



FEDERAL ELECTION 2006 : PRE-DEBATE POLL

- *A 2 point Conservative edge shows both leading parties in statistical tie!*
- *Harper out-campaigning Martin according to Canadians, as vote still has not gelled (30% could still change their minds)*
- *Heading into the final debate showdown, no clear winner foreseen in the English debate, while Duceppe is expected to dominate in French debate. During the debate, Harper can score most points on ethics in government, while a debate on national unity will benefit Martin.*

UNDER EMBARGO
RELEASE DAY AND TIME : JANUARY 5, 6:00 PM EST

DETAILED REPORT

Methodology

This Leger Marketing survey was conducted with **1500** adult Canadians between December 30, 2005, and January 4, 2006. A sample of this size yields a maximum margin of error of **± 2.5%**, 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 500 employees spread over its Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, 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.

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1. Conservatives Hold a 2-Point Lead Nationally

According to this Leger Marketing survey completed between December 30 and January 4, the Conservatives (34%) hold a 2-point lead over the Liberals (32%), while the NDP is third in voting intentions at 16%, the Bloc Québécois 11% and the Green Party of Canada 5%. In the most contested regions, the Liberals hold on to a 5 point lead in Ontario, while the survey confirms a tight two way race in BC. In Quebec, both the Bloc and Liberals lose 5 points, all to the benefit of the Conservatives who gain 9 points since our December 23 poll. (See table 1)

Since the start of the campaign, the Liberals have lost 7 points nationally, while the Conservatives have gained the exact same number. In other words, a 12 point Liberal lead has now become a 2 point Conservative lead. (See Graph 1 – next page)

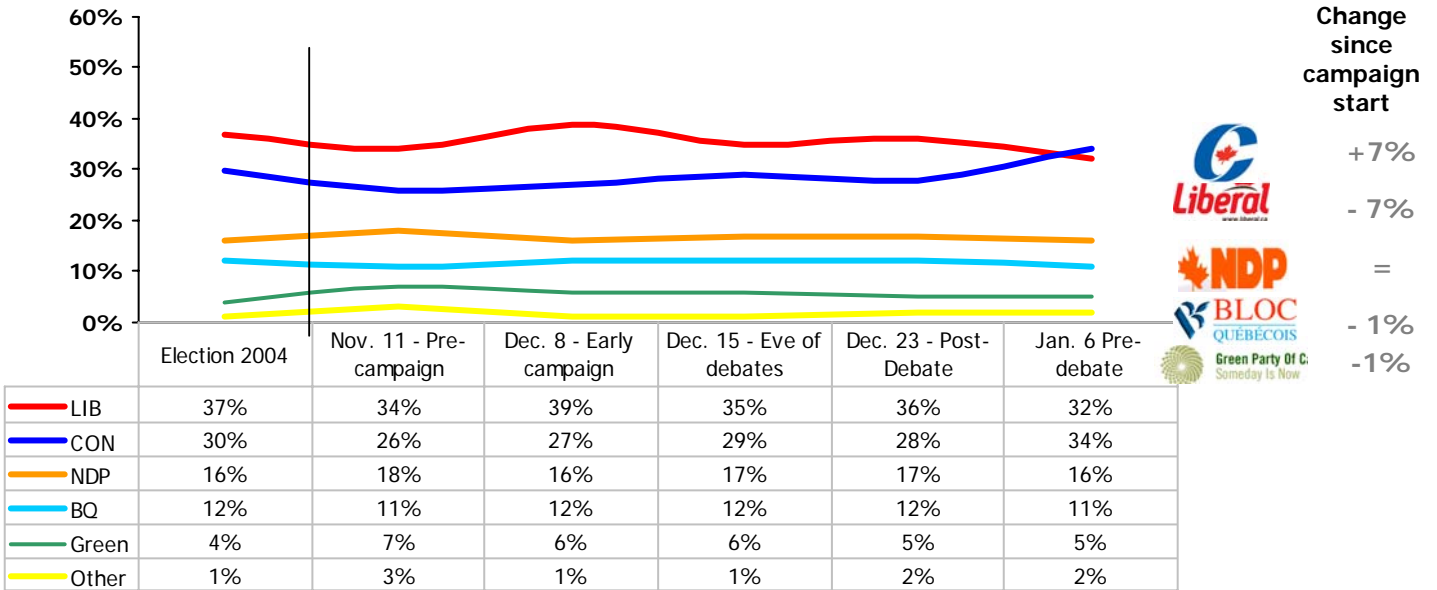
Table 1 – FEDERAL VOTING INTENTIONS

Question: If federal elections were held today, for which of results 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=1500	After Distribution n=1210	AP n=91	QC n=291	ONT n=461	PR n=80	AB n=119	BC n=169
	27%	34%	39%	16%	33%	48%	58%	37%
	26%	32%	44%	26%	38%	21%	25%	33%
	13%	16%	13%	10%	20%	16%	10%	22%
	9%	11%	-	45%	-	-	-	-
	4%	5%	4%	0%	7%	8%	5%	6%
Other	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%	7%	2%	2%
Abstain/Spoil ballot	6%							
Don't know	13%							
Refusal	2%							

- Distribution of undecided is proportional.

**Graph 1: Evolution of Voting Intentions in Canada
November 11 2005 - January 6 2006**



2. Close to a Third Could Still Change Their Minds!

Close to one third of Canadian voters (30%) said they could still change their minds between today and January 23, showing that the vote has not gelled yet. It is in the Prairies (43%), Atlantic Canada (40%) and BC (34%) where volatility is highest, while the vote is much more stable in Quebec (20% could change their vote). It should be noted that current Bloc (11%) and Conservative (24%) voters are the ones least likely to change their vote, indicating that these two parties enjoy a base that remains more firm. Conversely, NDP supporters (35%) and Green Party supporters (44%) are the ones where the probability of switching their allegiance is highest. (See Table 2)

Table 2 – VOTE CHANGE

Question: *Is it possible that you could still change your mind when it comes to the party you will support in the January 23 election? Is it ...?*

(n=1500)	Total	Region						Voting intention				
		AP	QC	ON	PR	AB	BC	Lib	CP	Bloc	NDP	GP
Possible change	30%	40%	20%	31%	43%	29%	34%	25%	24%	11%	22%	52%
Change not likely	66%	57%	78%	65%	54%	70%	64%					
Don't know/Refusal	3%	4%	2%	4%	3%	3%	2%					

3. Harper Out-Campaigning the Liberals According to Canadians

When asked which leader was having the best campaign so far, 25% of Canadians said Stephen Harper, versus 18% for Paul Martin. This figure would indicate that the momentum currently belongs to Stephen Harper. Except for Quebec, Harper leads in all regions, although leads in Ontario and BC remain within the margin of error of the survey (Table 3 and Table 4)

Table 3 – MOMENTUM SCORE – BEST CAMPAIGN

Question: *Among the following party leaders, which one do you think has lead the best campaign so far? Is it ...*

(n=1500)	Total	Region					
		AP	QC	ON	PR	AB	BC
Stephen Harper	25%	26%	17%	23%	35%	41%	25%
Paul Martin	18%	22%	13%	20%	17%	11%	21%
Jack Layton	15%	8%	13%	17%	15%	14%	22%
Gilles Duceppe	7%	-	30%	-	-	-	-
Jim Harris	1%	-	-	1%	-	1%	-
Don't know/Refusal	34%	36%	31%	39%	34%	32%	31%

Table 4 – MOMENTUM SCORE – BEST CAMPAIGN

Question: *Among the following party leaders, which one do you think has lead the best campaign so far? Is it ...*

(n=1500)	Total	Party Support					
		CP	Lib	NDP	BQ	GP	Oth
Stephen Harper	25%	58%	13%	10%	13%	27%	17%
Paul Martin	18%	7%	42%	10%	7%	8%	2%
Jack Layton	15%	9%	9%	51%	9%	25%	25%
Gilles Duceppe	7%	1%	3%	5%	55%	-	7%
Jim Harris	1%	-	1%	1%	-	3%	-
Don't know/Refusal	34%	24%	33%	24%	14%	36%	49%

4. Canadians Split On Expected Winner of January 9 English Debate

When asked who they expect to win the English language debate, Canadians remained split between Martin (30%) and Harper (23%), while another third simply did not know (34%). In Quebec, when it comes to the French debate, 61% expect Duceppe to come out the winner, compared to only 18% for Martin.¹

Given the surge in support for the Tories, Jean-Marc Léger, President and CEO of Leger Marketing feels that:

"The leaders' debates will likely have more impact in this election compared to recent ones. So far, Harper has lead an almost flawless campaign, but can he seal the deal after the January 9 debate?"

Table 5 – EXPECTED WINNERS OF THE DEBATES

Question: *The leaders debates will be held on January 9 and 10, who do you expect will win the English debate? (For Québec only, the question was asking about the "French debate")*

(n=1500)	Total English	Region					
		AP	QC French	ON	PR	AB	BC
Paul Martin	30%	32%	18%	34%	18%	18%	29%
Stephen Harper	23%	23%	3%	18%	28%	37%	23%
Jack Layton	13%	8%	4%	13%	16%	12%	18%
Gilles Duceppe	-	-	61%	-	-	-	-
Don't know/Refusal	34%	38%	13%	35%	38%	33%	30%

¹ The question regarding the debate was asked according to language of the interview. If the interview was in French, respondents were asked about the French debate. The same logic applies for the English debate.

5. Harper Scoring on Crime While Martin Has More Credibility on Public Finances

When asked on which campaign issue among the list of early debate topics, the top leaders could score the most points against their main opponents, Paul Martin remains vulnerable on the issue of transparency and ethics in government, the issue where both Harper in the rest of the country and Duceppe in Quebec can score most points against Martin. In Canada outside Quebec, Martin would have an edge over Harper on national unity. In Quebec, Paul Martin leads Duceppe on issues tied to taxes and public finances. (Table 6)

Table 6 – MOMENTUM SCORE – BEST CAMPAIGN²

Question: *Among the following issues, on what specific issue do you think (INSERT PARTY LEADER) can score the most points against his opponents? Is it ...?*

(n=1500)	Canada Outside Quebec		Quebec	
	Martin	Harper	Martin	Duceppe
National unity/Question nationale	12%	4%	8%	16%
Taxes and public finances	19%	20%	18%	13%
Fed-prov relations	8%	7%	14%	13%
Gay marriage and the Charter	8%	3%	8%	4%
Transparency and ethics	5%	17%	6%	21%
Gun control	8%	7%	6%	4%
Relations with USA	8%	8%	9%	4%
Other	18%	16%	12%	6%
Don't know/Refusal	16%	18%	18%	19%

² Numbers in bold indicate an issue where one leader has a statistically significant edge over his main opponent.