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O'Leary Tories (37%) vs. Trudeau Grits (38%) Matchup
Portends Close Race**

***O'Leary Outperforms Bernier and Leitch in Head-to-Head
Matchups Against Trudeau***

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O’Leary Outperforms Bernier and Leitch in Head-to-Head Matchups Against Trudeau

Toronto, ON – If TV star and businessman Kevin O’Leary wins the leadership of the Conservative Party, the Conservatives could mount a serious challenge to Justin Trudeau and the governing Liberals in the next general election, according to a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of Global News.

Canadians were presented with three hypothetical situations, each presenting a different leader of the Conservative Party: Kevin O’Leary, Maxime Bernier and Kellie Leitch. Of the three, an O’Leary-led Conservative Party was shown to mount the most significant challenge to the incumbent Liberals during the next federal election, while a Bernier or Leitch-led Conservative Party does not fare much better than the current situation. None of these results necessarily reflect what is on the minds of Conservative Party voting members, but to the extent that CPC members are looking for someone who can immediately challenge Trudeau, O’Leary’s familiarity and broad appeal could be enticing to voting members.

- If **Kevin O’Leary** were the leader of the Conservative Party, the Liberal lead (38%) over the Conservatives (37%) would be just one point among decided voters, while the NDP (17%), Bloc (4%) and other parties (4%) would be well back. Three in ten Canadians either don’t know (23%) or wouldn’t vote/would spoil/not choose any (8%) in such a matchup.



- If **Maxime Bernier** were the leader of the Conservative Party, the Liberals (42%) would have a fourteen-point lead over the Conservatives (28%) among decided voters, while the NDP (20%) would be a little more competitive. The Bloc (5%) and other parties (6%) would trail. Four in ten Canadians either don't know (30%) or they wouldn't vote/would spoil/not choose any (7%).
- If **Kellie Leitch** were the leader of the Conservative Party, the Grit lead (42%) over the Tories (26%) grows to sixteen points among decided voters, with the NDP (21%), other parties (6%) and the Bloc (5%) well behind. Nearly four in ten Canadians don't know (29%) or they wouldn't vote/would spoil/not choose any (8%).
- These hypothetical scenarios all compare to the **current voter preference** – if an election were held tomorrow, four in ten (41%) decided voters would vote for the Liberal Party, while three in ten (30%) would vote for the Conservatives. The NDP (19%), Bloc (5%) and other parties (5%) are well behind on a national basis. Three in ten (29%) Canadians either are not sure (23%) about who they would vote for or they wouldn't vote/would spoil/not choose any (6%).
- Six in ten Canadians (59%) say they **approve of the performance of the Liberal government under Justin Trudeau** (13% strongly / 45% somewhat), while four in ten (41%) disapprove (19% strongly / 22% somewhat). While the Liberal government's approval ratings remain strong overall, they have softened somewhat over the past year (from 66% in March 2016, to 62% in October 2016, to 61% in December 2016, to 59% now).

Interestingly, the Conservative Party's boost in voter support under O'Leary seems to be coming from an unlikely source. Among decided voters, the vast majority tend to say they'd vote for their current choice no matter who's leading the Conservatives (Tories will vote

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Tory, Liberals will vote Liberal, and so on). Yet, the survey reveals that many current NDP voters say they'd vote Conservative if O'Leary were leading the CPC.

In fact, two in ten (22%) current NDP voters appear poised to change their vote to Conservative if O'Leary wins the leadership race. Moreover, the proportion of Canadians who are undecided on their vote choice decreases when O'Leary is the leader (23% don't know of their vote choice if O'Leary leads the party, 29% if Leitch leads it, and 30% if Bernier leads it), suggesting that the rise in support for the Tories under an O'Leary leadership comes both from undecided and some NDP voters, although this could be temporary given the NDP are also looking for a new leader.

Decided voters who would vote for the Conservative Party in a federal election held tomorrow if the Party were led by...			
	Among current Conservative Voters	Among current Liberal Voters	Among current NDP Voters
Kevin O'Leary	92%	8%	<u>22%</u>
Maxime Bernier	92%	5%	4%
Kellie Leitch	91%	5%	4%

One of Maxime Bernier's perceived strengths over much of the rest of the Conservative field is that he is French-Canadian. Despite this, Bernier doesn't appear to have a significant advantage over O'Leary in *la belle province*: a Bernier-led Conservative Party would receive 23% of the decided vote within Quebec, while an O'Leary-led Conservative Party would garner 25% of the decided vote. By comparison, a Leitch-led Conservative Party only receives 14% of the decided vote in Quebec. Of course, these figures are all at an early juncture, and still hypothetical at this stage.



Can O'Leary Win the Nomination?

O'Leary presently appears to have popularity and is the preferred choice for Leader of the Conservatives among Canadians generally, although it is likely a function of his name recognition and his celebrity status compared to low familiarity with all the other candidates. If all Canadians could vote for the Conservative leader (which they cannot), while four in ten Canadians (43%) would choose not to vote, among those that would, four in ten (42%) would vote for O'Leary to be the next leader of the Conservative Party if they could. By contrast, all of the other party leadership candidates garner significantly less voter intent (only Bernier gets more than 10%), whether among all Canadians with an opinion (excluding those who wouldn't vote) or among current, decided Conservative voters. While these results in no way predict the winner of the Conservative race or what's on the minds of CPC members, they do suggest what the potential winner's relative popularity might be among the general electorate.

- Kevin O'Leary (businessman and television personality): 42% of decided voters, 60% of decided Conservative voters;
- Maxime Bernier (MP for Beauce, Quebec): 13% of decided voters, 7% of decided Conservative voters;
- Lisa Raitt (MP for Milton, Ontario): 9% of decided voters, 5% of decided Tory voters;
- Andrew Saxton (former MP for North Vancouver, BC): 6% of decided voters, 5% of decided Tory voters;
- Steven Blaney (MP for Bellechasse-Les-Étchemins-Levis, Quebec): 6% of decided voters, 1% of decided Tory voters;
- Kellie Leitch (MP for Simcoe-Grey, Ontario): 4% of decided voters, 7% of decided Tory voters;
- Erin O'Toole (MP for Durham, Ontario): 3% of decided voters, 3% of decided Tory voters;
- Chris Alexander (former MP for Ajax-Pickering, Ontario): 3% of decided voters, 1% of decided Tory voters;



- Michael Chong (MP for Wellington-Halton Hills, Ontario): 3% of decided voters, 1% of decided Tory voters;
- Deepak Obhrai (MP for Calgary Forest Lawn, Alberta): 3% of decided voters, 1% of decided Tory voters;
- Andrew Scheer (MP for Regina-Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan): 2% of decided voters, 3% of decided Tory voters;
- Brad Trost (MP for Saskatoon-University, Saskatchewan): 2% of decided voters, 3% of decided Tory voters;
- Pierre Lemieux (former MP for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, Ontario): 2% of decided voters, 1% of decided Tory voters; and
- Rick Peterson (businessman): 1% of decided voters, 1% of decided Tory voters.

Star Power Boosts Familiarity

Polling results at this early stage are no doubt informed by Canadians' familiarity with each of the candidates, and in this regard, O'Leary's star power has given him a distinct advantage in recognition. Six in ten Canadians (58%) say they're familiar (25% very / 32% somewhat) with the *Dragon's Den* and *Shark Tank* star, and while Bernier is the next best-known leadership candidate, he trails behind significantly at 26% familiarity (7% very / 19% somewhat). Raitt (21%; 6% very / 15% somewhat), Leitch (18%; 6% very / 12% somewhat) and Blaney (14%; 3% very / 10% somewhat) round out the top five, followed by:

- Chris Alexander: 12% are familiar (3% very / 9% somewhat);
- Pierre Lemieux: 11% are familiar (2% very / 9% somewhat);
- Andrew Scheer: 10% are familiar (2% very / 8% somewhat);
- Michael Chong: 10% are familiar (2% very / 8% somewhat);
- Erin O'Toole: 10% are familiar (1% very / 9% somewhat);
- Deepak Obhrai: 9% are familiar (2% very / 7% somewhat);
- Andrew Saxton: 8% are familiar (2% very / 6% somewhat);
- Rick Peterson: 7% are familiar (1% very / 6% somewhat); and
- Brad Trost: 7% are familiar (1% very / 6% somewhat).



These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between January 23 and January 25, 2017, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,000 Canadians from Ipsos' online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadian adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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