

Election 43: half the electorate up for grabs; health care, affordability, honesty are top issues for pliable voters

Women under 35 most likely to be uncommitted (74%), six-in-ten men over 55 already locked in (61%)

August 26, 2019 – In an (unofficial) election campaign where more than half the electorate is available, the focus of party leaders over the next seven weeks shifts from winning over the masses to persuading malleable segments of the increasingly important uncommitted vote.

The most recent public opinion survey from the Angus Reid Institute shows every major party with a desire to form a national government will have to lock in a significant portion of moveable voters in order to achieve that goal.

This reality provides significant opportunities – and burdens – for the main parties.

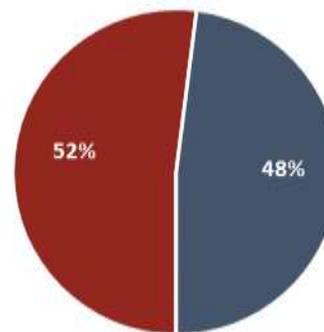
For example, while the opposition Conservatives currently boast the highest number of committed voters (25%), their own ability to grow the CPC base into government-forming territory is blunted by their perceptions of poor performance on issues most important to voters who have not yet locked in, specifically climate change and housing affordability.

Meanwhile, the Liberals have their own issues. On one hand, uncommitted voters are more likely to give the governing party under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau high scores on top issues for them, such as health care delivery and the climate change file. However, the ghosts of SNC-Lavalin continue to haunt. Another top, vote-moving issue— ethics and transparency in government – is one where the party elicits little trust.

More Key Findings:

- Uncommitted voters are more likely to be female (58%) than male (42%), with three-quarters of young women (74%), those under the age of 35, yet to decide on a party. Men over 55 are most likely to have locked in their choice for October already (61% say they have)
- The top issue overall for Canadians is climate change (23%). One-in-three 18 to 34-year old's choose this issue (33%), while it drops to second place for Canadians over 55 behind health care

Committed vs. Uncommitted Voters
(All Respondents, n=1,946)



- Do not have a party they will "definitely support"
- Have a party they will "definitely support"

METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from August 13 - 21 among a representative randomized sample of 1,946 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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- One-in-three uncommitted voters say they supported Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party in 2015 but are not yet locked in this time around. One-in-five say they supported the NDP (20%) and 15 per cent chose the Stephen Harper's Conservatives

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

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The Vote Universe

With fewer than two months until the 43rd Canadian election, the [most recent ARI polling](#) from a vote intention standpoint has shown a competitive race between the Conservative Party and governing Liberals. That said, the picture may be far less defined.

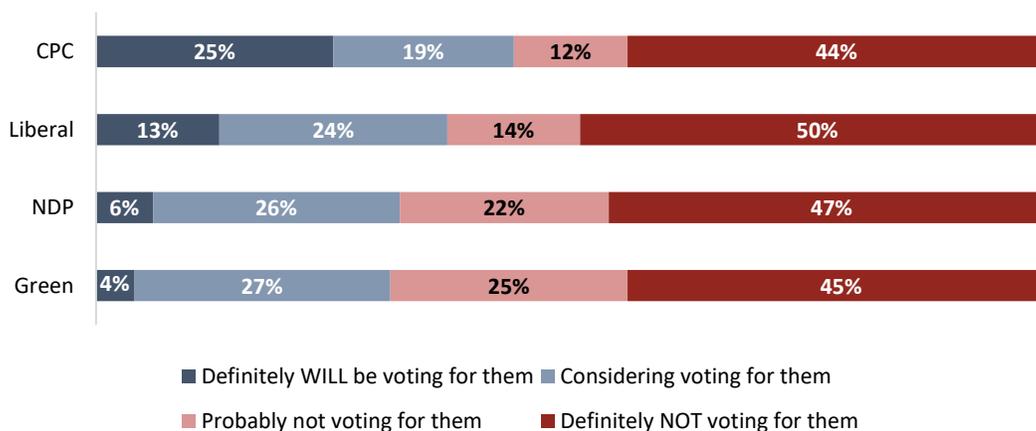
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Indeed, when asked, less than half of the potential voter pool has firmly made up their minds about who they will support on October 21.

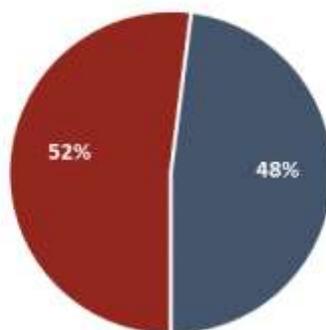
The Angus Reid Institute asked Canadians which of the major federal parties they would consider voting for, and just how firm they consider that decision to be at this point:

**We would like to know how likely is it that you will consider voting for each of these parties in October when Canadians go to the polls?
(All respondents, n=1,946)**



In other words: from a sample size of nearly 2,000 respondents, just 48 per cent say that they are definitely voting for a specific main party and their vote will not change. The other half are weighing their options to varying degrees. This leaves a base of uncommitted voters representing 52 per cent:

**Committed vs. Uncommitted Voters
(All Respondents, n=1,946)**

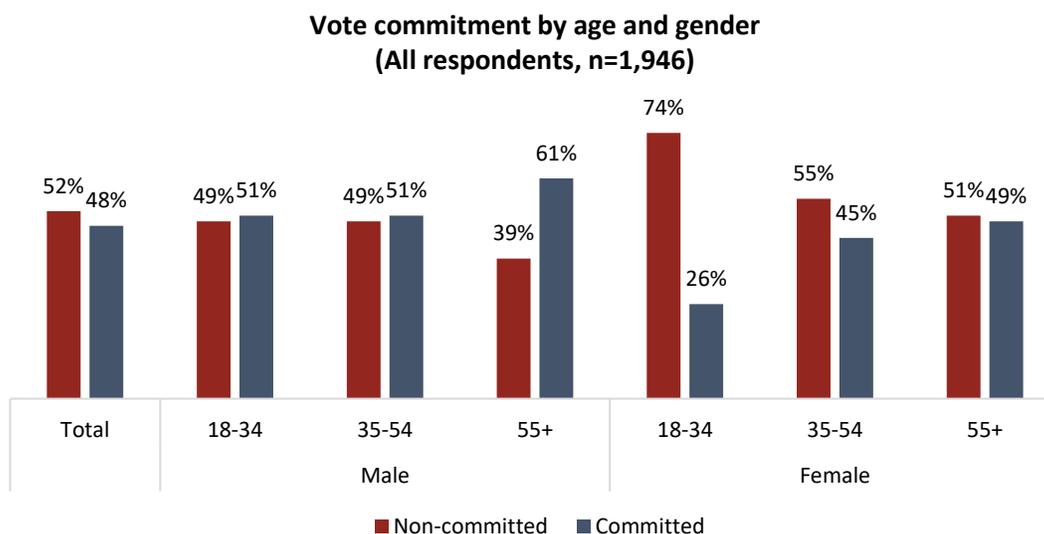


- Do not have a party they will "definitely support"
- Have a party they will "definitely support"

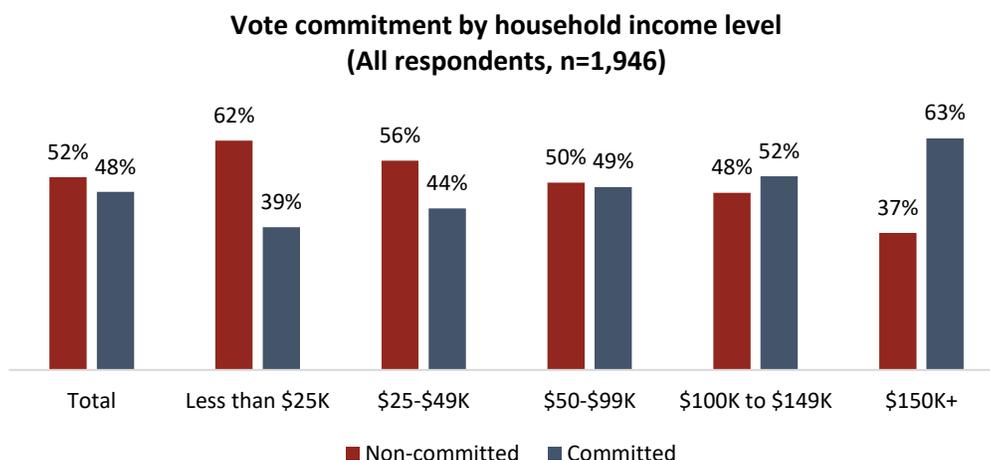
Who are the uncommitted voters?

One of the most important questions then becomes, who are these uncommitted Canadians? To start, they are more likely to be female. In each of the age cohorts, women are less likely to have firmly committed to a party. This is particularly true of young women, three-quarters of whom (74%) are uncommitted.

Much of this gender disparity also likely owes to the strength of the Conservative Party among men, which would have reduced the pool of uncommitted voters among that gender. Men over the age of 55 are far more likely than other groups to have decided on their vote already compared to all other groups:



Uncommitted voters are also most likely to come from lower or middle-income households. Six-in-ten with household incomes below \$25 thousand (62%) are uncommitted. Commitment rises across each of the income categories, with six-in-ten of the wealthiest Canadians (63%) already having made up their minds:

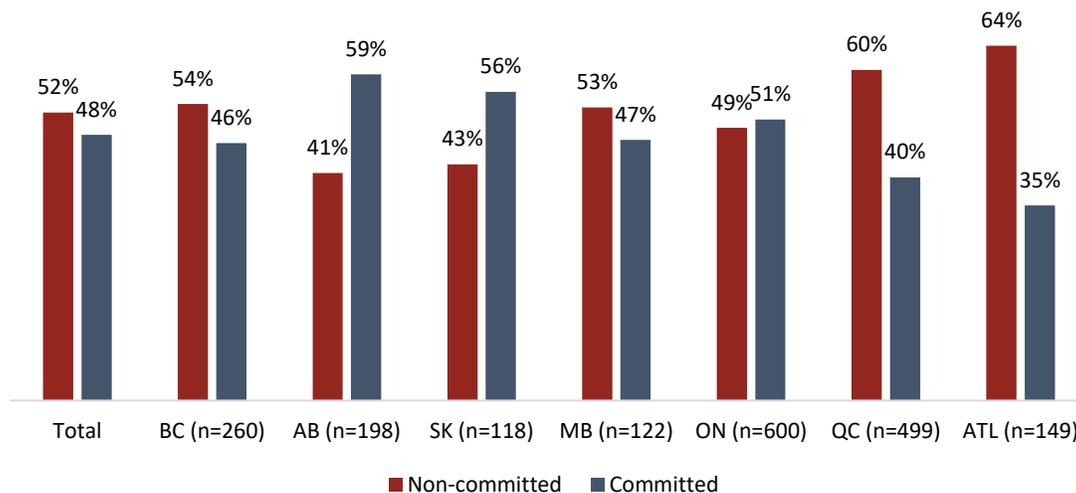


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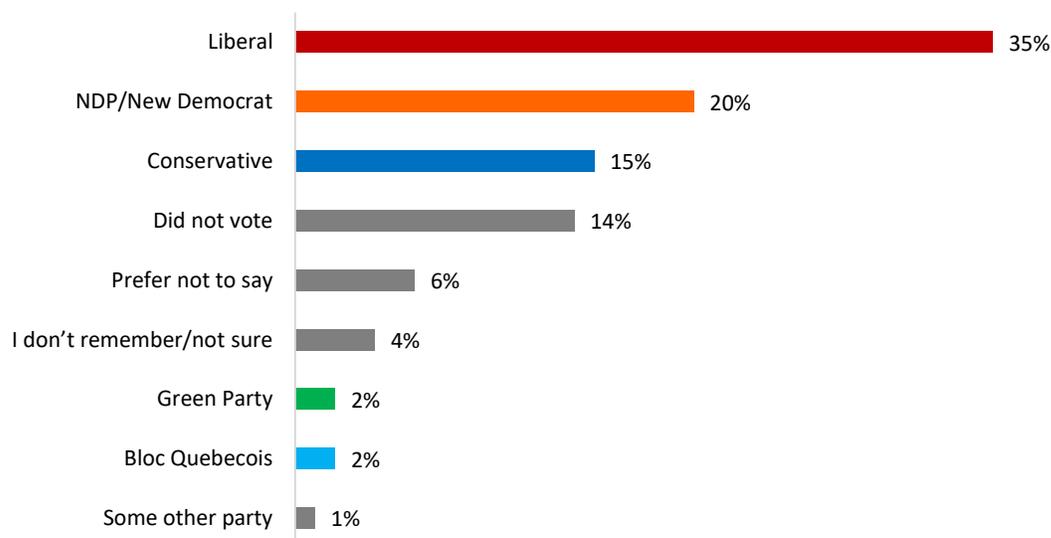
Importantly, at least four-in-ten residents in each region of the country say they are not fully committed to a party yet. In Quebec (60%) and Atlantic Canada (64%), six-in-ten are heading into the campaign with open minds:

Vote commitment by region (All Respondents, n=1,946)



Troubling to the Liberals, they find themselves competing for a significant portion of their own 2015 voters. One-third of *current* uncommitted voters (35%) say they supported the party in last federal election, but will not yet commit to the party again, while one-in-five (20%) voted for the New Democratic Party. Notably, a considerable number of uncommitted respondents say they did not vote in 2015 (14%):

Current uncommitted voters: how they voted in 2015 (n=1,021)



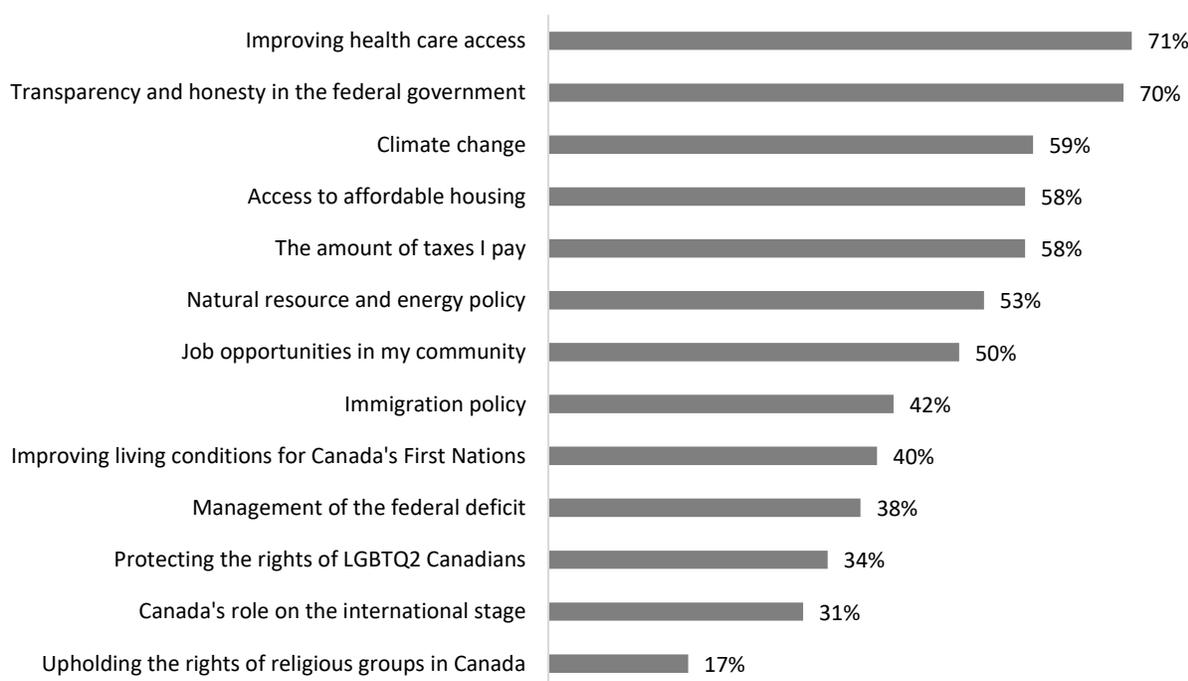
What do uncommitted voters care about?

Chief among the core issues for uncommitted voters: improving health care access and the transparency and honesty that they expect from a federal government. On both of these issues, seven-in-ten uncommitted voters allotted a score of six or seven on a seven-point scale.

Both issues figure to play prominent roles in the upcoming campaign. Discussions of a [national pharmacare program](#) will be front and centre, as will discussion about Trudeau's [ethics violation](#) in regards to the SNC-Lavalin scandal this year.

Three other issues garner a top score from six-in-ten uncommitted voters: taxes, climate change, and affordable housing.

**Top Issues for Uncommitted Voters
(Percentage saying each issue is a 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale, n=1,021)**



There are considerable generational differences when it comes to issue priority. For example, climate change is elevated to first place (tied with health care) among 18 to 34-year-olds who have not committed to a party. By contrast, uncommitted Canadians over the age of 55 are considerably more likely to be concerned about their personal tax burden (70%), the federal deficit (53%) and immigration policy (49%).

In terms of gender, climate change holds elevated importance among women (65%) compared to men (50%), while men are more concerned with the federal deficit (46% to 33%).

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| Top Issues for Uncommitted Voters by Age and Gender (Percentage saying each issue is a 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| | Total (1,021) | Gender | | Age | | |
| | | Male (425) | Female (596) | 18-34 (341) | 35-54 (353) | 55+ (326) |
| Improving health care access | 71% | 67% | 74% | 67% | 67% | 80% |
| Transparency and honesty in the federal government | 70% | 70% | 69% | 65% | 67% | 77% |
| Climate change | 59% | 50% | 65% | 67% | 49% | 61% |
| The amount of taxes I pay | 58% | 60% | 57% | 48% | 57% | 70% |
| Access to affordable housing | 58% | 48% | 65% | 62% | 54% | 58% |
| Natural resource and energy policy | 53% | 57% | 51% | 53% | 49% | 59% |
| Job opportunities in my community | 50% | 46% | 52% | 55% | 52% | 42% |
| Immigration policy | 42% | 44% | 40% | 37% | 40% | 49% |
| Improving living conditions for Canada's First Nations | 40% | 34% | 43% | 40% | 36% | 43% |
| Management of the federal deficit | 38% | 46% | 33% | 27% | 35% | 53% |
| Protecting the rights of LGBTQ2 Canadians | 34% | 27% | 39% | 40% | 32% | 29% |
| Canada's role on the international stage | 31% | 32% | 31% | 31% | 30% | 34% |
| Upholding the rights of religious groups in Canada | 17% | 18% | 16% | 17% | 18% | 16% |

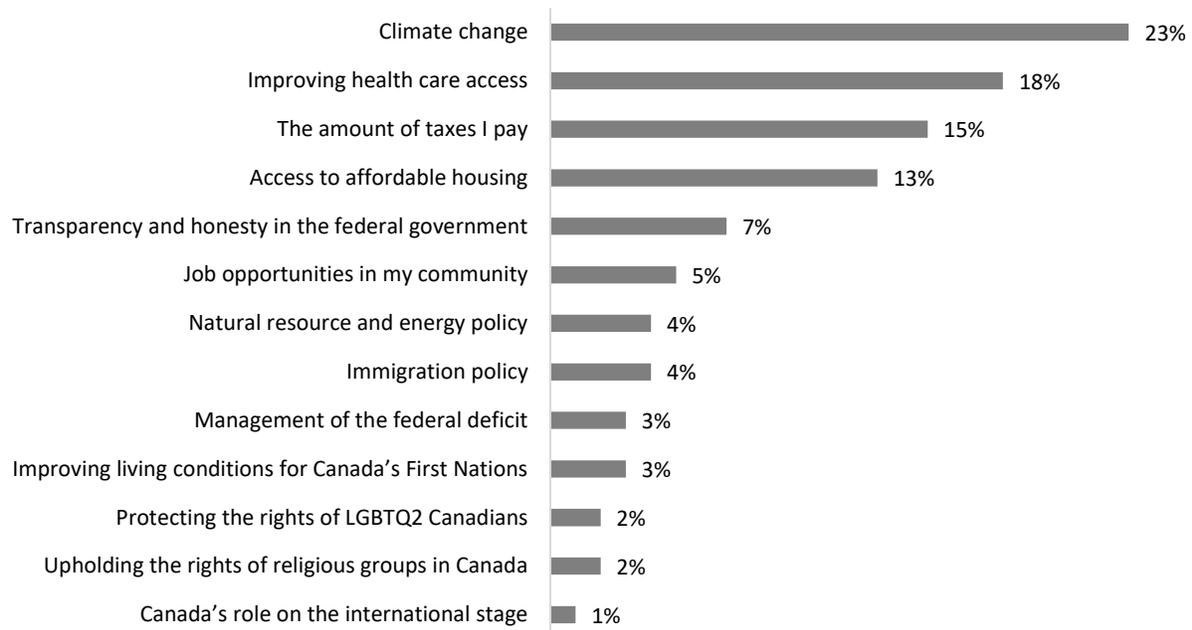
If you had to choose one issue...

It is worth noting what happens when respondents are asked to choose just one top issue. Climate change emerges as the priority, followed by health care, taxes, and affordable housing; all of which receive double digit support. Transparency and honesty in government falls to less than 10 per cent:

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And if you had to pick just one... which of those issues is most important to you personally? (Among uncommitted voters, n=1,021)



That said, the single-most mentioned issue changes among different demographics. Younger Canadians show a clear commitment to climate change as their top issue (33%), while for those over the age of 35, health care and taxes take the top spot.

Women and men differ on their single, top-most priority as well. Women are twice as likely as men to name health care or affordable housing. Men are more likely to say taxes or the federal deficit are most important to them.

| Top Issue for Uncommitted Voters by Age | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| | Total (1,021) | Gender | | Age | | |
| | | Male (425) | Female (596) | 18-34 (341) | 35-54 (353) | 55+ (326) |
| Climate change | 23% | 23% | 24% | 33% | 19% | 18% |
| Improving health care access | 18% | 11% | 22% | 12% | 19% | 22% |
| The amount of taxes I pay | 15% | 18% | 12% | 10% | 17% | 17% |
| Access to affordable housing | 13% | 8% | 17% | 17% | 11% | 11% |
| Transparency and honesty in the federal government | 7% | 9% | 6% | 4% | 7% | 10% |
| Job opportunities in my community | 5% | 6% | 5% | 5% | 7% | 4% |
| Immigration policy | 4% | 6% | 3% | 3% | 4% | 6% |
| Natural resource and energy policy | 4% | 5% | 3% | 4% | 3% | 5% |
| Improving living conditions for Canada's First Nations | 3% | 3% | 4% | 3% | 5% | 2% |
| Management of the federal deficit | 3% | 6% | 1% | 2% | 4% | 4% |
| Upholding the rights of religious groups in Canada | 2% | 2% | 2% | 3% | 2% | 1% |
| Protecting the rights of LGBTQ2 Canadians | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 3% | 0% |
| Canada's role on the international stage | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |

Who are they considering?

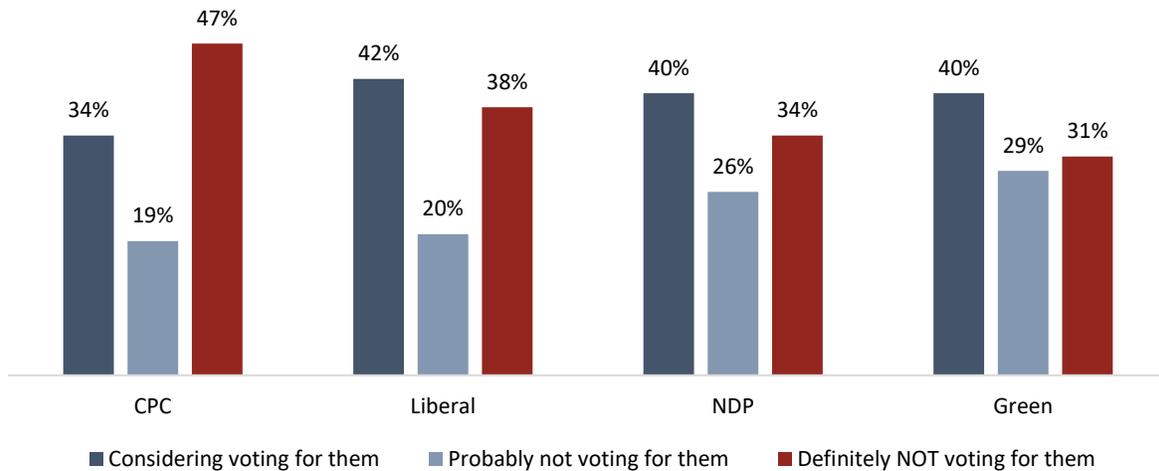
There is natural overlap among uncommitted voters, as they may be mulling more than one party. Still, among this group, some parties carry more appeal than others, as evidenced in the graph below. When analyzing the segments of uncommitted voters who have not totally ruled out a party, it emerges that the Conservative Party has fewer voters to work with than its left-of-centre competitors:

- 53% of uncommitted voters have not ruled out the CPC
- 62% of uncommitted voters have not ruled out the Liberals
- 66% of uncommitted voters have not ruled out the NDP
- 69% of uncommitted voters have not ruled out the Green Party

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**We would like to know how likely it is that you will consider voting for each of these parties in October when Canadians go to the polls?
(Among uncommitted voters, n=1,021)**

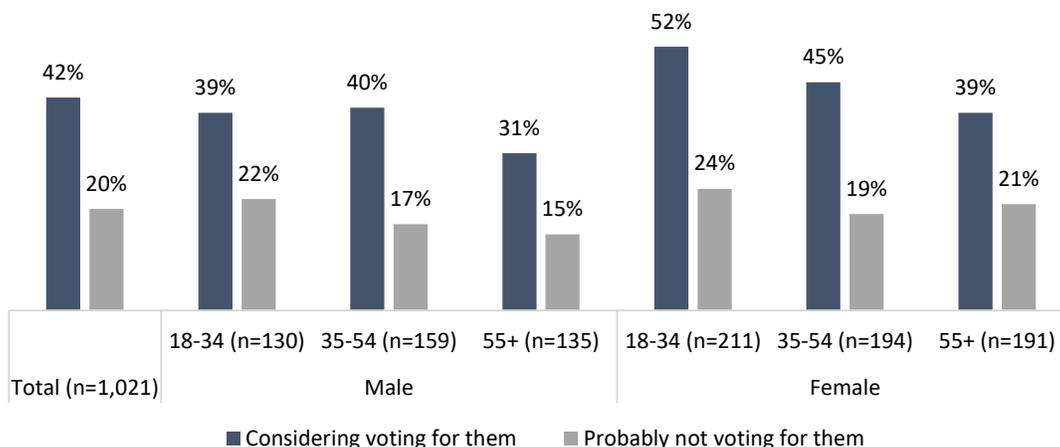


The Liberal Landscape

Can the party re-convince younger women?

One of the key successes of the 2015 Liberal campaign was the mobilization of the youth vote. Among the 18 to 29 age cohort that year, support for the Trudeau Liberals outpaced that of Stephen Harper’s Conservatives 45 per cent to 20 per cent. The landscape in 2019 is far different. His shine with younger voters *has faded considerably*. The good news for the Liberals is that, among uncommitted voters, six-in-ten have not yet ruled out the party (62%). This rises to three-quarters (76%) among young women and drops to just 46 per cent among men 55+:

**Percentage of uncommitted voters considering the Liberal Party -
By age and gender**



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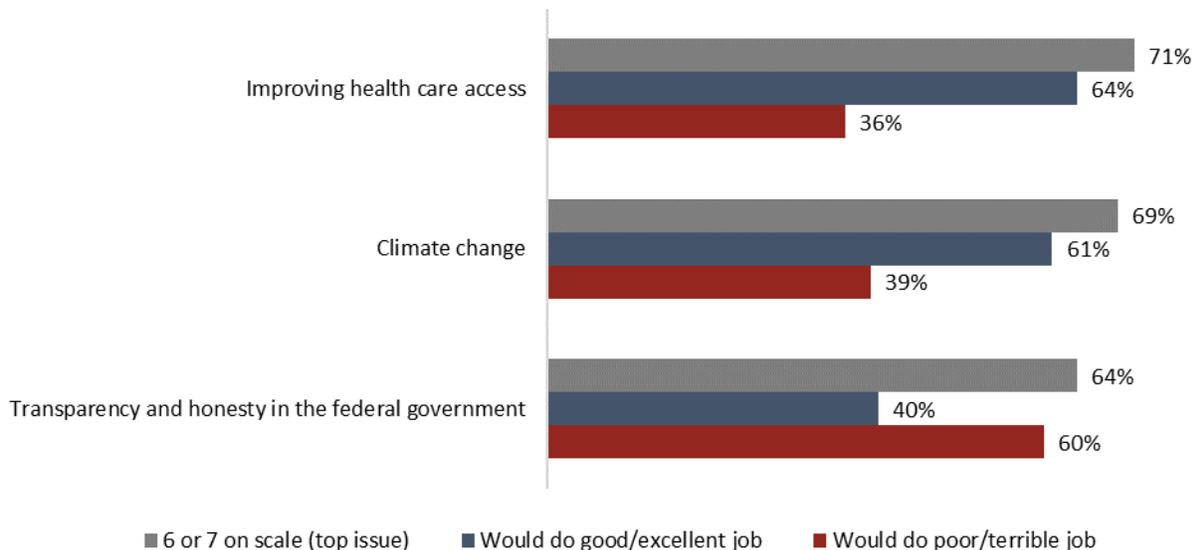
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Top Issues and expected performance - Liberal

Among the 62 per cent of all uncommitted voters open to the Liberals, the party has good standing heading into the election on their top two issues – improving health care access and dealing with climate change.

Trudeau has stated that his party is committed to a [universal pharmacare program](#), and has introduced a federal carbon pricing program that [is overwhelmingly popular](#) with centre-left voters. On both of these issues, a considerable majority of uncommitted voters say they trust that the Liberals would do at least a good job. But driven by dissatisfaction over SNC-Lavalin, six-in-ten say they believe the Liberals would do poorly if not terribly on transparency and honesty in government, the third most prioritized issue amongst this group.

**Uncommitted Voters - considering Liberals
Top Issue vs. Performance Expectation (n=726)**



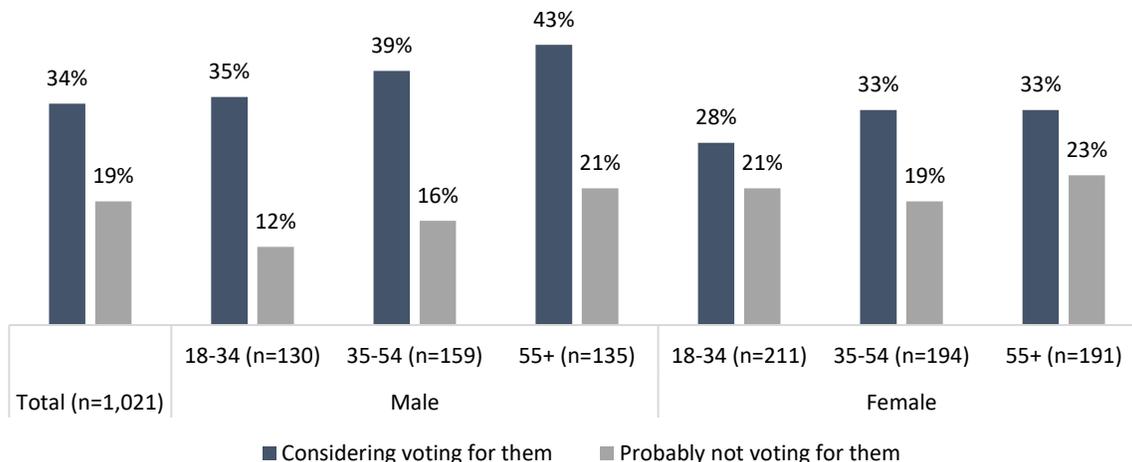
There is also considerable division as to how the Liberals would do on each of the other three top issues for those considering the party. On affordable housing, natural resources, and personal taxation, this group leans ever-so-slightly toward the party ([see detailed tables](#)).

The Conservative Climate

Uncommitted Conservative universe leans male

The Conservative Party and leader Andrew Scheer have cause for both confidence and concern based on this data. As noted, the party has nearly double the committed base of the Liberals but has a smaller pool from which to draw among uncommitted voters (53%). Men are more likely to be open to the party. Far fewer uncommitted women say the same:

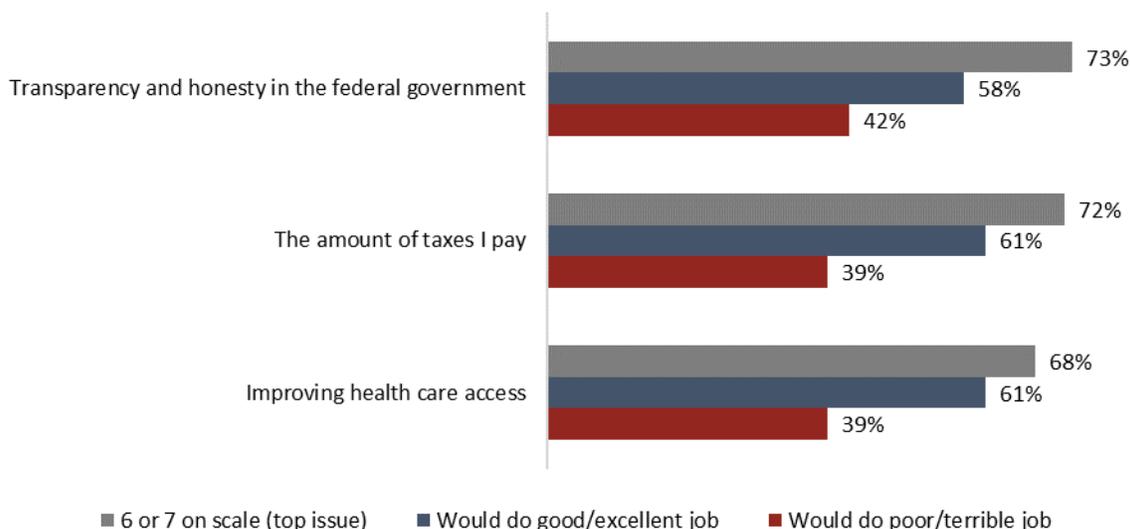
Percentage of uncommitted voters considering the CPC - By age and gender



Top Issues and expected performance - CPC

Among the group of uncommitted voters who say they could consider the Conservative Party (53%), three primary issues emerge: government transparency, taxes and health care.

**Uncommitted Voters - considering CPC
Top Issues vs. Performance Expectation (n=605)**

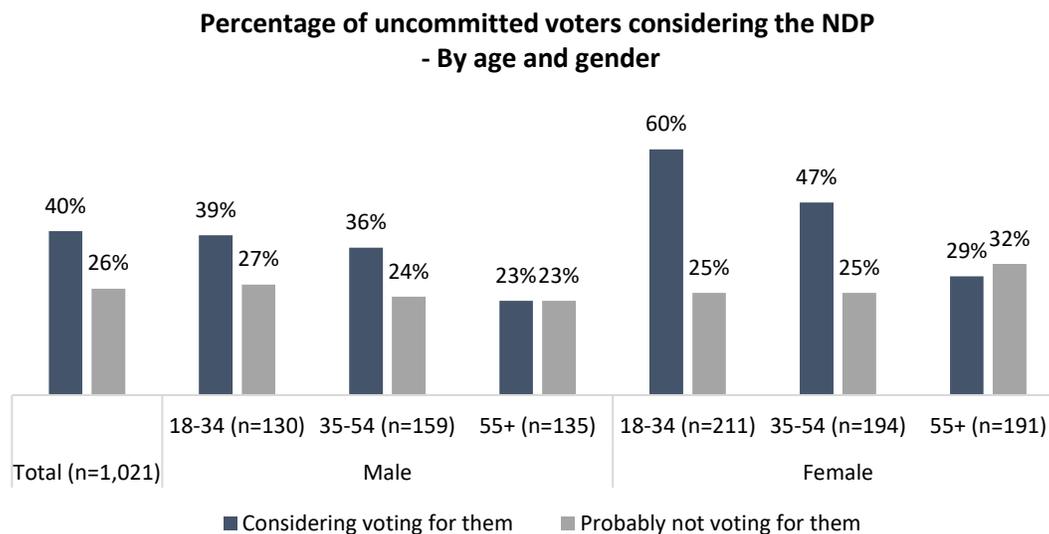


It is notable that CPC scores better on transparency than the Liberals among each party's respective consideration set. Other issues are more divisive among those who haven't ruled out the Conservatives. The party performs well on three issues – job opportunities, the federal deficit, and natural resource policy - but generated division over how it would handle affordable housing and climate change ([see detailed tables](#)):

The New Democratic Network

Can the NDP turn potential into support?

Jagmeet Singh has arguably had a [difficult time establishing himself](#) with some Canadians since assuming the NDP leadership in autumn 2017. His party's success in October will likely hinge on its ability to draw disenchanted Liberal and undecided Green voters into its tent. The party is being considered by two-thirds of uncommitted voters at this point (66%), with women under the age of 55 comprising a significant portion.

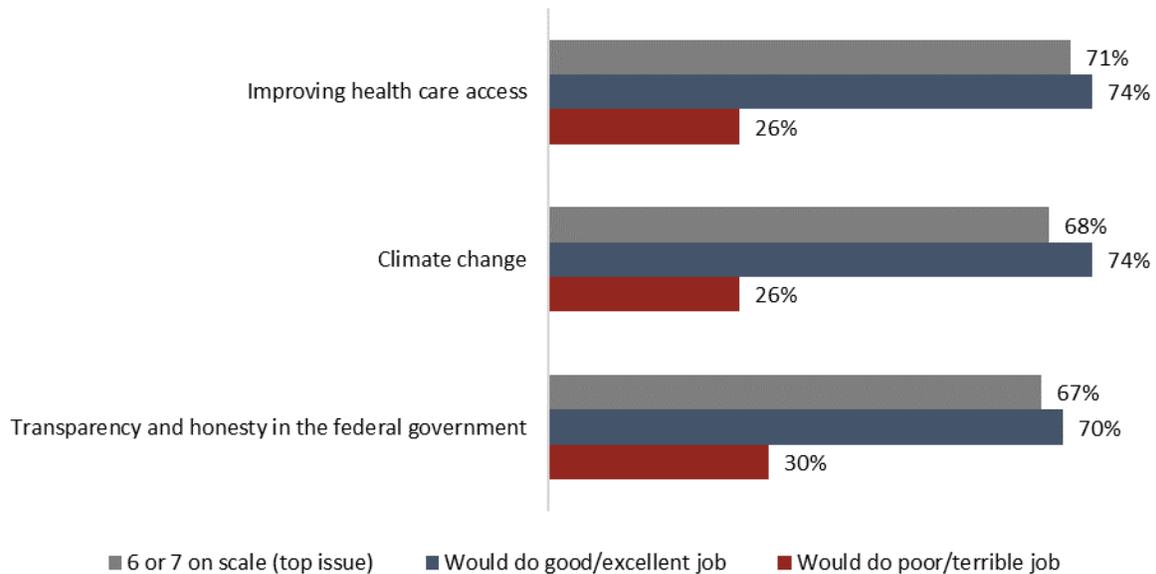


Top Issues and expected performance - NDP

While the NDP has been relegated to a distant third and sometimes even fourth place in polls, it appears that the party has considerable potential if its message is communicated effectively to left-of-centre voters.

On each of the top three issues for those considering the NDP: health care, climate change and government transparency, seven-in-ten or more say the party would do at least a good job. This is substantially more faith than leaning and undecided voters offer the CPC or Liberal Party:

**Uncommitted Voters - considering NDP
Top Issue vs. Performance Expectation (n=919)**



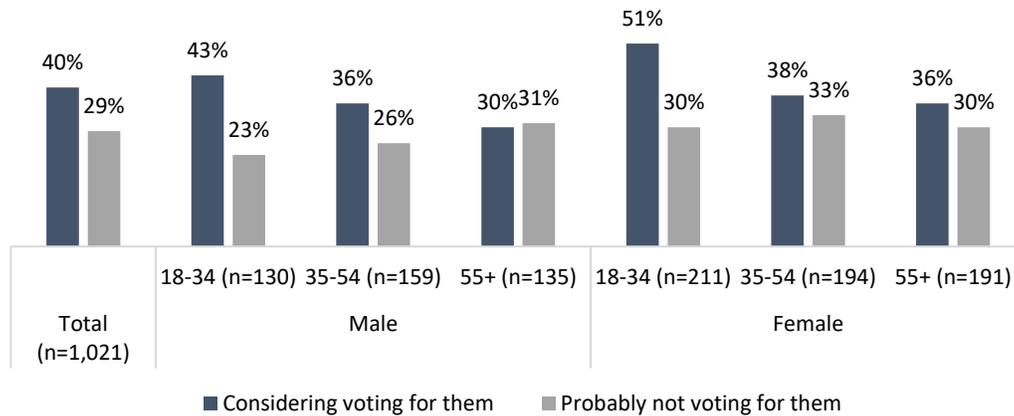
Singh’s party also fares far better than the Liberals and Conservatives on access to affordable housing, and better than the Liberals on the natural resource file. The party’s biggest liability appears to be on personal taxation levels, where half of uncommitted voters say the party would perform poorly ([see detailed tables](#))

Green Party Grid

Will the Green surge reach October?

Early momentum can foretell great success, but it can also be fleeting, as the NDP and Tom Mulcair [found out in 2015](#). Thus, the surge in support for the Green Party, which has polled in the double digits recently, should be taken with a note of caution. Currently, their room to grow is significant, particularly among younger voters. That said, the youngest age group is also the least likely to vote:

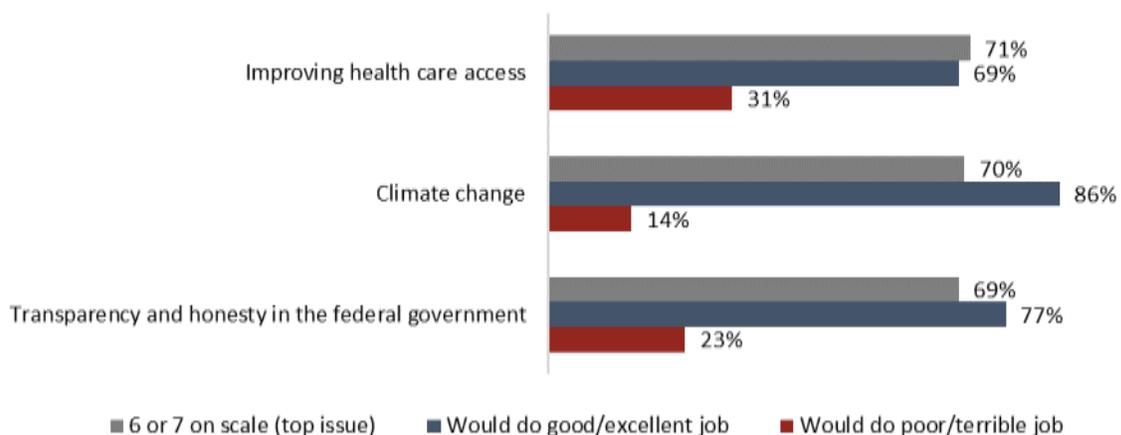
**Percentage of uncommitted voters considering the Green Party
- By age and gender**



Top Issues and expected performance – Green Party

For years, the Green Party has been characterized as a “one issue party”. While it’s true that a portion of their rise in polling this year can be attributed to the parallel rise of climate change as a top issue for the country, the 69 per cent of all uncommitted who would consider voting Green appear to value what the party offers on a host of files, including climate change, health care, and government transparency:

**Uncommitted voters - considering Green Party
Top issue vs Performance Expectation
(n=998)**



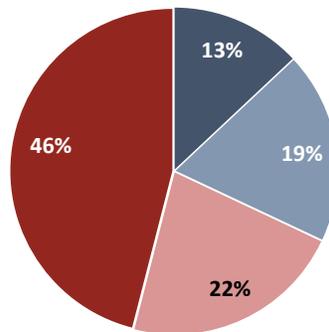
Where are the Greens vulnerable? The upstart party generates the same doubts on taxation that the NDP does. Half of uncommitted voters say it is among their top issues and half say the party would do a poor job on that file. Four-in-ten are also concerned about what a Green government would mean to job opportunities in their community ([see detailed tables](#)).

The Bloc Factor

Quebec is likely to play a significant role in determining which party forms government in October. In 2015, the Liberal Party won 40 of the 78 seats in the province, with three other parties competitive as well (NDP – 16 seats, CPC – 12 seats, BQ – 10 seats).

The coming election looks to be hotly contested once again. While the Bloc’s base appears to be around one-in-10 voters (13%), this party is generating interest from another one-in-five Quebec residents (19%), and has only been ruled out by approximately half (46%) in the province:

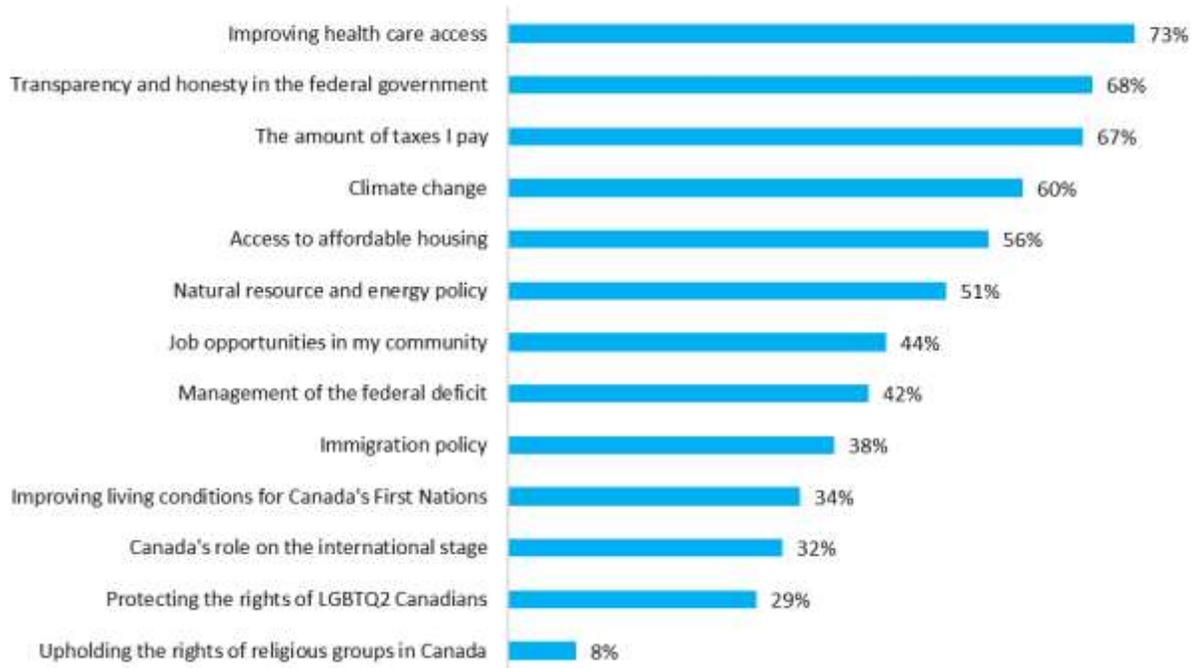
**Support for Bloc Québécois
(QC only, n=469)**



- Definitely WILL be voting for them
- Considering voting for them
- Probably not voting for them
- Definitely NOT voting for them

The top three issues for those considering but not committed to the Bloc are health care, transparency in government and taxes:

**Top Issues for Uncommitted Voters - Considering the Bloc Québécois
(Percentage saying each issue is a 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale, n=193)**



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, click [here](#).

For detailed results by vote consideration, click [here](#).

For detailed results by committed voters, click [here](#).

For detailed results among uncommitted voters by age, gender, region, education and other demographics, click [here](#).

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