



# Bouncing Back?

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Federal Liberals

Reach 40%

for the First

Time Since

May 2004

## The Issue

On the heels of a narrowly avoided vote of non-confidence in the House of Commons—a vote that could have resulted in a snap election—this latest survey shows that the federal Liberal Party has cracked the 39% ceiling that has eluded them since May 2004 and now have a comfortable lead over their nearest rivals, the Conservatives.

## The Highlights

- Four in ten decided voters in Canada would cast their support for the federal Liberal Party.
- The Conservative Party has slipped and now garners the support of only 25% of the decided vote in Canada.
- The federal New Democratic Party and the Green Party have held steady nationally since the last election, while the Bloc Québécois has lost a small percentage of its decided vote support at the national level.

## The Findings

### Federal Liberals Back Up to May Levels

According to the survey, conducted over the nights leading up to and including the showdown in the House of Commons over the Throne speech, 40% of decided voters in Canada would cast their support for the federal Liberal Party (figure 1). This represents an overall 3-point

climb in support from the actual percentage of popular vote the Liberals received when they were elected to a minority government in the June 28, 2004 election (37%) and is the highest level achieved by the party since our May 13, 2004 survey.

As the federal Liberal Party has been making gains, the Conservative Party has slipped and now garners the support of only 25% of the decided vote in Canada. This is a drop of 5 points from 30% this past election.

The federal New Democratic Party (17%, up 1 point from 16%) and the Green Party (6%, up 2 points from 4%) have held steady nationally since the last election, while the Bloc Québécois has lost a small percentage of its decided vote support at the national level (9%, down 3 points from 12%).

The Bloc Québécois has experienced a sharp drop-off in support since the federal election: they now have the

Party Support Trendlines Since the November 2000 Election

"Thinking of how you feel right now, if a federal election were held tomorrow, which of the following parties' candidates would you, yourself, be most likely to support?"

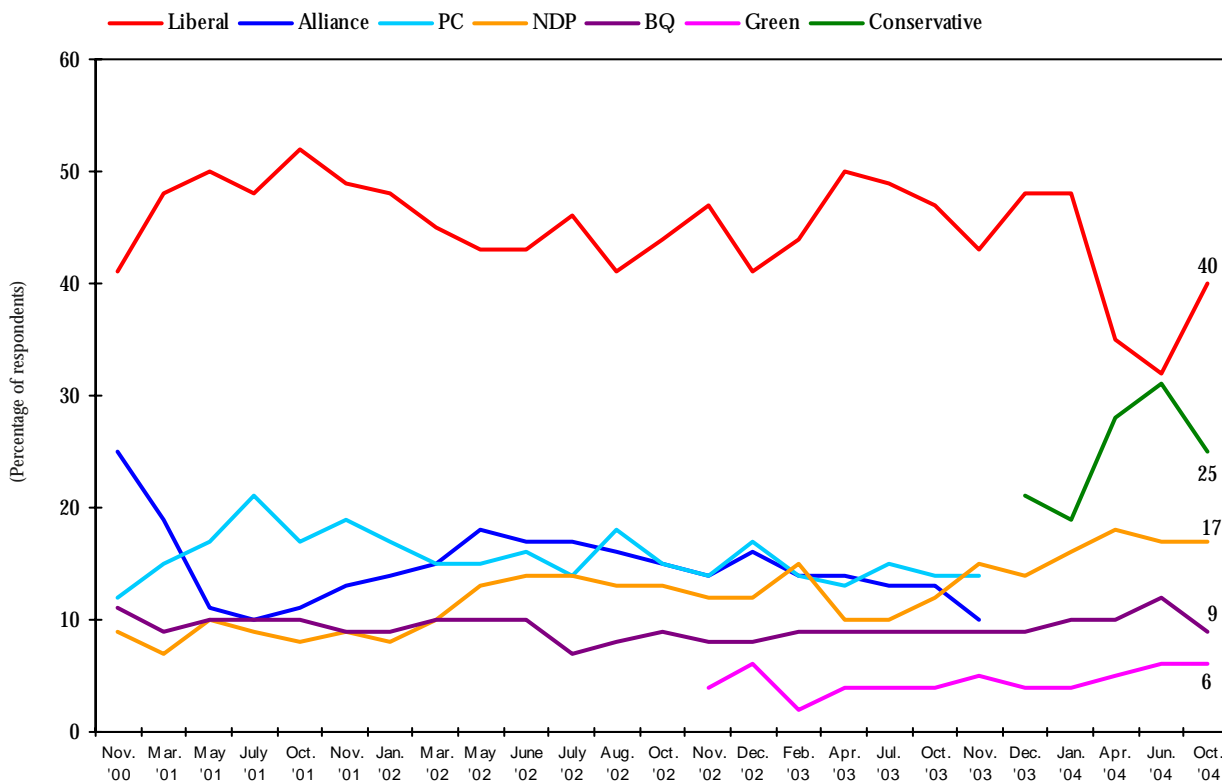


figure 1

support of 36% of decided voters in Québec (down 13 points from 49%) (figure 2). The Liberals (39%, up 5 points from 34%) and the New Democratic Party (11%, up 6 points from 5%) have moved in to fill the federal political vacuum in Québec and have made modest gains. The Conservatives continue to make little noise in this region and barely register on the federal landscape (5%, down 4 points from 9%).

A very small portion of Canadians (4%) would vote for some “other” party. Among all Canadians, 1 in 10 (11%) are undecided or refused to say whom they would vote for if an election were held tomorrow.

The federal Liberal Party has its highest levels of support in Atlantic Canada (54%), followed by Ontario (42%), British Columbia (41%), Québec (39%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (38%), and Alberta (30%).

The Conservative Party has its highest levels of support in Alberta (52%), followed by Saskatchewan/Manitoba (38%), Atlantic Canada (29%), Ontario (27%), and British Columbia (24%).

The New Democratic Party has its highest levels of support in British Columbia (22%), Ontario (21%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (17%), Québec (11%), Atlantic Canada (10%), and Alberta (9%).

**Federal Parties' Popular Support Levels**  
1997 Election–October 2004

*"Thinking of how you feel right now, if a federal election were held tomorrow, which of the following parties' candidates would you, yourself, be most likely to support?"*

(Percentages)	Elections																	
	June '97	Nov. '00	July '01	Oct. '01	Jan. '02	July '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Apr. '03	July '03	Oct. '03	Nov. '03	Dec. '03	Jan. '04	Feb. '04	Apr. '04	June '04	Oct. '04
<b>Canada:</b>																		
PC	19	12	21	17	17	14	15	14	13	15	14	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liberal	38	41	48	52	48	46	44	44	50	49	47	43	48	48	36	35	32	40
NDP	11	9	9	8	8	14	13	15	10	10	12	15	14	16	17	18	17	17
Alliance	19	25	10	11	14	17	15	14	14	13	13	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bloc Québécois	11	11	10	10	9	7	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	10	11	10	12	9
Conservative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	19	27	28	31	25
<b>British Columbia:</b>																		
PC	6	7	14	12	13	8	13	10	8	8	8	11	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liberal	28	28	47	45	37	34	29	31	45	47	36	32	41	42	26	30	24	41
NDP	17	11	10	10	11	27	23	17	18	15	18	19	28	27	26	25	22	22
Alliance	41	49	19	27	31	25	24	34	18	19	26	20	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conservative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	20	33	27	44	24
<b>Alberta:</b>																		
PC	14	13	36	34	29	25	16	14	24	17	25	24	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liberal	24	21	33	33	38	19	23	33	29	27	17	28	29	35	28	31	20	30
NDP	6	6	4	1	5	6	9	7	4	11	12	8	11	13	18	12	11	9
Alliance	54	59	24	28	26	50	48	43	39	40	40	30	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conservative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	47	47	46	59	52
<b>Sask./Man.:</b>																		
PC	13	10	25	20	14	16	20	14	13	15	17	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liberal	30	27	45	43	44	33	38	41	38	39	35	34	32	46	29	29	32	38
NDP	27	23	14	19	16	17	17	25	27	14	19	32	27	17	29	27	25	17
Alliance	29	39	16	17	24	31	24	20	19	27	19	15	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conservative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	20	31	36	36	38
<b>Ontario:</b>																		
PC	18	14	25	20	23	15	17	23	15	20	17	17	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liberal	49	51	53	63	51	58	56	49	58	56	57	52	60	57	46	32	38	42
NDP	10	8	12	7	7	12	10	18	9	11	12	19	10	17	18	19	20	21
Alliance	19	24	9	9	14	12	13	8	14	9	10	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conservative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	18	29	41	34	27
<b>Québec:</b>																		
PC	22	6	10	6	8	7	8	2	4	5	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liberal	36	44	43	45	48	46	38	44	50	52	51	40	45	45	30	30	29	39
NDP	2	2	4	7	5	12	11	10	3	4	2	8	9	6	9	10	5	11
Alliance	-	6	2	2	2	5	1	4	2	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bloc Québécois	38	40	41	40	36	26	36	39	36	35	38	38	36	39	44	45	48	36
Conservative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	3	10	11	9	5
<b>Atlantic:</b>																		
PC	33	31	27	25	18	27	22	17	22	37	26	28	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liberal	33	41	55	59	69	53	57	57	53	43	48	50	50	43	39	29	44	54
NDP	23	17	11	10	8	12	14	21	21	13	21	10	11	17	18	22	26	10
Alliance	9	10	7	5	2	6	4	3	5	6	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conservative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29	37	36	41	23	29

Decided Voters Only: Undecided and Refused excluded; "Leaners" included.  
\*Base sizes for other mentions were too low to be significant.

The Conservative Party has slipped and now garner the support of only 25% of the decided vote in Canada.

## The Bottom Line

The federal Liberals are enjoying renewed popularity in this latest poll, but, it is nowhere near the 48% support they commanded before their dramatic plunge as a result of the sponsorship scandal. If this trend upwards continues, some of the opposition members may have cause for concern. The question is: Would it be in the best interest of the government to call an election and secure a majority when they see the polls hit 45%? It's worth remembering that ultimately support in Québec and Ontario is what wins elections.

Although, there has been some theatre in the House as opposition parties play chicken with the government and make amendments to the Throne Speech, it's not likely, in our view, that anyone will

want to pull the plug—particularly the Bloc Québécois—until at least 2006 after current Premier Jean Charest has called and experienced his re-election test at the polls.

From its perch (and extra funding from the House) in Ottawa, the Bloc is more than likely to support the government there while it makes preparations to help defeat the provincial Liberals.

Perhaps there is nothing predictable here other than that—including the “unanticipated” 9.1 billion surplus and the potential tax cuts to follow. One wonders what it would have been like in Ottawa just before the National Healthcare Summit had the same ballooning surplus emerged. Interesting, if not, astute timing. ❖