloc is steady at the top (42%) but the Liberals (25%) are now leading the Tories (17%).

### **Approval**

Stephen Harper's approval rating is 32 per cent (-2), while NDP leader Jack Layton gained five points since mid-November and is at 29 per cent. Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff gained three points (15%), but remains well behind his two main rivals.

### **Momentum**

Ignatieff's momentum score, while better than last month's, is still the worst of all three party leaders at -33 (7% of Canadians report an improvement in their opinion of the Liberal leader over the past month, while 40% say their views have worsened). Layton improved from -10 in mid-November to -6 this month. Harper had the toughest month, going from -9 to -24.

### **The Economy**

Almost half of Canadians (49%, -4) are satisfied with the reaction of the federal government to the economic crisis, while 44 per cent (+6) are dissatisfied. Quebec is the only region where a majority of respondents (57%) disapprove of the way the federal government has dealt with the crisis.

Two-in-five Canadians (43%) either completely or moderately trust Harper to do the right thing to help the economy recover, while 27 per cent feel the same way about Ignatieff. The Liberal leader gained six points on this particular indicator. Mark Carney, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, is trusted by 46 per cent of Canadians, although 28 per cent are undecided.

### **"Unite the Left"**

Six years ago, Canada's main right-leaning parties—the Canadian Alliance and the Progressive Conservatives—achieved a full merger and became the Conservative Party. This month, respondents

---

#### **CONTACT:**

Jodi Shanoff, Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, [jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com](mailto:jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com)

were provided with three options that deal with the possibility of the Liberals and the NDP working together.

One third of Canadians (33%) support a full merger between the Liberals and the NDP. This idea is backed by 50 per cent of Liberal voters and 50 per cent of NDP supporters.

A slightly larger proportion of Canadians (35%) would welcome an agreement between the Liberals and NDP to only run candidates from one of the two parties in ridings where vote splitting occurs. This idea is supported by 55 per cent of Liberal voters and 51 per cent of NDP supporters.

Still, the most popular plan is a formal agreement between the two parties to share power in a coalition government, if the opportunity arises. Two-in-five Canadians (42%) support this notion, including 64 per cent of Liberal voters and 70 per cent of NDP supporters.

The formal agreement towards a coalition government is also popular with Bloc Québécois voters (54%) but is rejected by a majority of Green voters (51%) and Conservative voters (76%).

## Analysis

This edition of the Canadian Political Pulse shows a bounce in Liberal support, suggesting that the party may have hit rock bottom last month. The Conservatives remain well ahead nationally, but their double-digit lead in Ontario has dwindled. The NDP and the Bloc are steady, and the Greens have lost a few points.

Stephen Harper closes the year with a higher approval rating than his main rival, Michael Ignatieff, but Jack Layton was the biggest winner on momentum this time around.

The three proposals to establish a “unite the left” movement are attractive to some Grit and NDP voters, but it is the idea of formal agreement towards a coalition that holds the highest level of support.

---

## CONTACT:

Jodi Shanoff, Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, [jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com](mailto:jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com)

### Canadian Political Pulse - TREND

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

	Dec. 9-10	Nov. 14-16	2008 Election
Conservative Party	36%	38%	37.6%
Liberal Party	29%	23%	26.2%
New Democratic Party	16%	17%	18.2%
Bloc Québécois	11%	11%	10.0%
Green Party	6%	10%	6.8%
Other party	1%	1%	1.2%

### Canadian Political Pulse - REGIONS

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	36%	42%	55%	54%	41%	17%	35%
Liberal Party	29%	23%	25%	17%	34%	25%	36%
New Democratic Party	16%	26%	13%	22%	17%	8%	27%
Bloc Québécois	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	42%	0%
Green Party	6%	8%	7%	7%	7%	5%	2%
Other party	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%

#### CONTACT:

Jodi Shanoff, Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, [jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com](mailto:jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com)

### Canadian Political Pulse - APPROVAL

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following people? *(Change since Nov. 14-16)*

	Approve	Disapprove	Not sure
<b>Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper</b>	32% (-2)	49% (+5)	18% (-4)
<b>Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff</b>	15% (+3)	53% (-3)	31% (-1)
<b>New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton</b>	29% (+5)	36% (-4)	35% (-1)

### Canadian Political Pulse - MOMENTUM

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? *(Change since Nov. 14-16)*

	Improved	Stayed the same	Worsened	Not sure
<b>Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper</b>	11% (-4)	49% (-5)	35% (+11)	6% (-1)
<b>Liberal Party and Official Opposition leader Michael Ignatieff</b>	7% (+3)	44% (+3)	40% (-5)	10% (=)
<b>New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton</b>	7% (=)	71% (+6)	13% (-4)	9% (-2)

#### CONTACT:

Jodi Shanoff, Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, [jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com](mailto:jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com)

### Canadian Political Pulse - ISSUES

Which party best represents the needs of...?

	People like you	The middle class	Your province	Special interests
Conservative Party	28%	27%	26%	20%
Liberal Party	18%	24%	21%	15%
New Democratic Party	17%	17%	12%	21%
Bloc Québécois	8%	6%	13%	9%
Green Party	5%	3%	2%	10%
None of them	24%	23%	25%	24%

### Canadian Political Pulse - ECONOMY

How satisfied are you with the reaction of the federal government to the economic crisis?

Region							
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Very satisfied	11%	14%	15%	22%	10%	4%	14%
Moderately satisfied	38%	36%	44%	44%	41%	30%	48%
Moderately dissatisfied	23%	26%	22%	19%	21%	28%	19%
Very dissatisfied	21%	18%	13%	4%	24%	29%	12%
Not sure	6%	6%	6%	10%	4%	8%	8%

#### CONTACT:

Jodi Shanoff, Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, [jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com](mailto:jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com)

### Canadian Political Pulse - TRUST

How much do you trust each of the following people to do the right thing to help the economy recover?

	Stephen Harper, Prime Minister	Michael Ignatieff, Federal Leader of the Opposition	Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of Canada
Completely trust	11%	3%	10%
Moderately trust	32%	24%	36%
Moderately distrust	20%	27%	18%
Completely distrust	28%	31%	9%
Not sure	9%	14%	28%

### Canadian Political Pulse - UNITE THE LEFT

Some people have suggested that the federal Liberal Party and the federal New Democratic Party (NDP) should work together. Would you support or oppose each of the following ideas? -  
*A full merger between the Liberals and the NDP*

Party Support						
	Total	Con.	Lib.	NDP	BQ	Grn.
Support	33%	16%	50%	50%	45%	32%
Oppose	53%	76%	44%	44%	50%	53%
Not sure	14%	8%	6%	6%	6%	14%

**CONTACT:**

Jodi Shanoff, Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, [jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com](mailto:jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com)

### Canadian Political Pulse - UNITE THE LEFT

Some people have suggested that the federal Liberal Party and the federal New Democratic Party (NDP) should work together. Would you support or oppose each of the following ideas? -  
*An agreement between the two parties to only run candidates from one of the two parties in ridings where vote splitting occurs*

Party Support						
	Total	Con.	Lib.	NDP	BQ	Grn.
<b>Support</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>11%</b>

### Canadian Political Pulse - UNITE THE LEFT

Some people have suggested that the federal Liberal Party and the federal New Democratic Party (NDP) should work together. Would you support or oppose each of the following ideas? -  
*A formal agreement between the two parties to share power in a coalition government, if the opportunity arises*

Party Support						
	Total	Con.	Lib.	NDP	BQ	Grn.
<b>Support</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>14%</b>

**CONTACT:**

Jodi Shanoff, Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, [jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com](mailto:jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com)



*Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical 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 Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995*

*Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. 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 Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum ([www.angusreidforum.com](http://www.angusreidforum.com)), Springboard America ([www.springboardamerica.com](http://www.springboardamerica.com)) and Springboard UK ([www.springboarduk.com](http://www.springboarduk.com)) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.*

*Angus Reid, 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://bit.ly/4zxf1S>

*Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight 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.*

*More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://bit.ly/3z0u1l>*

- 30 -

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

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:  
<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>**

---

**CONTACT:**

Jodi Shanoff, Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, [jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com](mailto:jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com)