

PRESS RELEASE

One Week from E-Day, Canadians Say They're Hearing More Negativity About Candidates and Leaders than Policy Options and Campaign Promises

SNC-Lavalin Affair, Leaders' Debates, Scheer's Abortion Stance Have Most Impact on Vote Choice

Toronto, ON, October 16, 2019 — When Canadians head to the ballot box next Monday, everyday issues like health care and taxes won't be the only thing guiding their decision on who to vote for. Over the past five weeks, social media and the 24-hour news cycle have brought an entirely different set of issues, considerations, and even scandals into play. The latest Ipsos survey conducted exclusively for Global News asks Canadians to take stock of the campaign coverage they've been following, and finds that most see it as exceptionally negative.

A majority – seven in ten (71%) – confirm that most of what they have heard or read about during the campaign has been negative news and social media posts about candidates, including the party leaders. This opinion extends to 76% of Canadians aged 55 and over, and is more prevalent among women (74%) than men (67%).

Only three in ten (29%) say that most of the news and posts they've been exposed to have focused on the party policies and what they are proposing to do if they get elected. This likely goes some way toward explaining the high levels of public cynicism the survey finds toward all parties when it comes to who Canadians see as being best equipped to tackle the issues.

Yet negativity isn't necessarily putting people off voting. Indeed, it may be hitting a nerve: seven in ten (70%) Canadians who have mostly heard negative news say they are 'completely certain' to vote at the federal election (or have already done so at the advance polling). A similar proportion (64%) of those who claim to have mostly heard about party policies say they too are completely certain to vote.

That said, not all political news that made waves during the campaign has the same impact on voter choice. Asked how important a number of media stories have been in determining who they will vote for, only three were deemed important by more than half of Canadians: SNC-Lavalin (58%), the leaders' debates (56%), and Andrew Scheer's stance on abortion (55%). Despite generating worldwide attention, only three in ten Canadians (32%) say Justin Trudeau's brownface photo scandal has played an important role in deciding their vote.

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- **The SNC-Lavalin scandal:** 58% say it's important (26% very/32% somewhat)
- **The leaders' debates:** 56% (15% very/41% somewhat)
- **Andrew Scheer's stance on abortion:** 55% (28% very/27% somewhat)
- **Justin Trudeau's two campaign airplanes:** 43% (17% very/25% somewhat)
- **Justin Trudeau's brownface/blackface photo/video scandal:** 32% (15% very/18% somewhat)
- **Andrew Scheer's dual citizenship:** 30% (11% very/19% somewhat)

It comes as no surprise that decided voters – Canadians who know who they will vote for on October 21st or who have already voted for their chosen party at the advance polls – tend to be most influenced by a news story affecting a party they didn't vote for. This speaks to the high volume of negative media coverage throughout the campaign, and the power it wields – if not to change voters' minds outright, then at least to cement their decision. For example:

- Eight in ten decided **Conservative voters** (83%) say the SNC-Lavalin scandal was important in determining who they will vote for, more than any other news story.
- By contrast, **Liberal voters** are much more likely to point to Andrew Scheer's stance on abortion (69%) as being important in their decision-making process. The abortion issue has been a decisive one for many progressive voters, including a majority of those who plan to vote **Bloc Québécois** (73%), **NDP** (69%), or **Green** (60%).
- **NDP voters** set themselves apart by being the most likely to say the leaders' debates were important in helping them decide (71%), following the broadly positive reaction to Jagmeet Singh's debate performance in both languages.

Importance in Determining Who You Will Vote For (Very/Somewhat Important)					
	Decided Voters & Leaners				
	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Bloc	Green
The SNC-Lavalin scandal	83%	40%	56%	62%	48%
The leaders' debates	54%	52%	71%	62%	54%
Scheer's stance on abortion	33%	69%	69%	73%	60%
Trudeau's two campaign airplanes	64%	23%	41%	51%	41%
Trudeau's brownface/blackface photo/video scandal	52%	16%	34%	34%	22%
Scheer's dual citizenship	16%	41%	35%	30%	34%

Blue highlights indicate the top issue of importance per decided voter group.

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Issues of Importance

With less than a week remaining until Canadians head to the polls, the issues that will help them decide who to vote for have not shifted significantly in light of last week's leaders' debate.

The survey reveals that nearly four in ten Canadians (37%) say health care is an issue of importance to them in determining how they will vote (+2 since the start of the campaign), followed by climate change (30%, +5) and taxes (25%, +3), both of which have strengthened since the campaign began, but are stable vs. the previous week's polling. A trio of pocketbook concerns continue to round out the top five issues of importance to voters, namely taxes (25%), affordability (25%), and the economy (24%).

Top 10 Most Important Issues in Determining Vote		
	Among Top 3 Most Important	Change vs. Campaign Start (% points)
Health care	37%	+2
Climate Change	30%	+5
Taxes	25%	+3
Affordability and cost of living	25%	-2
The economy	24%	unchanged
Seniors' issues/aging population	14%	+1
Housing (e.g., affordability, availability)	14%	-1
Immigration	13%	-1
Energy, including pipelines, gas prices	12%	+1
Education	12%	unchanged

Pipelines Take Priority in Alberta

While much of the top 10 has remained fairly static since the start of the campaign, one issue that has cracked the list for the first time this week is energy – an issue that is both complex and highly politically charged, touching on everything from pipelines to gas prices. This is almost exclusively due to dynamics in Alberta, where the importance of energy issues in the final run-up to the federal election has come into sharp focus.

One in three Albertans who are eligible to vote (34%) say energy will play an important role in determining their vote on election day – up 14 points from just a week ago. The increase has propelled energy up the rankings to become the most important issue in the province, ahead of health care (30%), the economy (28%), taxes (25%), and affordability (25%).

This makes Alberta one of just two provinces where health care is not the top issue – as it is in Atlantic Canada (61%), Quebec (40%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (37%), and Ontario (36%). The other one is British Columbia, where climate change (34%) is the strongest issue of importance to voter choice. Together, they represent the crux of a seemingly intractable regional divide in Canadian politics: not only East-West, but within the West.

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Most Important Issues in Determining Vote: By Region						
	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
Health care	31%	30%	37%	36%	40%	61%
Climate Change	34%	14%	22%	28%	40%	33%
Taxes	24%	25%	29%	26%	24%	31%
Affordability and cost of living	29%	25%	27%	28%	16%	26%
The economy	24%	28%	24%	23%	23%	23%
Seniors' issues/aging population	15%	15%	13%	13%	14%	19%
Housing (e.g., affordability, availability)	24%	7%	11%	17%	9%	9%
Immigration	9%	9%	11%	15%	17%	8%
Energy, including pipelines, gas prices	16%	34%	14%	6%	9%	8%
Education	6%	7%	8%	14%	14%	9%

Blue highlights indicate the top issue of importance per region.

Dealing with Issues: NDP Gets a Boost

When it comes to which party Canadians consider best placed to deal with the issues that matter most, the biggest story this week has been the resurgence of the NDP. While the Liberals still have a slight edge in being seen as the best party to deal with health care (27%), the NDP is now just two points behind (25%), inching past the Conservatives. Meanwhile, the Conservatives (27%) and NDP (25%) are now in a tight race in terms of which party is seen as best to deal with affordability and the cost of living, with the NDP up 9 points since last week.

Overall, the Liberals retain their lead on one of the top five issues (health care), the Conservatives are ahead on three (taxes, affordability, and the economy), while the Greens continue to enjoy a comfortable lead as the party seen as best placed to tackle climate change.

- Health care:** Liberals (27%, -5), NDP (24%, +4), Conservatives (16%, -4), Greens (6%, +3), Bloc Québécois (2% nationally, unchanged, and 9% in Quebec, also unchanged), People's Party (2%, +1)
- Climate change:** Greens (43%, +4), Liberals (25%, unchanged), NDP (12%, unchanged), Conservatives (5%, unchanged), Bloc Québécois (5% nationally, +1, and 17% in Quebec, +5), People's Party (0%, -1)
- Taxes:** Conservatives (41%, +7), Liberals (19%, unchanged), NDP (11%, +4), Bloc Québécois (3% nationally, -1, and 14% in Quebec, -2), People's Party (3%, unchanged), Greens (2%, unchanged)

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- **Affordability and cost of living:** Conservatives (27%, +4), NDP (25%, +9), Liberals (19%, -2), Greens (3%, -1), People's Party (3%, unchanged), Bloc Québécois (1% nationally, unchanged, and 10% in Quebec, +3)
- **The economy:** Conservatives (43%, +3), Liberals (27%, -1), NDP (9%, +3), Bloc Québécois (2% nationally, -2; 10% in Quebec, -4), Greens (3%, unchanged), People's Party (3%, +1)

Cynicism remains a factor as the campaign continues: many Canadians say that none of the parties is best to deal with the issues that matter – for this group, the parties are all the same. Within the top ten issues of importance to voters, this sentiment is most in evidence in relation to education (23%), health care (22%), seniors' issues (22%), taxes (21%), immigration (21%), and housing (21%).

Bill C-24: Majority Support on ISIS Fighters Law

Bill C-24 is a law that aims to strip dual citizens of their Canadian passports if they are convicted of crimes of terrorism, treason or espionage against Canada, or take up arms against Canada. This has been specifically debated in the case of Canadian nationals who have fought with ISIS in Syria and wish to return to Canada.

A majority of Canadians appear to be supportive of the proposed law, with seven in ten (71%) saying 'we should not do anything to help bring these Canadians back to Canada'. Canadians aged 55+ (83%) are most likely to hold this view, followed by those aged 35-54 (70%) and those 18-34 (56%).

By contrast, three in ten (29%) think that 'a Canadian is a Canadian, and we should help bring these Canadians back.' This view is significantly more prevalent among those aged 18-34 (44%), compared to those 35-54 (30%) or 55+ (17%). Regionally, Quebecers (39%) are more likely to hold this opinion than residents of any other province.

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These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between October 11 and 13, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of n = 2,204 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed. A sample of n = 1,504 was interviewed online, via the Ipsos I-Say panel and non-panel sources, and respondents earn a nominal incentive for their participation. A sample of n = 700 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed by live-interview telephone interviewers by landline and cellphone, using random-digit dialing. Quotas and weighting were 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 (weighting efficiency = 66.9%). The precision of Ipsos polls which include non-probability sampling is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 2.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians 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. Ipsos abides by the disclosure standards established by the CRIC, found here:

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<https://ipsosintelligence.ca/canadiancontext/>

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