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But Polling Conducted Leading Up to and Following New York Terrorist Act Show Only 41% Say the Prime Minister is Best Leader for Federal Liberal Party And Should Stay to Fight Next Election



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Toronto, ONTARIO – A new Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CTV poll released today indicates that despite the fact that many commentators and observers have criticized how Prime Minister Jean Chrétien has re-acted to the events of and following September 11, 2001, fully two-thirds (63%) of the Canadian public approve of the way he has performed as Prime Minister – up from 55 percent in early July, 2001, and his highest standing of approval as Prime Minister since June, 1998 when 65 percent approved.

This poll, which was conducted over the last three nights comes on the heels of last weeks Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CTV poll which found that 74 percent of Canadians approved of the Prime Minister's handling of issues and events concerning the September 11 terrorist attack in New York.

With respect to those Canadians who are decided voters, the Liberals have increased their lead from polling in early July – the Liberals now hold the support of 51 percent of the population (up from 49% in July) followed by, the Progressive Conservatives at 18 percent (down from 20%), the Canadian Alliance at 10 percent (down from 11%), the Bloc Quebecois

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at 10 percent nationally (in Quebec, the Bloc is up from 37% to 41%) and the New Democratic Party is at 9 percent.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CTV poll conducted between September 25th and 27th. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Canadians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data.

But a companion poll of 2,000 Canadian adults which was conducted between September 5th and September 13th, 2001 shows that while the Prime Minister has favourable assessments of his performance, there is an underpinning which is less buoyant. The poll, which carries a margin of error of ± 2.2 percentage points, and was also conducted for The Globe and Mail and CTV, indicates that only 41 percent of the public believe that the Prime Minister is the “best choice for their party and should stay to fight the next election” while 57 percent believe that he should “step aside before the next election to allow someone else to lead their political party”. In this regard, 56 percent of decided Liberal voters think the Prime Minister should stay on while 43 percent say he should step aside. Further, the poll reveals that 66 percent (32% strongly) of Canadians do not believe that the Prime Minister has earned the right to remain as leader of the Liberal party as long as he wants – whereas 32 percent believe the opposite. In fact, a majority of decided Liberal voters (55%) do not believe that the Prime Minister has the right to stay on as long as he wishes with 45 percent saying someone else should lead the party.



In this regard, Canadians were asked their impression of various potential Liberal leadership contenders with the following results:

Paul Martin emerges with the most positive impression (67% among the public and 70% among decided Liberals.) When the negative impressions (14% among the public and 12% among Liberals) are removed from the positive impressions it creates a “net score” of +53 among the public and +58 among Liberals.

Brian Tobin emerges as the next favoured potential contender with 44 percent positive public impressions and 51 percent positive impressions among Liberals for “net scores” of +24 and +38.

Next on the list is Allan Rock with 36 percent positive impressions among the public and 41 percent among Liberals for “net scores” of +9 and +21.

And, former New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna receives 33 percent positive impressions from the public and 34 percent from Liberals for “net scores” of +17 and +19.

Variously:

Sheila Copps has positive impressions from 27 percent of the public and 32 percent from Liberals for “net scores” of -26 for the public and -15 for Liberals.

John Manley has positive impressions from 21 percent of the public and 23 percent from Liberals for a “net score” of -1 for the public and +3 among Liberals.

Anne McLellan has positive impressions of 18 percent of the public and 20 percent of Liberals for “net scores” of -5 from the public and +3 from Liberals.

Pierre Pettigrew has positive impressions from 16 percent of the public and 17 percent of Liberals for “net scores” of -8 for the public and -3 for Liberals.

Jane Stewart has 10 percent positive impressions among the public and 13 percent among Liberals for “net scores” of -15 among the public and -8 among Liberals.

Martin Cauchon has 8 percent positive impressions from the public and 10 percent positive impressions from Liberals for “net scores” of -9 among the public and -3 among Liberals.

But while speculation may run rife as to who might replace the Prime Minister in the future, the most recent poll demonstrates that 63 percent currently approve (including 85% of decided Liberal voters) of the way Jean Chrétien has performed as Prime Minister – and 33 percent disapprove. Approval for the Prime Minister is the highest in Atlantic Canada (72%), followed by Ontario (64%), Quebec (62%), British Columbia (60%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (59%) and Alberta (55%). With respect to disapproval, the highest level is found in Alberta (44%), followed then by British Columbia (37%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (35%).

Tracking of the Prime Minister’s performance approval ratings indicate the following highlights: September ’00 – 55%, March ’00 – 60%, September ’99 – 56%, November ’98 – 56%, June ’98 – 65%, January ’98 – 67%, May ’97 – 52%, November ’96 – 63%, March ’95 – 70%, February ’94 – 71%.

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Ipsos Reid

*Darrell Bricker
President and COO
Public Affairs
Ipsos-Reid
(416) 324-2900*

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