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Referendum with Limited, Minority, Support for Sovereignty (30%)*

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**Ipsos Reid**

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***Almost Three Quarters (72%) Believe a Vote for PQ is a Vote for a Referendum with Limited, Minority, Support for Sovereignty (30%)***

**Toronto, ON** – The Quebec Liberal Party enjoys a five-point lead over the Parti Quebecois heading into the leaders' debate, according to a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of CTV News.

And it would appear that while the Parti Quebecois may have wanted to fashion the ballot question on its Charter of Values at the outset of the campaign, it's a different game now leading into the Leaders' debate with almost three quarters (72%) of Quebecers believing that a vote for the Parti Quebecois is a vote for a referendum – likely spurred by the declaration of Pierre Karl Peladeau that he and the PQ favour an independent Quebec – where a majority (51%) don't want sovereignty and only a minority (30%) do.

If the election were held tomorrow, the Quebec Liberal Party, led by Philippe Couillard, would receive 37% of the vote among decided voters, compared to the 32% of Quebecers who would vote for Premier Pauline Marois and the Parti Quebecois. These two parties appear to be the only ones in contention to form the government with the other parties trailing far behind. The Coalition Avenir Quebec, led by Francois Legault, would receive 16% of the vote, while Francoise David's Quebec Solidaire would receive 10% of the vote. Option

Nationale, led by Sol Zanetti, would receive just 2% of the votes, while 3% would vote for some other party, including the Green Party. One in ten (12%) remain undecided.

The Liberals have the edge on the island of Montreal (48% Liberal vs. 25% PQ), while the PQ has the edge in the suburbs of Montreal (39% PQ vs. 33% Liberal), and in the Quebec City area (30% PQ vs. 27% Liberals). The Liberals have a 5-point lead in the rest of Quebec (37% Liberal vs. 32% PQ).

Among those who completed the survey in English, the results are overwhelmingly in favour of the Liberals: Liberals (80%), PQ (6%), CAQ (6%), Solidaire (2%), Option Nationale (1%), other (5%).

Among those who completed the survey in French, the PQ has the decided advantage: PQ (38%), Liberals (29%), CAQ (18%), Solidaire (12%), Option Nationale (2%), other (2%).

The tide seems to have turned away from Pauline Marois and the PQ, at least for the time being, as just 33% of Quebecers believe that 'Quebec is headed in the right track', compared to 67% who think that it is 'going down the wrong direction'.

### ***Turnout is the Key to Securing Victory...***

Key to any election victory is the ability to get one's supporters to the ballot box on Election Day, something that Liberal voters appear most determined to do. Examining the vote among the 64% of Quebecers who say that 'nothing short of an emergency could stop me from getting to the voting booth and casting my vote', the Liberal vote grows to 40% (+3), compared to 33% for the PQ (+1). Support for the other parties softens: CAQ at 14% (-2), Solidaire at 9% (-1), Option Nationale at 2% (unchanged), and other parties at 2% (-1).

### *Quebecers' Second Choice...*

The dark horse in the race is the Coalition Avenir Quebec, chosen as the second choice by 32% of Quebecers. Quebec Solidaire is the second choice of 21% of Quebecers, followed by some other party including the Green Party (18%), the Liberals (13%), PQ (9%) and Option Nationale (7%).

With only 9% choosing the PQ as their second choice, their ability to grow in the polls appears to be somewhat stifled. This is exacerbated by the fact that only 4% of Liberals would choose the PQ as their second party, while 14% of PQ voters would chose the Liberals as their second party – suggesting that the Liberals would be the primary beneficiary of any vote swapping between the two leading parties.

### *PKP Not Helping PQ's Fortunes...*

The election campaign was kicked into a frenzy last week with the announcement that Pierre Karl Peladeau, Quebec's most notable media baron, would join the race as a PQ candidate. His desire for a sovereign Quebec is well-known, and his entry into the race has knocked the PQ off message as speculation about the possibility of another referendum mounts.

However, the data suggest that PKP is a drag on his party. A majority (54%) of Quebecers 'disagree' (27% strongly/27% somewhat) that 'the entrance of Pierre Karl Peladeau into the election is a good thing for Quebec', while a minority (46%) 'agrees' (15% strongly/31% somewhat).

Furthermore, just 11% of Quebecers say that PKP's entrance makes them 'more likely' to vote for the Parti Quebecois (two thirds of whom are already PQ voters), compared to 26% who

say it makes them 'less likely' to vote for the PQ. For most (63%), it has no impact on their vote.

### ***Limited, Minority Support for Referendum, Sovereignty...***

Support for another referendum and sovereignty is very low, and much lower than it was two decades ago when Ipsos Reid began polling on the topic, likely explaining why many appear to be rallying around the Liberals as an anti-referendum vote.

Just two in ten (18%) Quebecers say that if the PQ should form the next government, they should hold a referendum on sovereignty during its next mandate. This compares to two thirds (64%) who say 'no', and two in ten (18%) who are unsure. Even among current PQ supporters, only 40% say the PQ should hold a referendum. In 1997, 36% of Quebecers thought the PQ should hold another referendum if re-elected.

If a referendum was held today, three in ten (30%) Quebecers would vote 'yes' to a '**sovereign Quebec, accompanied by an offer of partnership** with the rest of Canada'. In contrast, 51% would vote 'no', while 19% aren't sure which way their vote would go. By comparison, in 1997, Ipsos polling showed that 55% of Quebecers would vote 'yes' under these circumstances.

In a slight variation, 27% would vote 'yes' to a '**Quebec becoming an independent country, separate from Canada**', while 57% would vote 'no' and 15% don't know. In 1997, 38% would have voted 'yes' for Quebec independence.

With referendum speculation rampant in the media, the results of the poll also show that 6% of Quebecers would 'leave Quebec' if there was a majority PQ government elected on

Election Day, while 19% would consider leaving Quebec. Three quarters (75%) would definitely remain in Quebec if the PQ wins a majority government on Election Day.

Some say, though, that the PQ is actually trying to persuade minorities to leave Quebec. When it comes to PQ policies on Anglophones and minorities, one in three (33%) Quebecers believe that PQ policies are ‘part of a deliberate strategy to antagonize minorities so they will leave the province’. Most (67%), though, believe the policies are designed ‘principally to protect and promote the viability of the francophone majority and its language and culture’.

There has been discussion about what impact a move towards sovereignty would have on the economy of Quebec. Seven in ten (69%) ‘agree’ (44% strongly/25% somewhat) that ‘Quebec sovereignty would entail significant economic disruption in Quebec’, while one in three (31%) ‘disagree’ (12% strongly/18% somewhat) with this assertion. Interestingly, 98% of current Liberal supporters agree, compared to just 33% of PQ supporters who believe there would be economic disruption.

### *Quebecers Assess the Party Leaders...*

Heading into the leaders’ debate, Quebecers have assessed the leaders of the major parties. Quebecers were presented with six leadership attributes or traits, and asked which leader was best described by each trait. In almost all cases, Liberal Leader Philippe Couillard came out on top, besting Premier Pauline Marois.

***Question: Which of the major party leaders is best described by each of the following traits?***

	Quebec Liberal Leader Philippe Couillard	Parti Quebecois Leader Pauline Marois	Coalition Avenir Quebec Leader Francois Legault	Quebec Solidaire Leader Francoise David	Option Nationale Leader Sol Zonatti	Green Party Leader Alex Tyrrell
Someone you can trust	<b>29%</b>	24%	19%	19%	2%	7%
Someone who is best to work with the Federal Government	<b>48%</b>	21%	17%	7%	2%	5%
Someone whose values are closest to your own	<b>29%</b>	24%	23%	15%	3%	7%
Someone who is best to manage Quebec's economy	<b>33%</b>	27%	24%	10%	2%	4%
Someone who can get the job done	<b>31%</b>	28%	21%	12%	3%	4%
Someone you most want to share a beer with	22%	18%	<b>26%</b>	19%	5%	11%

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*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between March 14<sup>th</sup> and 18th, 2014 on behalf of CTV News. For this survey, a sample of 810 Quebecers from Ipsos' Canadian 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 +/- 4 percentage points had all adults in Quebec been polled. 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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