

## Questions over vaccine rollout drive negative perceptions of Trudeau government's crisis management

*PM's own political fortunes untouched by worsening views of federal COVID-19 management*

**December 3, 2020** – As Canadians watch Britons and New Yorkers roll up their sleeves – literally – in preparation to receive much-coveted first doses of COVID-19 vaccines, lingering questions over when they themselves will be immunized are having a negative impact on how they perceive the federal government's management of the pandemic.

New research from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute shows a slim majority (56%) says the government under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has done a “good job” handling the crisis. However, this represents a 10-point decline from the last quarter.

This poorer assessment, however, does not appear to be affecting the PM's own political circumstances. Half in this country (50%) approve of the job he is doing, a level unchanged since early September.

Trudeau continues to perform well ahead of his party, given the statistical tie the Liberal Party of Canada finds itself in with the Conservative Party on vote intention (34% to 33% respectively) – essentially where the two parties stood after the October 2019 election.

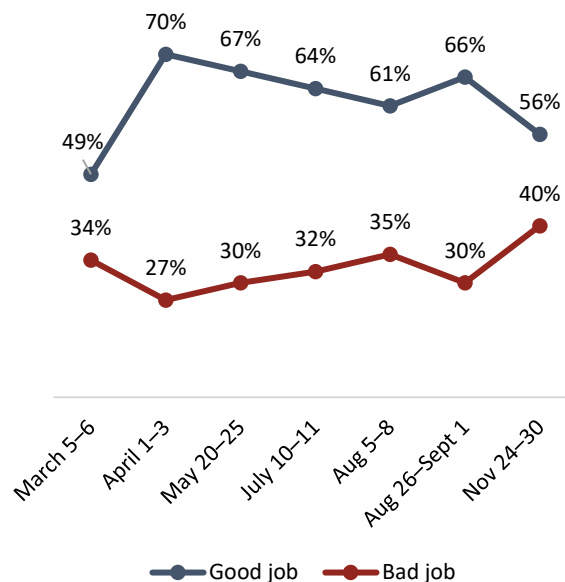
As the country looks towards a new year and an eventual end to the crisis that has taken lives, jobs, and hope from so many Canadians, the financial impact of COVID-19 has a massive impact on their outlook for 2021.

Those who have lost work or equity due to the crisis are nearly twice as likely to say they'll be worse off next year than those who have escaped financially unscathed so far.

### More Key Findings:

- The share of Canadians saying that the COVID-19 response is a top issue has risen by nine percentage points since the summer, from 38 per cent in July to 47 per cent now.

**Views on the federal government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic over time**



### METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from November 24 - 30, 2020 among a representative randomized sample of 5,003 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 +/- 1.4 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.

### CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

- Over one-third (36%) are worse off financially than they were a year ago, twice the proportion saying that they are better off (17%).
- Just over one-in-three Canadians view CPC leader Erin O'Toole favourably. That said, one-in-five (22%) have yet to form an opinion of him, and he maintains high popularity among past CPC voters (76%).

### **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.*

### **INDEX:**

#### **Part One: Top federal priorities**

- **COVID-19 takes precedence as year comes to a close**
- **Criticism of pandemic management grows**

#### **Part Two: Economic outlook**

- **Losses and layoffs have hurt many**
- **Will they be better off next year?**

#### **Part Three: Leadership**

- **Trudeau approved of by half**
- **O'Toole strong with base, room to grow in Quebec?**
- **Singh seen favourably by centre-left**

#### **Part Four: Vote intention**

### **Part One: Top federal priorities**

#### **COVID-19 takes precedence as year comes to a close**

In a year like no other seen for generations, Canadians head into an anxiety-laden holiday season, asked to cancel family gatherings and long-held traditions in order to quell the second wave of COVID-19.

As with most of the year, pandemic response continues to top the list of federal government priorities that Canadians care about most. Nearly half (47%) say it is top priority and another closely connected concern

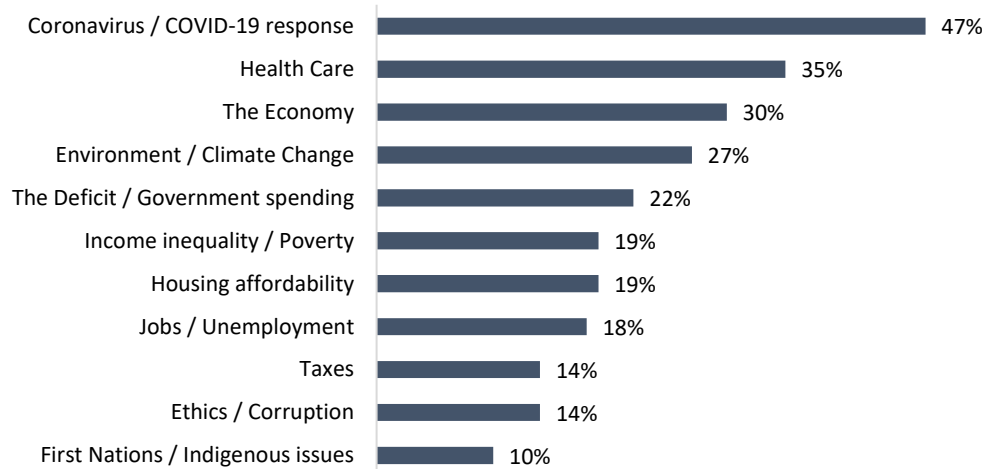
---

#### **CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

– health care – is the second most urgent issue. The economy comes in third, suggesting that while financial concerns are widely seen as the crucial focus, the country continues to give precedence to the fight to contain the virus itself.

**Please rank the issues facing Canada that you care about most:  
(Up to three selected, items with 10% or greater shown)  
(All respondents, n=5,003)**

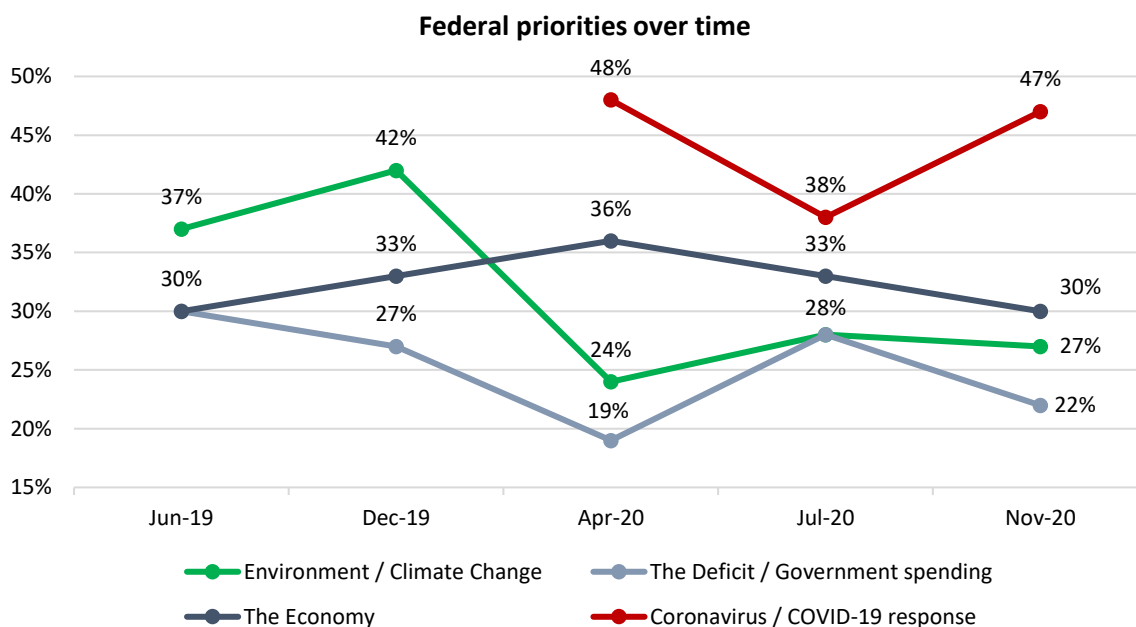


There has been a sharp increase in the proportion of Canadians saying the pandemic is a top issue for them compared to when this same question was asked in the summer, when the COVID-19 curve was trending downward. Current priority levels for the country's COVID-19 response are back to the peak recorded in April, during the worst of the first wave.

As COVID-19 has dominated the year, other top issues like climate change have been de-prioritized by Canadians. The proportion of Canadians worried about the deficit has also waxed and waned as the perceptions of the threat of the virus – and the economic measures needed to sustain Canadians during this period – have evolved. Note that these responses were fielded before the new deficit numbers were released, and responses to the new \$381 billion deficit are not reflected in this wave:

**CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)



Canadians are broadly aligned on what the focus of the federal government should be. The pandemic is considered the most pressing concern in every region of the country, though in Alberta it is virtually tied with the economy in this regard. The province’s economy was hit especially hard this year, and is expected to have a [long road](#) to recovery.

British Columbia is the only province where climate change and the environment are seen as the second highest priority, however this is considered a top issue by a similar share of residents (roughly one-third) in Quebec and Nova Scotia as well.

In Saskatchewan, the deficit and government spending, a primary worry for 35 per cent of residents, cracks the top three.

Top issues by province (Up to three selected)								
BC (n=603)	AB (n=602)	SK (n=497)	MB (n=499)	ON (n=1049)	QC (n=855)	NB (n=260)	NS (n=336)	NL (n=242)
COVID-19 47%	COVID-19 43%	COVID-19 45%	COVID-19 52%	COVID-19 50%	COVID-19 44%	COVID-19 46%	COVID-19 54%	COVID-19 57%
Climate change 31%	Economy 42%	Economy 37%	Healthcare 41%	Healthcare 31%	Healthcare 42%	Healthcare 39%	Healthcare 48%	Healthcare 49%
Healthcare 30%	Healthcare 29%	The Deficit 35%	Economy 28%	Economy 29%	Climate change 33%	Economy 28%	Climate change 29%	Economy 35%

**CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

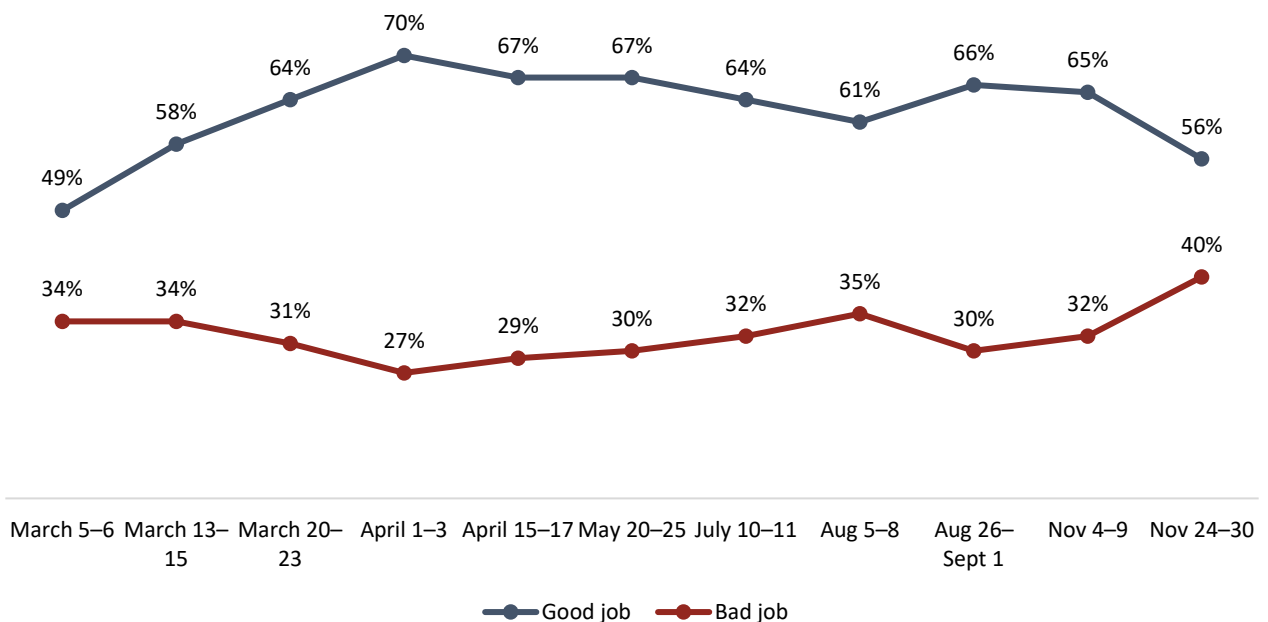
**Criticism of pandemic management grows**

Overall, Canadians are more positive than negative about how the federal government is handling the pandemic, with a majority (56%) saying they are doing a good job. Canada has secured 20 million doses of a vaccine from Moderna and will reportedly be among the first countries to receive shipments in the new year, but Trudeau has warned that Canada will receive some vaccines later than countries that had capacity to produce doses domestically.

Having been criticized for putting Canada “at the back of the line” after the government waited until August to make its first purchase order, two-in-five Canadians (40%) say they believe the federal government is doing a poor job of handling this issue.

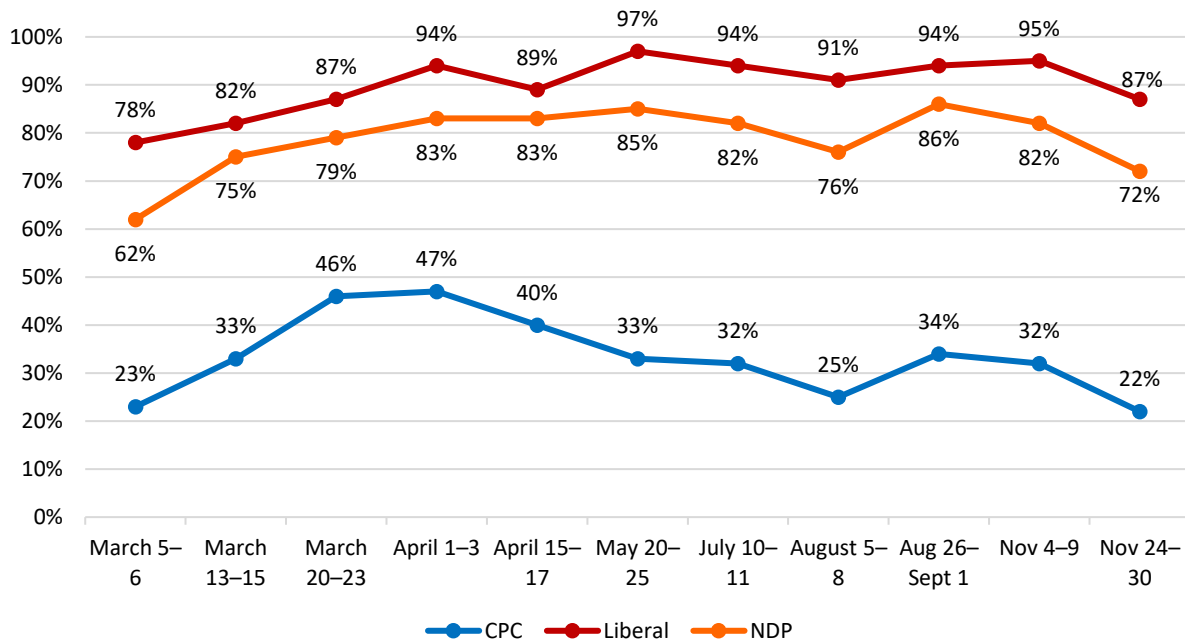
Unfortunately for the government, the trend is not an encouraging one. More say it is doing a poor job than at any point this year, with a correspondingly steep drop in the number who think the response has been handled well.

**Views on the federal government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic over time**



Opinions about the performance of the Liberal government on this issue vary with political leanings. Past Liberal voters are unwavering in their support for the government. Support among past New Democrats remains high at 71 per cent, but this represents a 15-point drop over the past quarter. Meanwhile, Conservatives were relatively complimentary of the government in the early days of the pandemic, but are now at their most critical:

Percentage saying federal government has done a 'good job' in handling COVID-19 outbreak by 2019 federal vote

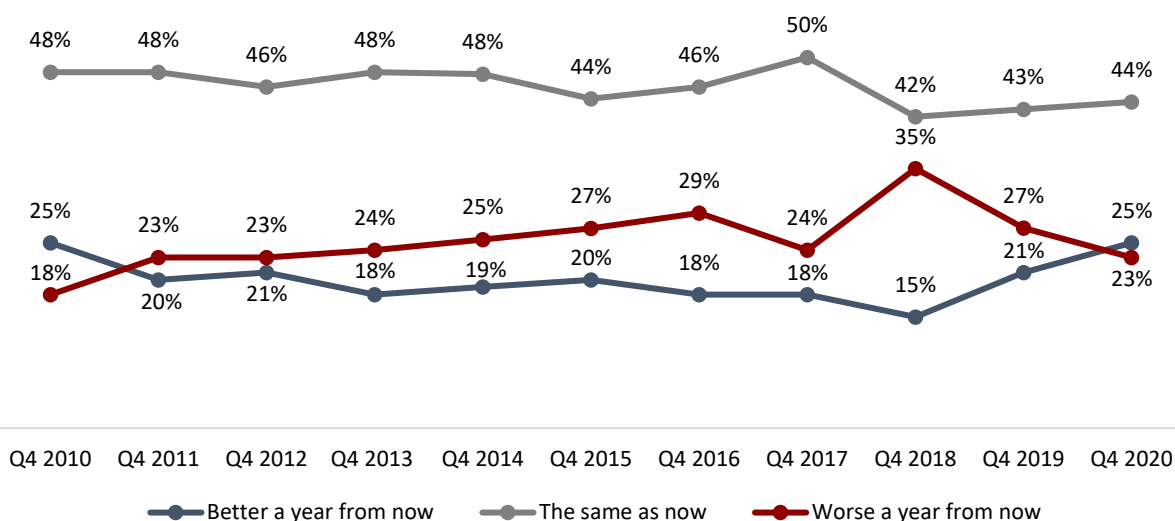


**Part Two: Economic outlook**

**Will they be better off next year?**

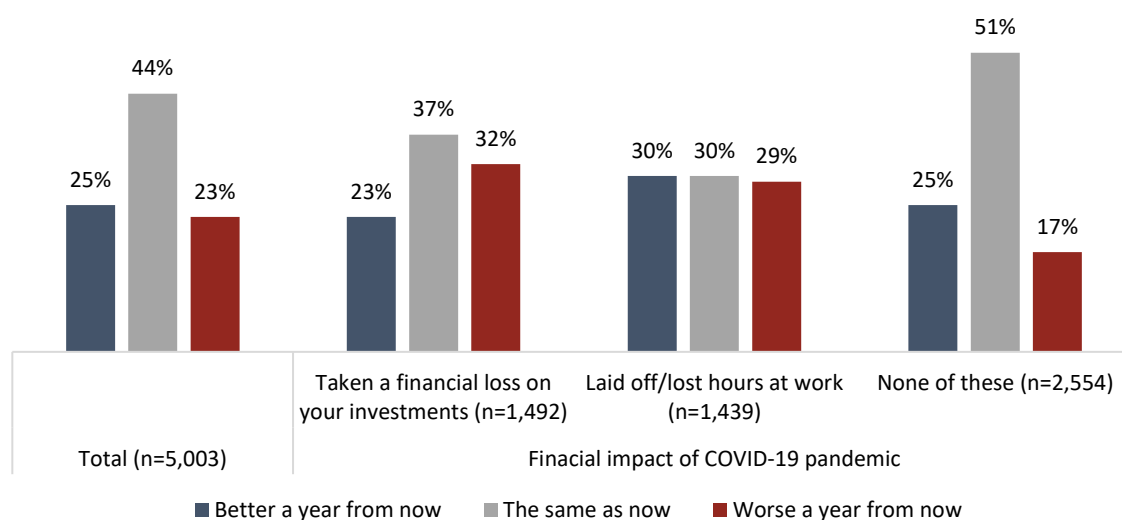
The federal government’s balancing act between preserving public health and economic livelihoods has defined the year from a public policy perspective. The coming years will pose challenges, as a newly revealed [\\$381 billion](#) 2021 deficit portends. Given the ravages of 2020, it is perhaps unsurprising that more Canadians now expect they will be better off in 12 months than at the end of any of the past 10 years. One-quarter (25%) say things will improve. That said, a counterbalancing portion of the same size feel the opposite:

**And a year from now, do you think you will be financially better off or worse off than you are now?**



Troublingly, among those who have endured the worst of the financial challenges, few feel next year will bring an improvement. Among those who have lost work due to COVID-19 or have experienced another financial loss, three-in-ten expect it to compound over the coming year, nearly twice the number (17%) of those who have been unaffected who are expecting their personal financial situation to worsen:

**And a year from now, do you think you will be financially better off or worse off than you are now?**



**CONTACT:**

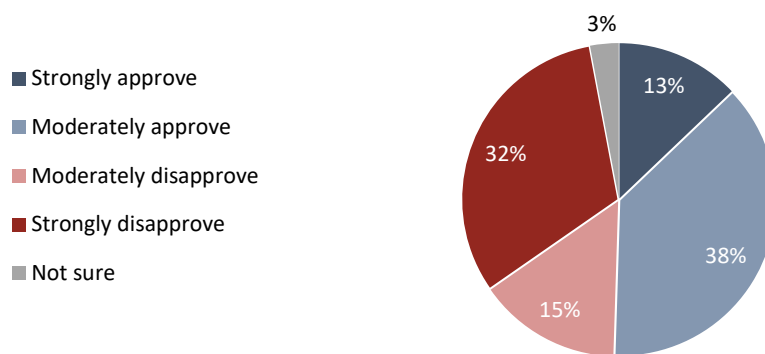
Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

**Part Three: Leadership**

**Trudeau approved of by half**

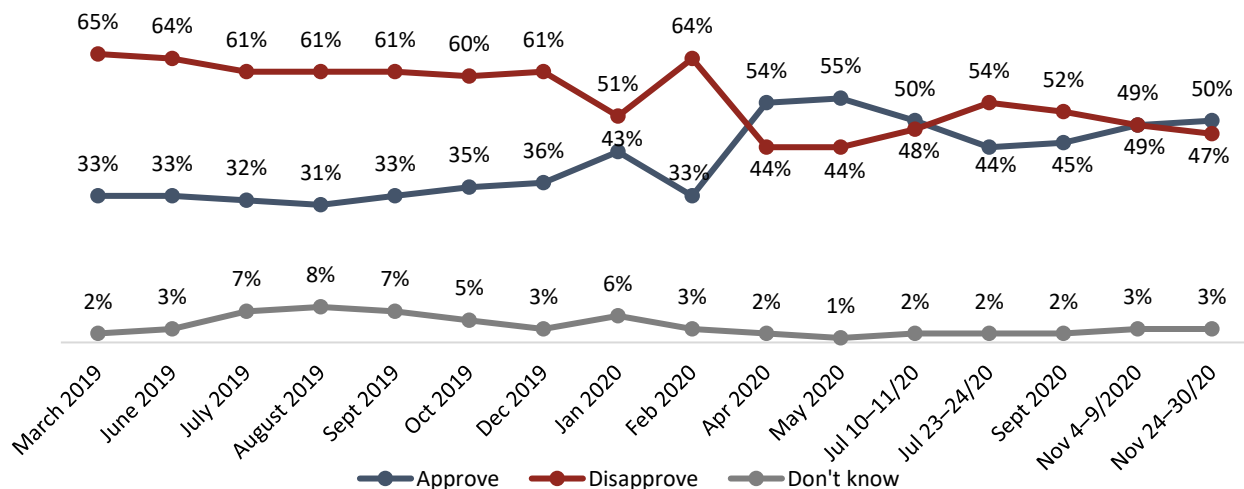
Despite increasing criticism of the federal government’s pandemic-related performance, approval of the Prime Minister is largely unchanged. Half (50%) approve of him, while just under half (47%) disapprove. It is worth noting that while most of those who approve of Trudeau give him only moderate support, most of those who think negatively of him do so with more conviction.

**Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the performance of Prime Minister and Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau?  
(All respondents, n=5,003)**



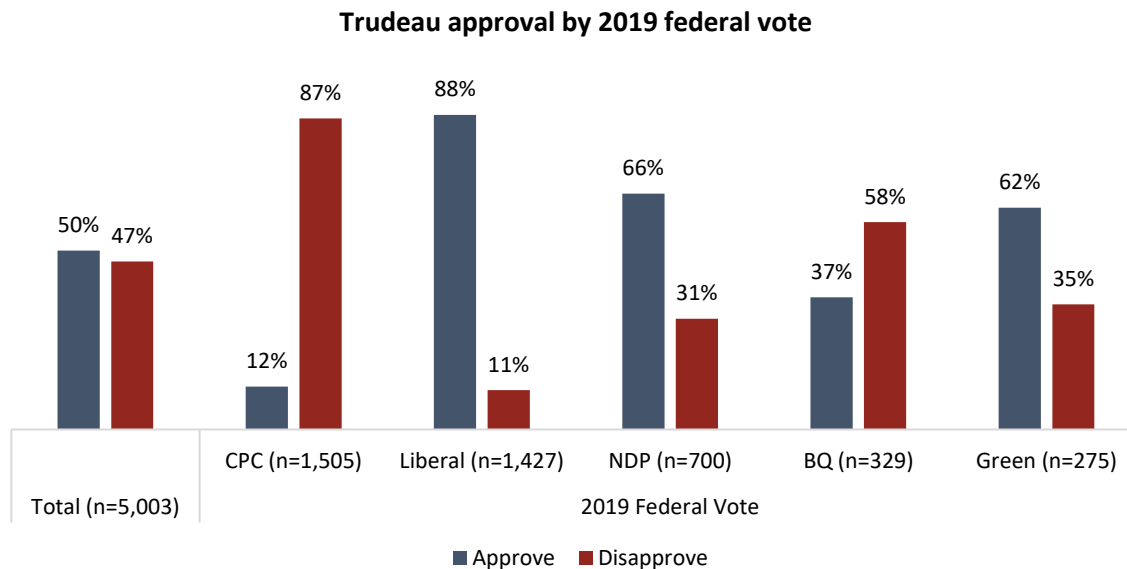
Trudeau’s approval rating has not changed dramatically over the past three months, but it is worth noting that more Canadians now approve than disapprove of him for the first time since early July:

**Do you approve or disapprove of Justin Trudeau?**





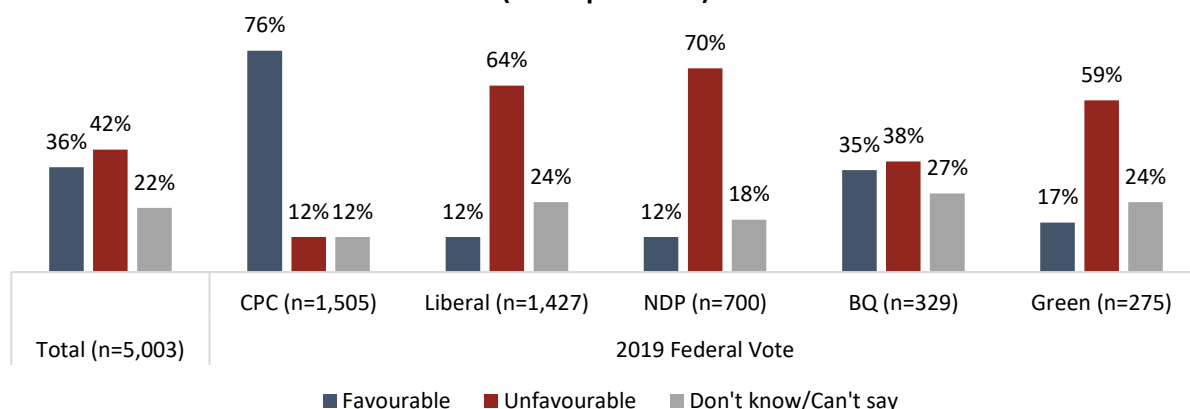
Nine-in-ten past Liberal voters (88%) approve of Trudeau's performance, statistically identical to the number of past Conservative voters that say the opposite. Importantly for Trudeau, more than three-in-five past Green and New Democrat voters also approve of his work:



**O'Toole strong with base, room to grow in Quebec?**

The leader of the official opposition, Conservative Erin O'Toole, has yet to gain significant momentum among Canadians. His favourability rating is the same this quarter as it was three months ago, at 36 per cent. While this leaves him in net-negative territory, with 42 per cent viewing him unfavourably, it is important to note that he is less than six months into his tenure. Thus, more than one-in-five Canadians (22%) have yet to form an opinion of him. The good news for O'Toole is that he resonates strongly with his base and receives mixed views from those who supported the Bloc Quebecois in 2019.

**Do you have an overall favourable or unfavourable view of Erin O'Toole – the new leader of the Conservative Party?  
(All respondents)**



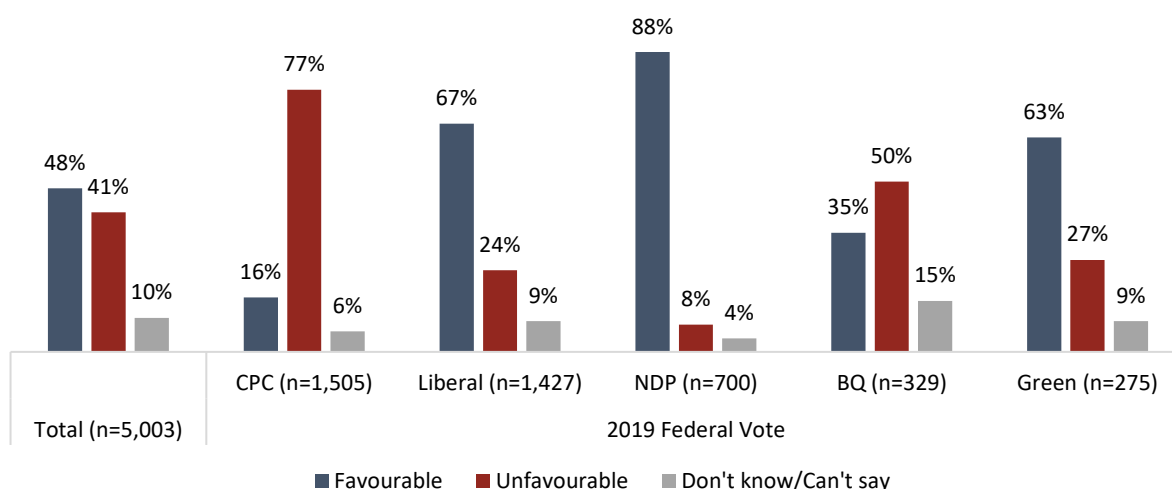
**CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

**Singh seen favourably by centre-left**

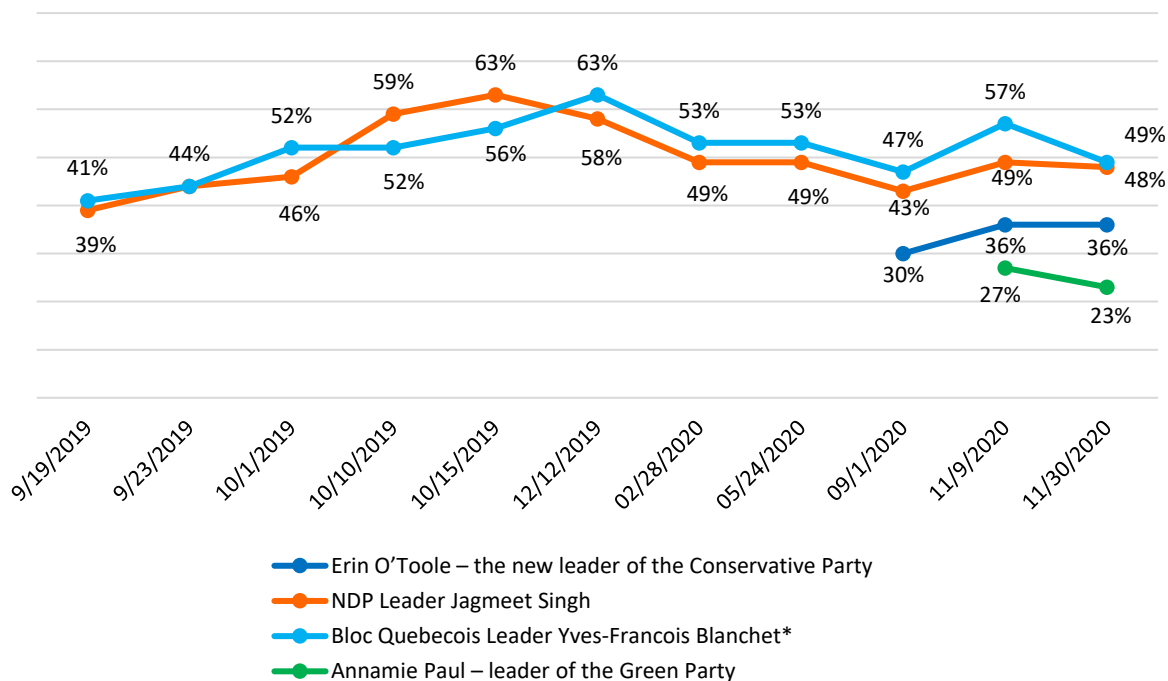
NDP leader Jagmeet Singh is viewed favourably by 48 per cent of Canadians, with 41 per cent viewing him unfavourably. Singh has been a vocal proponent of social programs throughout the pandemic, and recently garnered attention south of the border, joining Democratic congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez for a [video game fundraiser](#) that raised more than \$200 thousand USD to reduce food and housing insecurity. Singh is popular among New Democrats, Liberals and Green supporters:

**Do you have an overall favourable or unfavourable view of Jagmeet Singh – leader of the NDP? (All respondents)**



The leader of Bloc Quebecois, Yves-Francois Blanchet, is approved of by half of Quebec residents (49%), while Green Party leader Annamie Paul is still a relative unknown.

**Leader Favourability  
(September 19, 2019 – November 30, 2020)**



*\*favourability asked only in Quebec*

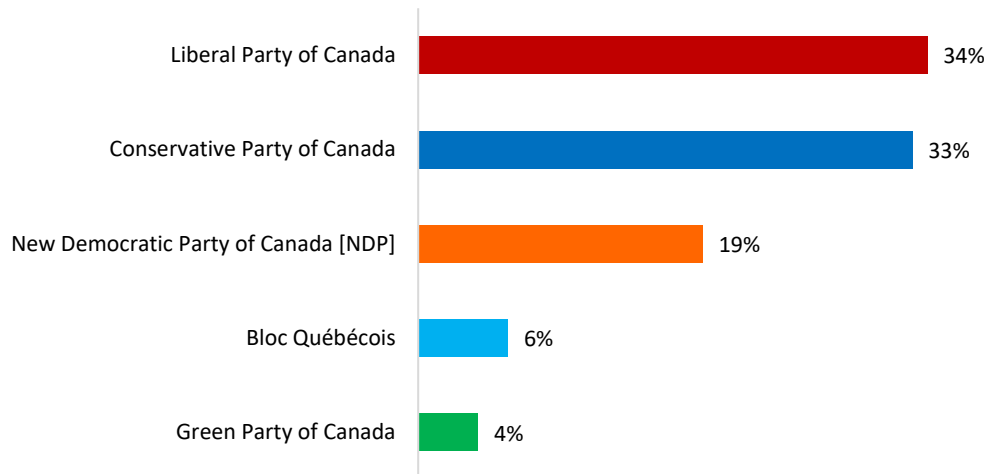
**Part Four: Vote intention**

As things stand now, the Conservatives and the Liberals are in a situation nearly identical to the outcome of the 2019 federal election; each party receives the support of one-third of decided voters. The NDP remains in third, with one-in-five (19%) intending to vote for them, followed by the Bloc Quebecois (6%) and the Green Party (4%).

**CONTACT:**

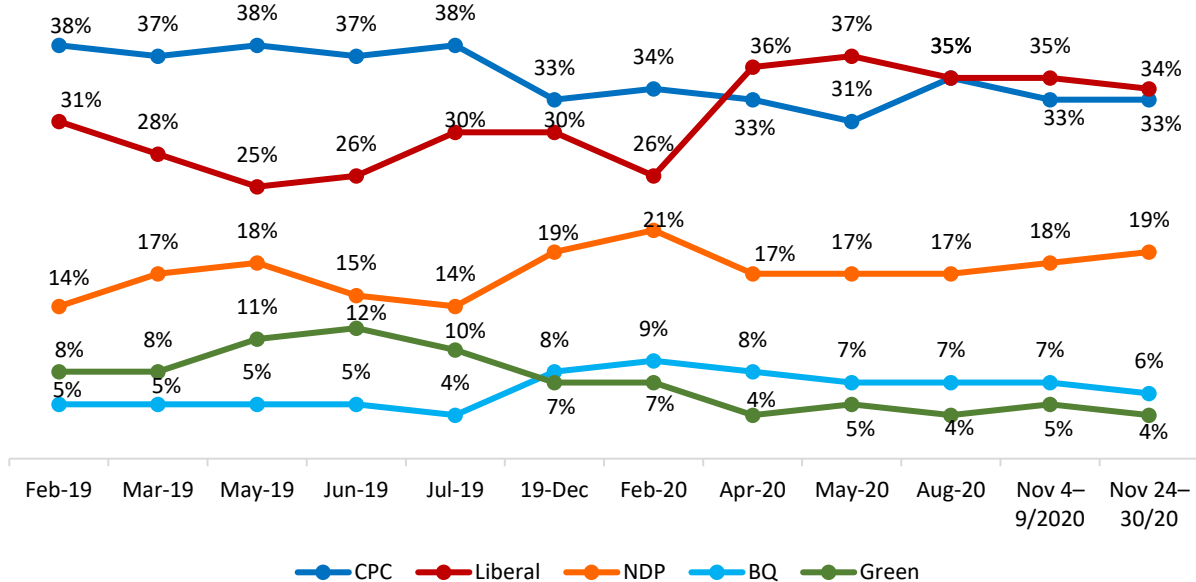
Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

**Federal vote intention  
(Decided voters, n=4,711)**



The Liberal Party retains the slightest of leads nationally, with the situation largely unchanged through the summer and fall:

**Federal vote intention over time  
Leaning and decided voters**



Erin O'Toole has claimed that he is a Conservative leader who can win in Ontario. At this point, however, the Liberals maintain a slight lead in the province of three points. That said, the incumbent party's edge over the CPC has narrowed by half since September.

The Liberals have a clearer advantage in Quebec, where the party holds an eight-point lead over the Bloc, and doubles the CPC:

Federal vote intention, including leaners, decided voters only:								
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (4,684)	Region						
		BC (577)	AB (574)	SK (467)	MB (470)	ON (996)	QC (788)	ATL (812)
<b>Liberal Party</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>NDP</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Bloc Québécois</b>	<b>6%</b>	-	-	-	-	-	<b>28%</b>	-
<b>Green Party</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Other Party</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>

The Conservatives continue to enjoy more support among men, while the Liberal party does well with women. The NDP draws much of its support from younger voters, especially women aged 18 to 34, the only group where they fare better than any other party.

Federal vote intention, including leaners, decided voters only:							
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (4,711)	Age and Gender					
		Male			Female		
		18-34 (646)	35-54 (787)	55+ (860)	18-34 (685)	35-54 (812)	55+ (920)
<b>Liberal Party</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Conservative Party</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>NDP</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Bloc Québécois</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Green Party</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Other Party</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>

**CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

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

*For detailed results COVID-19 financial impacts, [click here.](#)*

---

**CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl

Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)