

**As Markets Decline,
Economy (26%) Rising in Importance in Campaign
Healthcare (19%), Taxes (12%) the Environment (11%) Trail**

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Ipsos Reid

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As Markets Decline, Economy (26%) Rising in Importance in Campaign Healthcare (19%), Taxes (12%) the Environment (11%) Trail

Ottawa, ON - According to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of CanWest News Service and Global Television, the economy (26%) remains the number-one issue for voters in this election campaign. Likely a result of the crisis south of the border with respect to the collapse of three major financial firms, and the subsequent effect it has had on worldwide markets, the proportion of Canadians who choose the economy as the dominant issue in the campaign has risen by 2 points over the last week.

Next in line for the issues that Canadians most want their leaders to talk about during this campaign are healthcare (19%, up 2 points), taxes (12%, down 2 points), the environment (11%, down 3 points), poverty (6%, unchanged) and jobs/unemployment (6%, unchanged). Others include crime/justice (5%, up 1 point), education (4%, unchanged), and the armed forces/military/defence (1%, down 1 point). Three percent (3%) would choose some other issue, and 7% don't know which issue is most important to them.

Here is how the issues break out in the regions:

- In **British Columbia**, healthcare (21%) is tops, followed by the economy (17%), the environment (12%), crime/justice (12%), taxes (11%) and poverty (11%).
- In **Alberta**, healthcare (31%) is the top issue, while the economy is in second position (22%). Crime/justice issues (14%) are next, followed by taxes (11%) and the environment (7%).



- In **Saskatchewan and Manitoba**, nearly four in ten (36%) says the economy should be at the forefront, while others believe healthcare (17%), taxes (12%), poverty (8%) and crime/justice issues (6%) should be the main topics of focus.
- In **Ontario**, probably the province hardest hit by the slowing economy, 29% say this issue should be top of the list in terms of what candidates and political leaders should be talking about. Next in line are healthcare (16%), the environment (11%), taxes (11%) and jobs/unemployment (8%).
- In **Quebec**, the economy is in first position (24%), while healthcare (19%), the environment (14%), taxes (11%) and poverty (7%) round out the top-five.
- In **Atlantic Canada**, the economy (28%) is the first issue that Atlantic Canadians want the party leaders to talk about, followed by healthcare (19%), taxes (19%), poverty (9%), the environment (6%) and jobs/unemployment (6%).

Key Issues By Party Support...

The data also reveal that the issues that Canadians think should be focused on vary greatly depending on which party they are supporting:

- For supporters of the **Conservative Party**, the economy (35%), healthcare (17%) and taxes (16%) are the top three issues. All others seem to be secondary, with crime/justice (11%) and the jobs/unemployment (5%) round out the top five.
- Among those who say they would vote for the **Liberals**, the top issue that they'd like the leaders and candidates to focus on is the economy (28%), followed by healthcare (26%), the environment (14%), taxes (8%) and poverty (5%).

- For **NDP** supporters, healthcare (25%) is at the top, followed by the economy (21%), taxes (12%), the environment (9%) and poverty (8%).
- **Bloc** supporters want the political leaders and candidates to be talking about healthcare (17%), the environment (16%), poverty (13%), the economy (12%) and taxes (12%).
- The environment (37%) is first and foremost for those supporting the **Green Party**. Trailing this dominant issue are the economy (18%), poverty (11%) and healthcare (8%).

Now, Who is Best to Deal with These Issues?

Asking Canadians which leader they thought could best deal with the issue that is most important to them shows:

- Among those who said the **economy** was their top issue, 40% say Harper has the best ideas and policies for dealing with this issue. Dion (14%) and Layton (10%) are distantly behind, while May (2%) and Duceppe (2%) trail significantly.
- Among those who mentioned **Healthcare** as their top issue, Prime Minister Harper (20%) once again came out on top, but Jack Layton (18%) and Stephane Dion (15%) are not far behind this time. Gilles Duceppe (3%) and Elizabeth May (2%) once again lag behind.
- Among those who said the **environment** is their top issue for the campaign, Elizabeth May (31%) comes out on top, followed by Stephane Dion (23%). Jack Layton (17%) is in third, and Prime Minister Harper (7%) fourth, and Gilles Duceppe (3%) fifth.



- Among those who said **taxes** should be the number-one issue of the campaign, Harper (36%) has a commanding lead as the one who they thought had the best ideas and policies to deal with this issue. Jack Layton (12%) came second, and Stephane Dion (7%) is in third. Duceppe (4%) comes ahead of May (2%) in this policy area.

Focus on the Environment...

Using another metric to deal specifically with the environment question, 26% of Canadians think that the Green Party and Elizabeth May would do the best job of dealing with climate change and the environment if they got into power. Only 16% believe that Stephane Dion and the Liberals would fill this role, despite being the forefront of Mr. Dion's campaign. In fact, not far behind is Mr. Harper and the Conservatives (14%), placing a head of Jack Layton and the NDP (11%) in this regard. Three in ten (31%), though, don't know who would be the best at dealing with this issue once in office.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of CanWest News Service and Global Television from September 17 to September 18, 2008. This online survey of 1013 Canadian adults was conducted via the Ipsos I-Say Online Panel, Ipsos Reid's national online panel. The results are based on a sample where quota sampling and weighting are employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the actual Ontarian population according to Census data. Quota samples with weighting from the Ipsos online panel provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. An unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire adult population in Canada been polled.

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