



FEDERAL ELECTION 2006 : PRE-DEBATE POLL

- *The Liberal lead falls by 6 points*
- *32% of Canadians expect Paul Martin to win the debates*
- *Expectations are high for Paul Martin*
- *Promises, promises, 76% of Canadians will not believe politicians' promises during the debate*

UNDER EMBARGO
RELEASE DAY AND TIME : DECEMBER 16, 6:00 EST

DETAILED REPORT

Methodology

This Leger Marketing survey was conducted with **2,013** adult Canadians between December 9 and December 13, 2005. In total, **150** interviews were conducted in Atlantic Canada, **504** in Quebec, **603** in Ontario, **151** in the Prairie provinces, **300** in Alberta and **305** in BC. A sample of this size yields a maximum margin of error of $\pm 2.2\%$, 19 times out of 20. The data presented here were weighted by age, gender, region and language according to the latest Statistics Canada information.

Founded in 1986, Leger Marketing is the largest independent full-service research firm in Canada, with more than 650 employees spread over its Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Quebec City, New York City and Philadelphia offices. Leger conducts quantitative and qualitative research on behalf of an extensive array of public and private sector clients on a local, national and global level. Leger is the Canadian representative of the Gallup International Association.

1. A Day Before the Debate, the Gap Between the Grits and the Conservatives is Tightening

A day before the debate, the gap between the LPC and the CP is lessening, going from a 12-point lead to 6 today. The Liberal Party of Canada is still first with 35% support, the Conservative Party is second with 29%, the NDP is third with 17% and the Green Party is last with 6%.






It is in Western Canada that the Liberal Party has lost some of its feathers in the last week, i.e., 13 points in the Prairies falling from 39% to 26% and 6 points in British Columbia, falling from 32% to 26% to the advantage of the CP gaining 6 points in the Prairies and 4 in British Columbia.

Moreover, while the Liberals were taking advantage of a 19-point lead on the Conservatives in Ontario, the gap between the two parties is now 11 points (42% for the LPC and 31% for CP).

However, it is dead calm in Quebec where the Bloc continues to dominate with 50% of support as opposed to 30% for the LPC.

Table 1 – FEDERAL VOTING INTENTIONS

Question: If federal elections were held today, for which of the following political parties would you be most likely to vote for? Would it be for...? (If the respondent did not have an opinion the following question was asked): Even if you have not yet made up your mind, which political party would you be most likely to vote for?






	Before Distribution n=2013	After Distribution n=1725	AP n=127	QC n=405	ONT N=655	PR n=119	AB n=182	BC n=237
	30%	35%	54%	30%	42%	26%	27%	26%
	25%	29%	26%	9%	31%	38%	51%	38%
	15%	17%	16%	10%	18%	29%	11%	28%
	10%	12%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	5%	6%	3%	0%	8%	4%	9%	7%
Other	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%
Abstain/Spoil ballot	6%							
Don't know	6%							
Refusal	2%							

- Distribution of undecided is proportional.

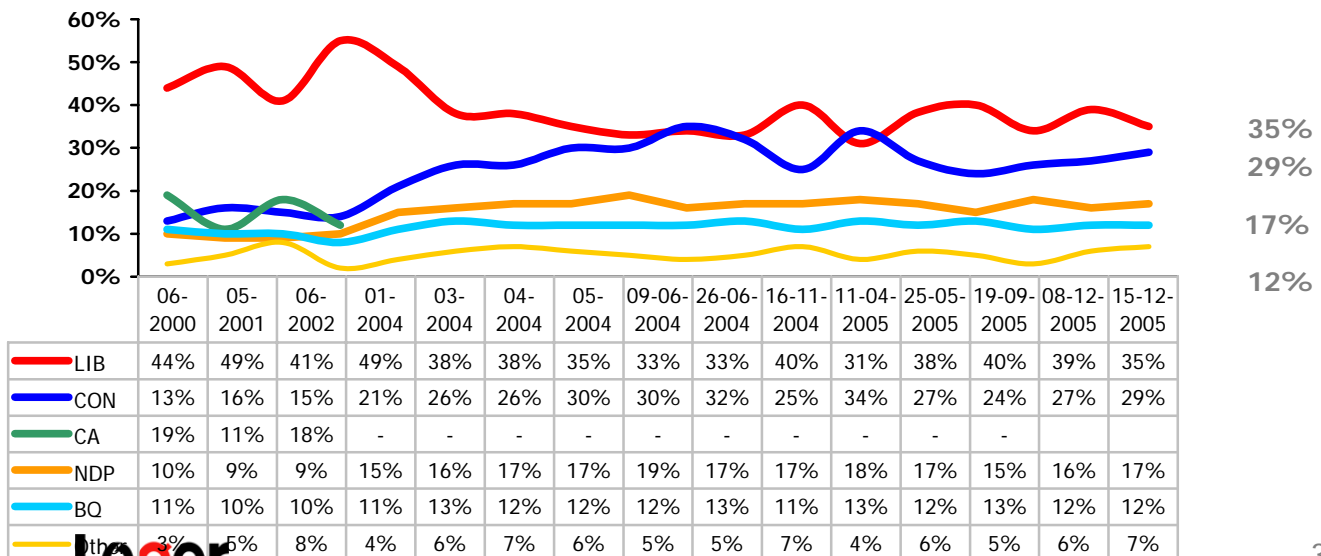
We are entering the second half of the campaign with the leaders debate. Our survey clearly shows the importance of the second round that party leaders are heading into. According to Leger Marketing President and CEO, Jean-Marc Léger this poll suggests that:

"This is bad news for Paul Martin. Canadians believe that he is more intelligent, expresses himself more clearly, has a nicer personality than Stephen Harper and that he will win the debates. Unfortunately, the past has shown that often the one who is most underestimated and from whom we expect the least wins the debate. What is important is not to win, but to do better than expected. In that game, Stephen Harper is at an advantage."

Table 2 – FEDERAL VOTING INTENTIONS (Decided Voters)

	Election 2004	Early Campaign Poll December 8	Pre debate Poll December 14	Change
 Liberal	37%	39%	35%	- 4%
	30%	27%	29%	+ 2%
	16%	16%	17%	+ 1%
	12%	12%	12%	-
 Green Party Of C. Someday Is Now	4%	5%	6%	+ 1%
Other	1%	1%	1%	+ 1%

**Graph 1: Evolution of Voting Intentions in Canada
June 2000 - December 15 2005**



2. 75% of Canadians are Interested in the Leaders Debate

Three-quarters of Canadians (75%) intend to watch the televised Leaders Debates on December 15 and 16 (12% will watch in French, 53% in English and 10% both), compared to 22% who will not watch.

Ontarians show more interest with 79% of them claiming they will watch the debate and 18% who say they will not. Inversely, respondents from Quebec are proportionately more likely not to show any interest: 66% will watch and 31% will not.

On the other hand, Bloc supporters are significantly less numerous compared to supporters of other parties to want to watch the debates. In fact, 70% will watch them compared to 80% of Liberals, 80% of Conservatives and 83% of NDP supporters.

Table 2 – INTEREST LEVEL TOWARD THE LEADERS DEBATES

Question : *Will you watch the...?*

n=2013	Total population	LPC	CP	NDP	BQ
Total that will watch	75%	80%	80%	83%	70%
...first leaders debate in French on December 15	12%	11%	3%	5%	56%
...second leaders debate in English on December 16	53%	57%	67%	67%	1%
Both	10%	12%	10%	10%	13%
None	22%	17%	16%	15%	28%
Don't know	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%

Profile of Canadians who will watch the debates	%
Men	78%
Women	72%
18-24 years old	71%
25-34 years old	71%
35-44 years old	76%
45-54 years old	73%
55-64 years old	78%
65 years old or more	81%
Francophones	64%
Anglophones	76%
Allophones	85%
Atlantic Provinces	77%
Quebec	66%
Ontario	79%
Prairies	72%
Alberta	79%
British Columbia	76%

3. A Third of Canadians Believe that Paul Martin Will Win the Debates

32% of Canadians expect Paul Martin to win the Leaders Debates compared to only 17% for Stephen Harper, 13% for Gilles Duceppe and 12% for Jack Layton. This opinion is shared among respondents throughout the country, with the exception of Quebec where 41% believe Gilles Duceppe will win and Alberta where a greater proportion of respondents (30%) think it will be Stephen Harper. However, we note that 23% of the population is unable to choose among the leaders.

Thus, 61% of the Liberals are confident that Paul Martin will be the winner, compared to 49% of Conservatives who believe it will be Harper, 37% of NDP supporters say Jack Layton and 62% of Bloc supporters say Duceppe.

Table 3 – EXPECTATIONS TOWARD THE LEADERS DEBATES

Question: In your opinion, which of the following leaders will win these debates, is it...?

(n=2013)	Total	Region						Vote Intent				
		AP	QC	ON	PR	AB	BC	LPC	CP	BQ	NDP	GP
...Paul Martin	32%	46%	28%	35%	32%	28%	26%	61%	16%	16%	23%	32%
...Stephen Harper	17%	21%	6%	19%	15%	30%	20%	4%	49%	5%	7%	17%
...Gilles Duceppe	13%	3%	41%	5%	5%	3%	5%	8%	5%	62%	12%	12%
...Jack Layton	12%	9%	5%	16%	9%	10%	18%	9%	8%	4%	37%	13%
None	3%	6%	1%	3%	4%	4%	5%	3%	3%	1%	2%	7%
Don't know/Refusal	23%	15%	19%	21%	34%	25%	26%	15%	21%	12%	18%	19%

4. The Vote is Volatile as 36% of Canadians could change their mind following the debates

More than one-third of the electorate (36%) believe that the debates could have an impact on the party they will vote for on election day, this compared to 58% whose mind is made up. 73% of Bloc supporters, 64% of the Liberals and 66% of Quebeckers say their vote is firm and will not change.

Table 4 – VOLATILITY OF THE VOTE

Question: Could these debates make you change your mind or is your vote intent firm?

(n=2013)	Total	Region						Vote Intent				
		AP	QC	ON	PR	AB	BC	LPC	CP	BQ	NDP	GP
Could change	36%	44%	30%	37%	40%	35%	38%	33%	34%	24%	42%	35%
Firm vote	58%	48%	66%	56%	53%	62%	56%	64%	63%	73%	54%	56%
Don't know/Refusal	6%	8%	4%	7%	7%	3%	6%	4%	3%	3%	3%	9%

5. Three-Quarters of Canadians do not Believe in Electoral Promises

76% of Canadians do not believe in electoral promises against 17% who do. This opinion is shared throughout the country.

On the other hand, Liberal Party supporters are proportionately more likely (24%) than supporters from the others parties to trust that electoral promises will be kept. Conversely, Bloc supporters are more sceptical with 84% of them saying they do not trust that politicians will keep their promises.

Table 5 – CONFIDENCE IN ELECTORAL PROMISES

Question: *Party leaders will make promises during these debates, do you believe they will keep their promises once elected or not ?*

(n=2013)	Total	Region						Vote Intent				
		PA	OC	ON	PR	AB	BC	LPC	CP	BQ	NDP	GP
Yes	17%	22%	16%	15%	22%	22%	16%	24%	19%	11%	16%	4%
No	76%	73%	78%	78%	76%	71%	75%	68%	74%	84%	80%	95%
Don't know/Refusal	7%	5%	6%	7%	3%	8%	9%	9%	7%	5%	4%	1%

6. Paul Martin Wins on 2 out of 4 Aspects

When questioned on different aspects, such as personality, honesty, intelligence and how they express themselves, Paul Martin is the leader who, according to 27% of Canadians, is the most intelligent of the four and who expresses himself the most clearly (25%). However, Jack Layton wins on two important aspects since 27% of Canadians think that Jack Layton has the nicest personality and 22% that he is the most honest.

Table 6 – POPULARITY MEASURE OF LEADERS
Question: *In your opinion, which of the four leaders... ?*

(n=2013)	Total	Region						Vote Intent				
		AP	QC	ON	PR	AB	BC	LPC	CP	BQ	NDP	GP
...expresses himself more clearly												
Paul Martin	25%	32%	18%	30%	26%	18%	24%	51%	11%	5%	14%	24%
Stephen Harper	20%	21%	7%	21%	26%	35%	28%	11%	50%	5%	10%	12%
Jack Layton	20%	20%	7%	25%	19%	19%	26%	18%	15%	3%	50%	33%
Gilles Duceppe	17%	6%	57%	5%	6%	6%	4%	9%	8%	81%	13%	12%
None	4%	2%	2%	5%	4%	6%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	7%
Don't know/Refuse	14%	18%	9%	15%	19%	16%	16%	9%	13%	5%	12%	12%
...is the most intelligent												
Paul Martin	27%	38%	22%	31%	24%	25%	25%	55%	14%	12%	15%	28%
Stephen Harper	16%	16%	4%	18%	19%	29%	20%	5%	46%	2%	8%	10%
Jack Layton	14%	11%	10%	16%	12%	13%	15%	9%	8%	8%	41%	17%
Gilles Duceppe	11%	5%	34%	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	56%	9%	13%
None	8%	4%	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%	5%	5%	9%	4%	14%
Don't know/Refuse	24%	27%	21%	24%	33%	22%	27%	20%	24%	14%	23%	18%
...is the most honest												
Paul Martin	16%	24%	13%	19%	12%	13%	13%	39%	4%	3%	7%	12%
Stephen Harper	18%	12%	7%	19%	21%	33%	27%	5%	56%	3%	5%	8%
Jack Layton	22%	27%	16%	24%	26%	18%	20%	18%	11%	12%	59%	32%
Gilles Duceppe	13%	4%	39%	4%	6%	7%	4%	7%	4%	68%	7%	16%
None	14%	12%	12%	16%	17%	12%	14%	13%	11%	9%	9%	14%
Don't know/Refuse	17%	21%	12%	18%	18%	17%	21%	17%	14%	6%	13%	18%
...has the nicest personality												
Paul Martin	24%	30%	17%	27%	26%	20%	22%	48%	11%	8%	13%	21%
Stephen Harper	16%	14%	13%	15%	16%	25%	17%	7%	39%	11%	5%	14%
Jack Layton	27%	33%	22%	29%	21%	25%	33%	23%	22%	17%	56%	40%
Gilles Duceppe	12%	3%	36%	5%	5%	5%	3%	5%	7%	56%	9%	7%
None	5%	1%	3%	6%	5%	6%	4%	4%	4%	1%	4%	6%
Don't know/Refuse	17%	19%	9%	18%	27%	18%	21%	13%	17%	6%	13%	11%

7. More than Half of Canadians are Favourable to a Free Vote on Gay Marriage

55% are favourable to a free vote on gay marriage in the House of Commons as opposed to 36% who are against. This opinion is shared by a majority of Canadians regardless of region. However, Bloc supporters (66%) as well as Conservatives (61%) are proportionately more likely to support a free vote than other parties.

Table 7 – OPINION ON FREE VOTE ON GAY MARRIAGE

Question: *In your opinion, should Parliament have a free vote on gay marriage or not?*

(n=2013)	Total	Vote Intent				
		LPC	CP	BQ	NDP	GP
Yes	55%	54%	61%	66%	46%	53%
No	36%	39%	30%	28%	44%	39%
Don't know/Refusal	9%	8%	9%	6%	9%	9%

8. 53% of Canadians Prefer Income Tax Cuts to Cutting the GST

A majority of Canadians prefer the Liberal Party's option to that of the Conservative Party's. Thus, 53% would choose income tax cuts as opposed to 38% who choose cutting the GST by 2%. Only Quebecers are somewhat ambivalent with 41% favouring cutting the GST as opposed to 49% for income tax cuts.

Moreover, a strong majority of Liberals (76%) choose the option proposed by their party, whereas the Conservative option garners 66% of support among its electorate.

Table 8 – OPINION ON LOWERING THE GST

Question: *The Conservatives pledge to cut the GST (good and services tax) by two percentage points if they are elected, while the Liberals pledge to cut down income tax. Personally, which of these 2 options do you prefer?*

(n=2013)	Total	Vote Intent				
		LPC	CP	BQ	NDP	GP
Cut the GST by 2%	38%	18%	66%	50%	33%	36%
Cut income tax down	53%	76%	27%	44%	58%	52%
Don't know/Refuse	9%	6%	7%	6%	9%	11%

9. Canadians Divided on Options Presented to Families with Young Children

Though 47% of Canadians prefer the Liberal Party's promise to increase funding for a national daycare program, 41% would choose the Conservative Party's option of paying \$1,200 a year for each child under the age of six.

However, there are regional differences: 51% of Ontarians and 56% of citizens from the Atlantic provinces would choose the Liberal promise while 47% of Quebecers and 54% of Albertans would choose the Conservative promise.

Table 9 – OPINION ON YOUNG FAMILY POLICY

Question: *The Conservative Party pledges to pay parents \$1200 a year for each child under the age of six if they are elected, while the Liberal Party plans to expand funding to its national daycare program. Personally, which of these 2 options do you support?*

(n=2013)	Total	Region						Vote Intent				
		AP	QC	ON	PR	AB	BC	LPC	CP	BQ	NDP	GP
\$1,200 a year for each child under 6	41%	31%	47%	35%	42%	54%	40%	23%	74%	53%	28%	31%
Expand funding for national daycare program	47%	56%	45%	51%	38%	33%	47%	67%	16%	41%	61%	53%
Don't know/Refuse	13%	12%	8%	13%	20%	13%	12%	11%	10%	5%	11%	17%

10. 6 Canadians Out of 10 Don't Believe that Banning Handguns Will Reduce Violent Crime

59% of Canadians consider that the Liberal Party's promise to ban handguns is ineffective since it will not reduce violent crime. Conversely, 37% are of the opinion that such a law would in fact contribute to making communities safer. Quebecers are proportionately more likely to view this policy in a good light (42%). However, though 50% of Liberals are favourable, 44% are not.

Table 10 – OPINION ON BANNING HANDGUNS

Question. *If re-elected, the Liberals plan to ban handguns as part of a plan to make communities safer? Do you believe such a policy would reduce violent crime or not?*

(n=2013)	Total	Region						Vote Intent				
		AP	QC	ON	PR	AB	BC	LPC	CP	BQ	NDP	GP
Yes	37%	44%	42%	38%	23%	21%	37%	50%	19%	37%	46%	35%
No	59%	49%	55%	57%	72%	77%	59%	44%	79%	61%	49%	64%
Don't know/Refuse	4%	7%	2%	4%	5%	2%	4%	6%	3%	2%	5%	2%

Questionnaire

FEDCA. If FEDERAL elections were held today, for which of the following political parties would you be most likely to vote for, would it be for ...?

READ - ONE MENTION POSSIBLE

Rotation => 5		
...Paul Martin's Liberal Party	01	=> +2
...Gilles Duceppe's Bloc Québécois	02	=> +2
...Stephen Harper's Conservative Party.....	03	=> +2
...Jack Layton's NDP	04	=> +2
...Jim Harris' Green Party	05	=> +2
Other party.....	96	=> +2
Would not vote/would spoil ballot	97	=> +2
Don't know	98	
Refusal.....	99	=> +2

FEDCR. Even if you have not yet made up your mind, which political party would you be most likely to vote for? Would it be for...

READ - ONE MENTION POSSIBLE

Rotation => 5		
...Paul Martin's Liberal Party	01	
...Gilles Duceppe's Bloc Québécois(do not read outside Quebec).....	02	
...Stephen Harper's Conservative Party.....	03	
...Jack Layton's NDP	04	
...Jim Harris' Green Party	05	
Other party.....	96	
Would not vote/would spoil ballot	97	
Don't know	98	
Refusal.....	99	

Q2. In your opinion, should Parliament have a free vote on gay marriage or not?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	8
Refusal.....	9

Q3. The Conservatives pledge to cut the GST (good and services tax) by two percentage points if they are elected, while the Liberals pledge to cut down income tax. Personally, which of these 2 options do you prefer?

Cut the GST by 2 percentage points.....	1
Cut down income tax.....	2
Don't know	8
Refusal.....	9

Q4. The Conservative Party pledges to pay parents \$1200 a year for each child under the age of six if they are elected, while the Liberal Party plans to expand

funding to its national daycare program. Personally, which of these 2 options do you support?

\$1200 a year for each child under 6	1
Expand funding to national daycare program	2
Don't know	8
Refusal.....	9

Q5. If reelected, the Liberals plan to ban handguns as part of a plan to make communities safer? Do you believe such a policy would reduce violent crime or not?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	8
Refusal.....	9

Q6. Will you watch...

READ FIRST 2 CHOICES ONLY

Rotation => 2

...the first leaders debate in French on December 15.....	1
...the second leaders debate in English on December 16.....	2
Both.....	3
None	7
Don't know	8
Refusal.....	9

Q7. In your opinion, which of the following leaders will win these debates, is it...

READ FIRST 4 CHOICES ONLY

Rotation => 4

...Paul Martin	1
...Stephen Harper	2
...Jack Layton	3
...Gilles Duceppe	4
None	7
Don't know	8
Refusal.....	9

Q8. Could these debates make you change your mind or is your vote intent firm?

Could change.....	1
Vote intent firm.....	2
Don't know	8
Refusal.....	9

Q9. Party leaders will make promises during these debates, do you believe they will keep their promises once elected or not?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	8
Refusal.....	9

Rotation => Q10D

Q10a. In your opinion, which of the four leaders...
...has the nicest personality? (READ IF NECESSARY)

Rotation => 4

...Paul Martin	1
...Stephen Harper	2
...Jack Layton	3
...Gilles Duceppe	4
None	7
Don't know	8
Refusal.....	9

Q10b. In your opinion, which of the four leaders...
...expresses himself more clearly? (READ IF NECESSARY)

Rotation => 4

...Paul Martin	1
...Stephen Harper	2
...Jack Layton	3
...Gilles Duceppe	4
None	7
Don't know	8
Refusal.....	9

Q10c. In your opinion, which of the four leaders...
...is the most intelligent ? (READ IF NECESSARY)

Rotation => 4

...Paul Martin	1
...Stephen Harper	2
...Jack Layton	3
...Gilles Duceppe	4
None	7
Don't know	8
Refusal.....	9

Q10d. In your opinion, which of the four leaders...
...is the most honest ? (READ IF NECESSARY)

Rotation => 4

...Paul Martin	1
...Stephen Harper	2
...Jack Layton	3
...Gilles Duceppe	4
None	7
Don't know	8
Refusal.....	9

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA

For classification purposes, I now need to ask you a few additional questions.

AGE. Can you tell me in which age group you are, is it between...?

READ LIST

...18-24 years of age	01
...25-34 years of age	02
...35-44 years of age	03
...45-54 years of age	04
...55-64 years of age	05
...65-74 years of age	06
...or 75 years of age or older	07
Refusal	99

LANGU. What is the language you first learned at home in your childhood and that you still understand?

French	1
English	2
Other	3
French and English	7
French and other	4
English and other	5
Other and other	6
Dnk/Refuse	9

GENDER. Record gender

Male	1
Female	2