

## Favourable vs. Capable: Party leaders earn more warmth from Canadians than trust when it comes to the job of PM

*Liberals, New Democrats twice as likely as CPC voters to say they'll vote by mail if able*

**July 29, 2021** – The interruption of summer reverie, brought to Canadians by political volunteers acting on behalf of their leaders, is already underway.

Robo-texts from party chatbots asking who they'll support. Phone calls from real people asking households whether they'll take campaign signs. While the writs have yet to be dropped, a summer election campaign is already in first gear.

Against this backdrop, new data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute shows that voters aren't exactly enamoured with their choices for Prime Minister.

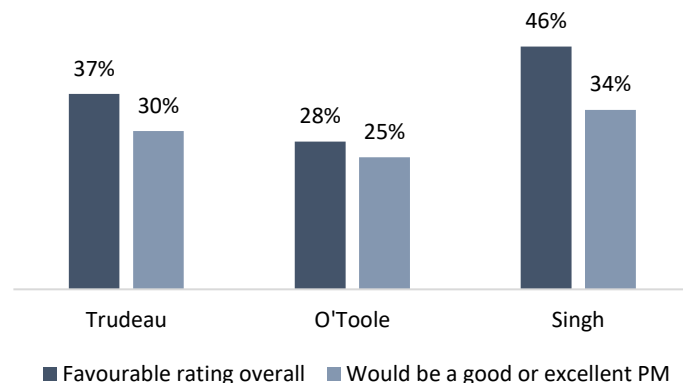
NDP leader Jagmeet Singh has the highest favourability, with 46 per cent viewing him positively, but only one-third of Canadians believe he would be a good or excellent Prime Minister.

A similar gap exists for current Prime Minister and Liberal party leader Justin Trudeau. Just under two-in-five (37%) are favourable towards him, while three-in-ten think he's a good candidate for another term on the job. One-quarter think Conservative leader Erin O'Toole would be good or excellent in the top role, while slightly fewer view him favourably.

Meanwhile, vote intention remains tight, with the Liberals holding a three-point advantage over the opposition Conservatives. One-in-five say they will support the NDP.

With the expectation of pandemic precautions affecting how voters cast their ballots, there may be an advantage for centre-left parties. Elections Canada has signalled that they will be encouraging Canadians to vote by mail if that is their preference and are working towards increasing the country's capacity to do so throughout the campaign. Asked about their preferred method of voting, those who say they will support the Liberals or New Democrats are twice as likely as Conservative voters to also say they'd rather vote by mail.

**Percentage of Canadians holding a favourable view of each leader, saying they would be a good or excellent Prime Minister (All respondents, n=1,606)**



### **METHODOLOGY:**

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from July 23-27, 2021 among a representative randomized sample of 1,606 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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## More Key Findings:

- Among their own supporters, 68 per cent each respectively say Erin O'Toole and Justin Trudeau would make good or excellent Prime Ministers. Jagmeet Singh is at 78 per cent on this measure among his own would-be voters
- The Liberals maintain key leads in Ontario and Quebec. British Columbia appears extremely competitive as the Liberals, Conservatives, and NDP all garner more than 26 per cent support. Meanwhile, the CPC stronghold in Alberta and Saskatchewan holds firm
- Voters under the age of 55 are much more likely to heap praise on Singh personally, while also giving him the edge as a potential “good” or “excellent” PM over Justin Trudeau or Erin O'Toole

## 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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**Part One: Favourability and Ability**

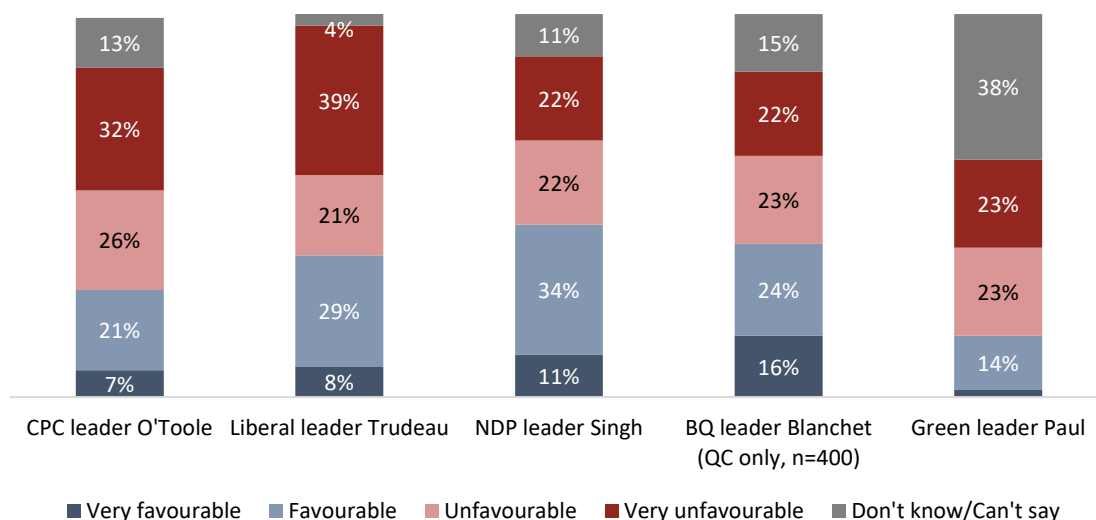
**Singh leads in favourability, Trudeau, O'Toole struggle**

As Canadians approach mid-summer and inch closer to an expected election, the three main federal party leaders have already begun their attempts to re-establish connections with voters.

New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh, with his thriving [TikTok presence](#) and strong standing among young Canadians, has an advantage in favourability among the three major federal party leaders. Approaching half of Canadians (46%) view Singh favourably, while 44 per cent say the opposite. For Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and opposition leader Erin O'Toole, the situation is worse.

Fewer than two-in-five (37%) currently have a favourable view of Prime Minister Trudeau, while only 28 per cent say the same of Erin O'Toole:

**Favourable vs. unfavourable views of each leader  
(All respondents, n=1,606)**



Party strategists will have work to do in order to ingratiate each leader more broadly. That said, some have more strengths to work with than others. Justin Trudeau is viewed favourably by at least two-in-five women of all ages. Erin O'Toole fares the best – by far – among men over the age of 54. Meantime, Jagmeet Singh receives favourable ratings of 47 per cent or higher among all female age groups and among young men:

Favourability of leading parties' leaders by age and gender								
(Weighted sample sizes)		Total (n=1,606)	Age and Gender					
			Male			Female		
			18-34 (n=174)	35-54 (n=282)	55+ (n=315)	18-34 (n=190)	35-54 (n=305)	55+ (n=340)
Liberal leader Trudeau	Favourable	37%	31%	32%	29%	40%	43%	43%
	Unfavourable	59%	66%	65%	69%	54%	51%	53%
CPC leader O'Toole	Favourable	28%	29%	31%	45%	13%	20%	26%
	Unfavourable	59%	62%	60%	50%	64%	58%	63%
NDP leader Singh	Favourable	46%	47%	41%	29%	67%	51%	48%
	Unfavourable	44%	44%	52%	67%	18%	34%	39%

Singh is also viewed most favourably by those who currently say they will support his party; nine-in-ten would be NDP voters view him positively (92%). This is the case for Justin Trudeau among 78 per cent of Liberal voters and for Erin O'Toole among 75 per cent of CPC voters. Perhaps most notable in these partisanship data, however, is Singh's 61 per cent favourability among those who say they intend to support the Liberals ([see detailed tables](#)).

### **Would anyone be a “good” or “excellent” PM?**

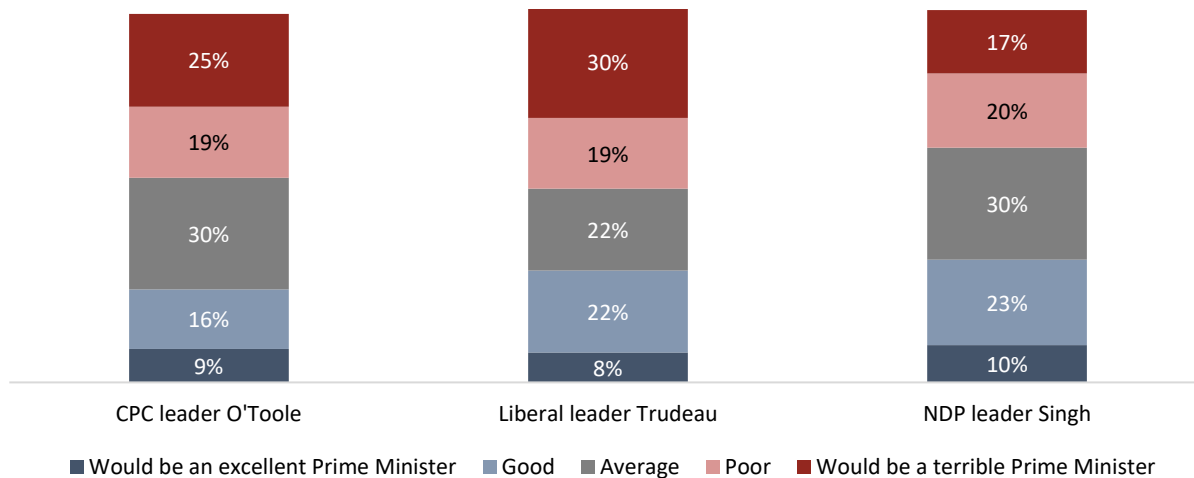
None of the major federal party leaders are significantly distinguishing themselves from the others in terms of perceived leadership ability. While Justin Trudeau has six years of experience under his belt, just three-in-ten Canadians feel he would be a good or excellent Prime Minister for the next four years.

The good news for Trudeau is that even fewer say this of his main rival, Erin O'Toole (25%). Jagmeet Singh holds a slight advantage on this question, with one-in-three saying he would be an above average Prime Minister and three-in-ten saying he would be average (30%). Note that for this question, only views of the three parties most likely to form government are canvassed:

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**Thinking about the following leaders, how do you think each would perform as Prime Minister assuming his party formed the next government:  
(All respondents, n=1,606)**



Men of all ages are critical of the current Prime Minister's performance prospects for another term. Indeed, at least 53 per cent in each age group say he would be poor or terrible. Despite their high levels of support for the Conservative Party, less than two-in-five (37%) men over the age of 54 feel Erin O'Toole would be an above average leader, while Jagmeet Singh's highest levels of enthusiasm come from women younger than 55:

Thinking about the following leaders, how do you think each would perform as Prime Minister assuming his party formed the next government:								
(Weighted sample sizes)		Total (n=1,606)	Age and Gender					
			Male			Female		
			18-34 (n=174)	35-54 (n=282)	55+ (n=315)	18-34 (n=190)	35-54 (n=305)	55+ (n=340)
Liberal leader Trudeau	Excellent/Good	30%	20%	25%	24%	31%	35%	40%
	Average	22%	27%	20%	15%	36%	25%	15%
	Poor/Terrible	48%	53%	55%	61%	32%	40%	45%
CPC leader O'Toole	Excellent/Good	25%	28%	27%	37%	16%	19%	22%
	Average	30%	27%	32%	28%	29%	32%	30%
	Poor/Terrible	45%	44%	41%	34%	56%	49%	49%
NDP leader Singh	Excellent/Good	34%	36%	27%	20%	53%	42%	32%
	Average	30%	27%	29%	24%	32%	33%	33%
	Poor/Terrible	37%	36%	43%	56%	15%	25%	35%

Erin O'Toole and the Conservative Party have an immense challenge ahead of them if an election is indeed called. Avenues for plying voters away from the Liberals and NDP appear much less open for the CPC. Consider that two-thirds of current NDP leaners say that Justin Trudeau would at least be an average, if not good or great leader, for the country if the Liberals won. Even more Liberals say the same of Jagmeet Singh, assuming his party formed government. When each – Liberal voters and NDP voters – consider Erin O'Toole, however, they are overwhelmingly negative ([see detailed tables](#)).

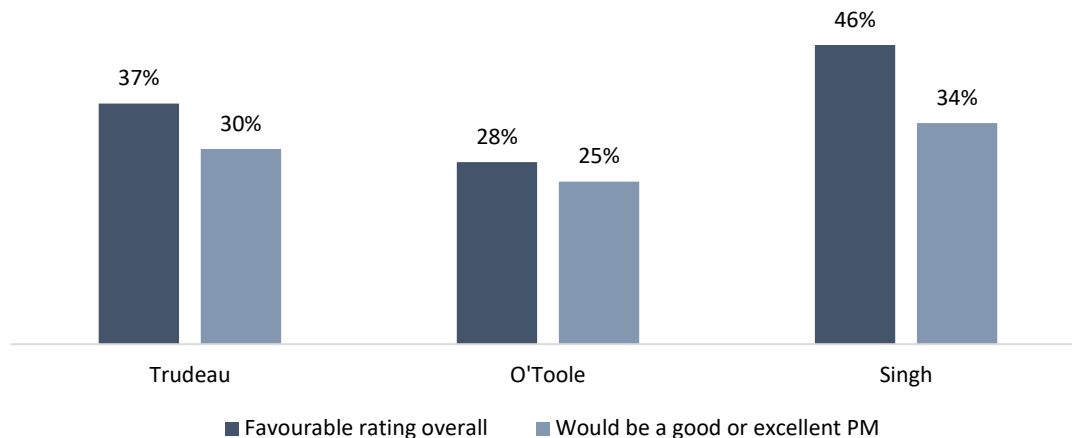
### **Favourability versus Ability: The Gap**

The percentage of Canadians saying each leader would be an above average Prime Minister falls short of their individual favourability rating (as seen in the graph below). This suggests that though they are seen as likable, or viewed positively in some way, those same people offering an optimistic appraisal are still withholding trust that each would do well if given the country's top job:

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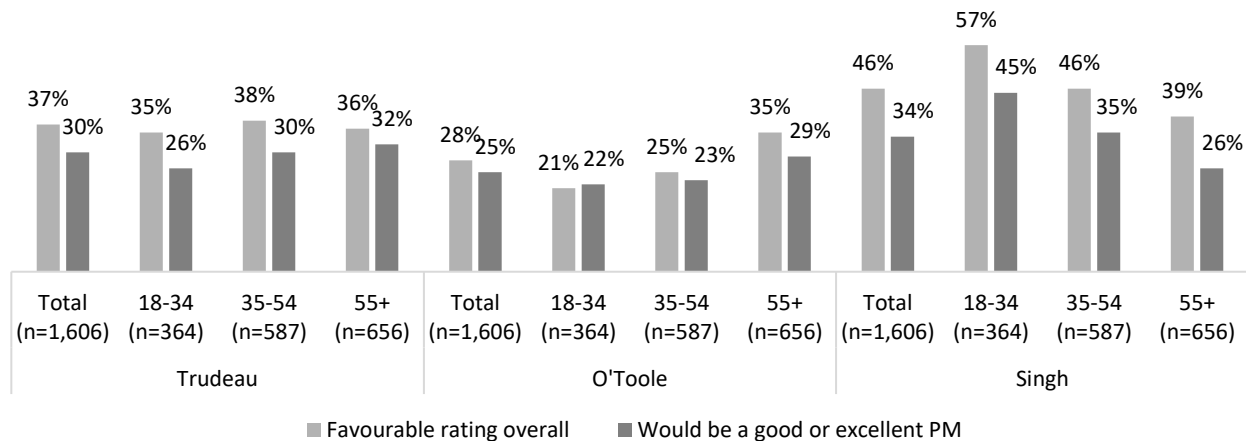
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**Percentage of Canadians holding a favourable view of each leader, saying they would be a good or excellent Prime Minister (All respondents, n=1,606)**



Looking at the situation by age demographics, voters under the age of 55 are much more likely to heap praise on Singh personally, while also giving him the edge as a potential “good” or “excellent” PM. The challenge for the NDP leader, as always, is converting this faith in him personally into votes for his party:

**Percentage of Canadians holding a favourable view of each leader, saying they would be a good or excellent Prime Minister, by age (All respondents, n=1,606)**



The positive feelings for O'Toole — both by favourability and whether respondents believe he would be a good or excellent Prime Minister — are concentrated in the Conservative strongholds of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Those in Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada are the most likely to say that Trudeau would be a good or excellent Prime Minister were he to get another term. Meanwhile, half of respondents in B.C., Manitoba, Ontario and Atlantic Canada have favourable ratings of Singh:

Percentage of Canadians holding a favourable view of each leader, saying they would be a good or excellent Prime Minister									
(Unweighted sample sizes)		Total (1,606)	Region						
			BC (205)	AB (154)	SK (124)	MB (124)	ON (446)	QC (400)	ATL (153)
Trudeau	Favourable rating overall	37%	39%	16%	22%	37%	40%	41%	41%
	Would be a good or excellent PM	30%	30%	13%	14%	28%	32%	36%	33%
O'Toole	Favourable rating overall	28%	26%	45%	39%	29%	25%	25%	26%
	Would be a good or excellent PM	25%	21%	41%	33%	23%	25%	22%	21%
Singh	Favourable rating overall	46%	51%	31%	39%	50%	50%	41%	51%
	Would be a good or excellent PM	34%	38%	26%	28%	38%	36%	30%	36%

While O'Toole enjoys little belief among Liberal and NDP supporters that he would be a good or excellent Prime Minister, importantly in battleground Quebec, one-quarter of decided Bloc Quebecois supporters believe the CPC leader could excel in the role and hold more favourable views of him:

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Percentage of Canadians holding a favourable view of each leader, saying they would be a good or excellent Prime Minister						
(Weighted sample sizes)		Total (n=1,606)	Federal vote intention			
			Liberal (n=453)	CPC (n=490)	NDP (n=307)	BQ (n=103)
Trudeau	Favourable rating overall	37%	78%	4%	41%	19%
	Would be a good or excellent PM	30%	68%	3%	29%	12%
O'Toole	Favourable rating overall	28%	8%	75%	7%	24%
	Would be a good or excellent PM	25%	5%	68%	4%	26%
Singh	Favourable rating overall	46%	61%	13%	92%	13%
	Would be a good or excellent PM	34%	40%	10%	78%	10%

\*Responses from Green supporters not shown due to small sample size

## Part Two: Mail-in voting could be key

In preparation for a potential pandemic election, the Liberal government tabled [a bill](#) last December to amend the Elections Act to allow for three-day polling periods among other COVID-19 focused safety measures. [Bill C-19 stalled](#) before parliament adjourned for summer, but Elections Canada says [it's ready](#) even without those changes.

[Elections Canada says](#) it has increased the capacity to process mail-in ballots, implemented an online system for people to register to vote by mail, and plans to put drop boxes at polling places to allow voters to cast their mail-in ballot on polling day if they miss the mail-by deadline. In December, when COVID-19 cases were much worse and before anyone in the country was vaccinated, Elections Canada said as many as [five million Canadians](#) may vote by mail in a pandemic election; only 55,000 chose that option in the 2019 election.

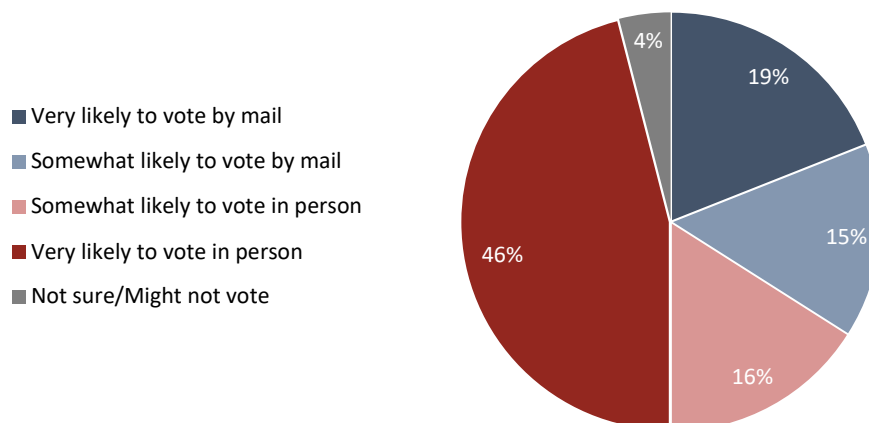
### One-in-three more likely to vote by mail if able

If an election is held this fall, one-third of Canadians currently say they are more likely to vote by mail than in person, including one-in-five (19%) who say they are very likely to vote by mail. By contrast, however, nearly half say they are very likely to vote in person:

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**If an election is held in the next few months are you:  
(All respondents, n=1,606)**



**Liberals, New Democrats gain advantage from mail-in ballots**

While there was [much outcry](#) to the contrary from former Republican U.S. President Donald Trump during the November American election, an extensive U.S. study suggests that voting by mail doesn't benefit either side of the political spectrum. [Two U.S. political scientists](#) compared voting behaviours in counties that exclusively vote by mail with those that don't and found no meaningful statistical evidence that mail-in ballots benefit Democrats or Republicans. They did, however, find that there was a small bump in voter participation, which tends to favour the Democratic Party.

Several Canadian provinces have already held pandemic elections, including B.C., which saw nearly [one-third of 1.9 million voters](#) choose to vote by mail in that province's October election. Left-leaning ridings were [more likely](#) to request mail ballots than those in right-leaning ones, which may have helped Premier John Horgan's NDP, who formed a majority government. That said, Horgan and the BC NDP enjoyed [tremendous popularity](#) prior to the election campaign.

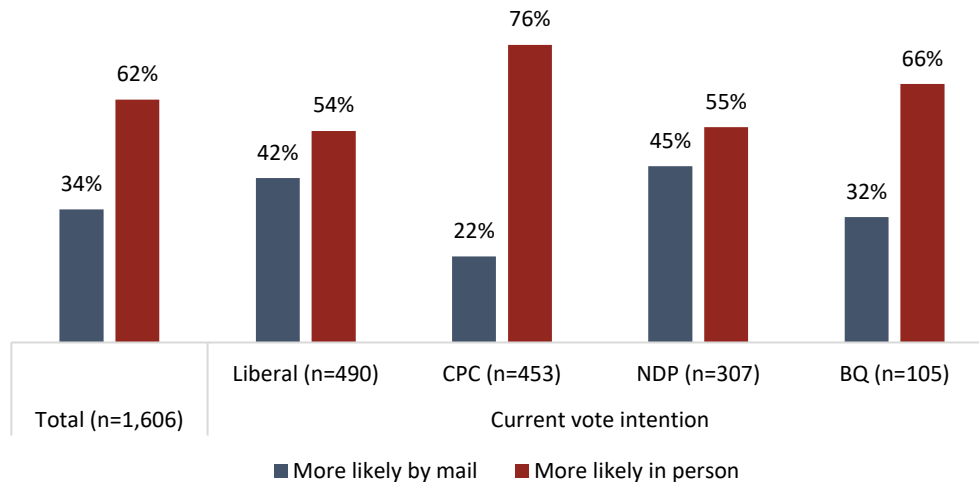
In New Brunswick, where an election was held in September, just 17 per cent of voters [voted by mail](#), though another 35 per cent voted at advance polling stations. There, Conservative Premier Blaine Higgs moved from a minority government to a majority one.

Though ARI finds that there is little difference in preference among different age groups to vote in person or by mail ([see detailed tables](#)) in the upcoming election, political leanings seem to be a key factor. Just one-in-five Conservative voters (22%) say they will vote by mail if given the option, approximately half the number of those who intend to support the Liberals or NDP:

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**If an election is held in the next few months are you more likely to vote by mail or in person?**

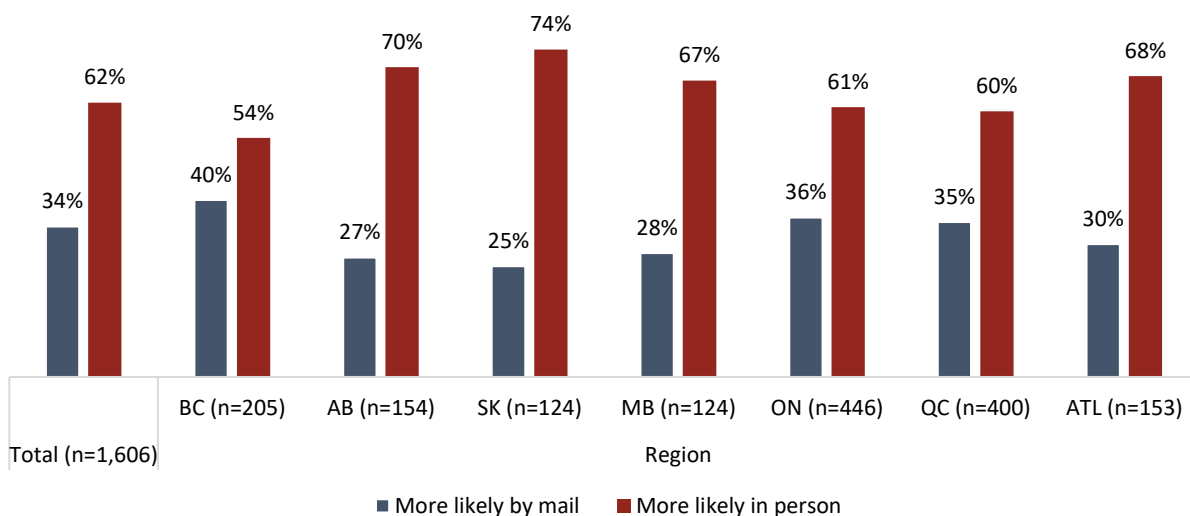


\*Green Party not shown due to small sample size

**Regional variance**

Those in B.C. seem most comfortable with voting by mail after the election last fall. There, the highest number of respondents in the country — two-in-five — say they are more likely to vote by mail than in person (40%). The prairies trend in the other direction, where over two-thirds in each of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba say they are more likely to vote in person:

**If an election is held in the next few months are you more likely to vote by mail or in person?**



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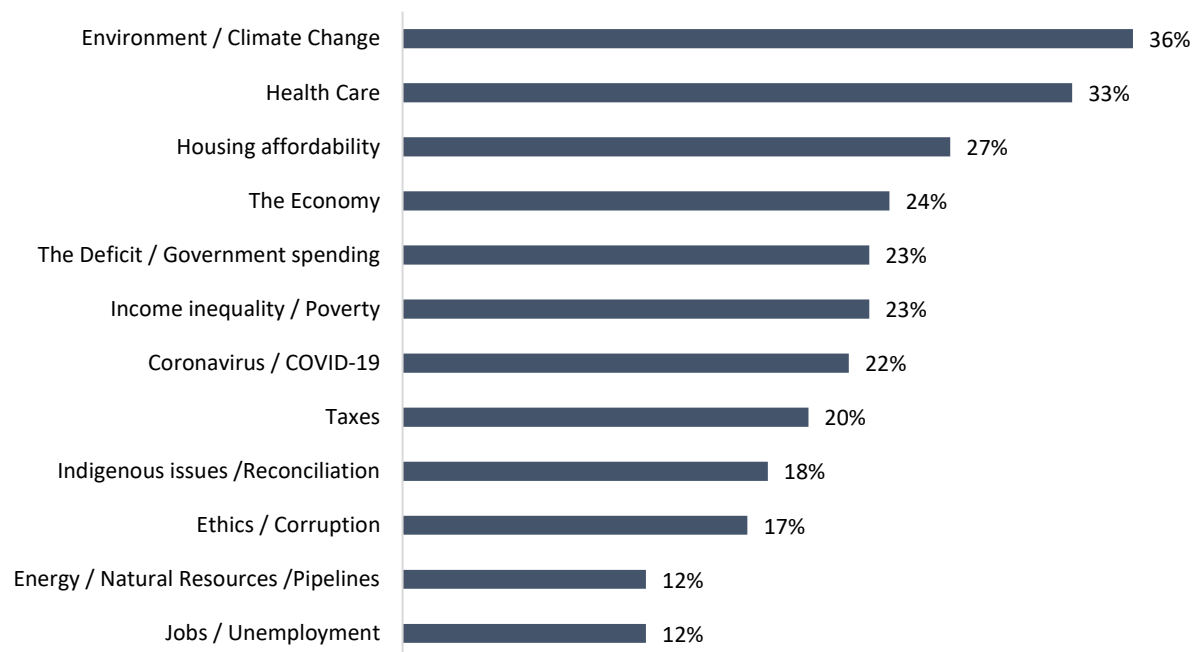
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**Part Three: The issues**

**Top national issues**

Climate change and health care **continue** to be the top two issues at the front of mind of Canadians heading into the likely election, while the economy, the deficit and housing affordability stay in the top five. After being **a top concern** for months, the COVID-19 response has fallen down the list of issues, but continues to **linger** in the back of some Canadians' minds:

**Please rank the issues facing Canada that you care most about  
(Up to three selected, items with 10% or greater shown)  
(All respondents, n=1,606)**



**CPC supporters differ significantly in key issues**

While supporters of centre-left parties share concerns about the environment, Conservative supporters continue to represent outlier opinions. Supporters of that party are more concerned about issues surrounding the economy, government spending and taxes:

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Top three issues by current federal vote intention			
Liberal (n=490)	CPC (n=453)	NDP (n=307)	Bloc Quebecois (n=103)
Environment / Climate Change 52%	The Deficit / Government spending 47%	Environment / Climate Change 52%	Environment / Climate Change 45%
Health Care 41%	The Economy 38%	Housing affordability 39%	Health Care 44%
Housing affordability 34%	Taxes 35%	Income inequality / Poverty 37%	Income inequality / Poverty 39%

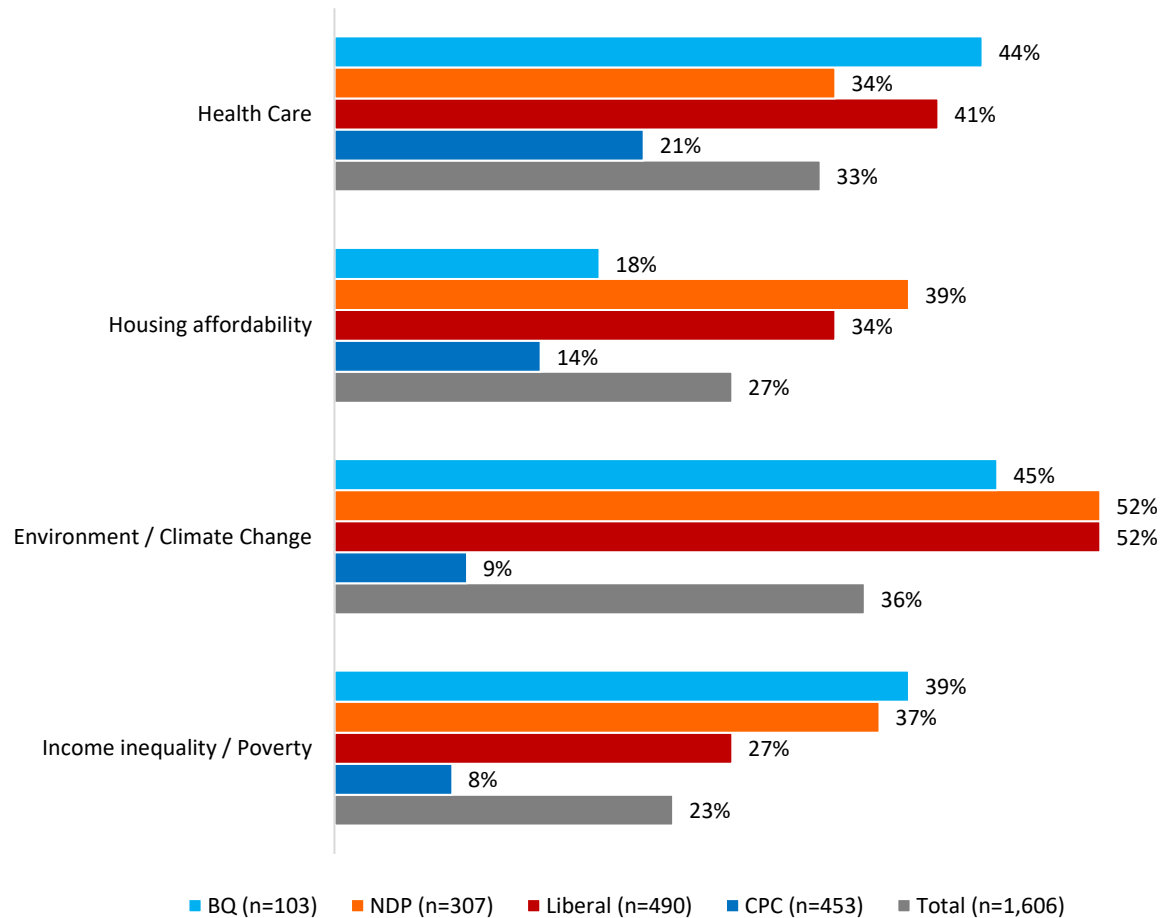
*\*Green supporters not shown due to small sample size*

The environment doesn't register as a top-10 issue for CPC supporters. Instead, their focus is more concentrated on ethics/corruption (34%; notably, [a pillar](#) of leader Erin O'Toole's initial platform) and energy/natural resources (24%, [see detailed tables](#)). By contrast, Liberal and NDP supporters are much more galvanized not only by climate change, but also by health care (a key concern for BQ voters too), housing affordability, and especially among NDP supporters, poverty reduction.

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Please rank the issues facing Canada that you care most about  
(by party support)



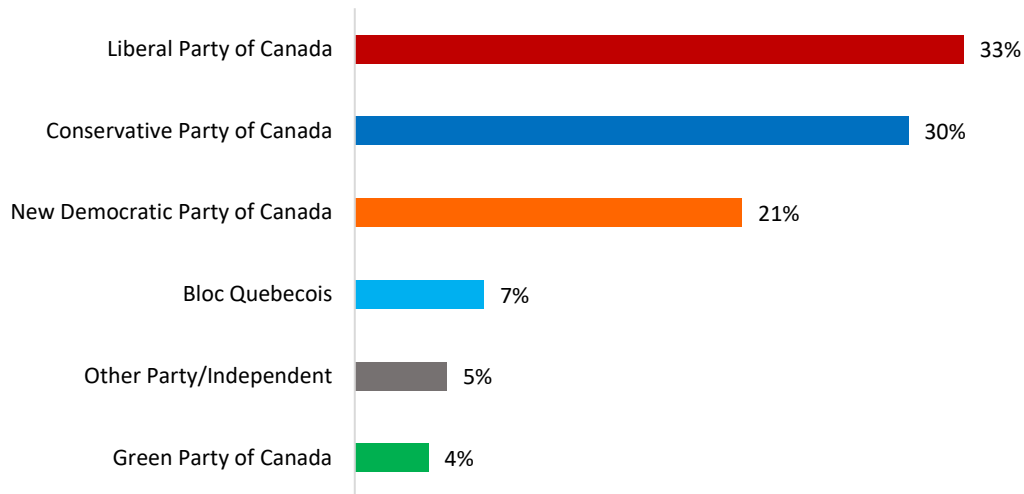
\*Responses from Green supporters not shown due to small sample size

**Part Four: Vote Intent**

**Liberals hold slight advantage**

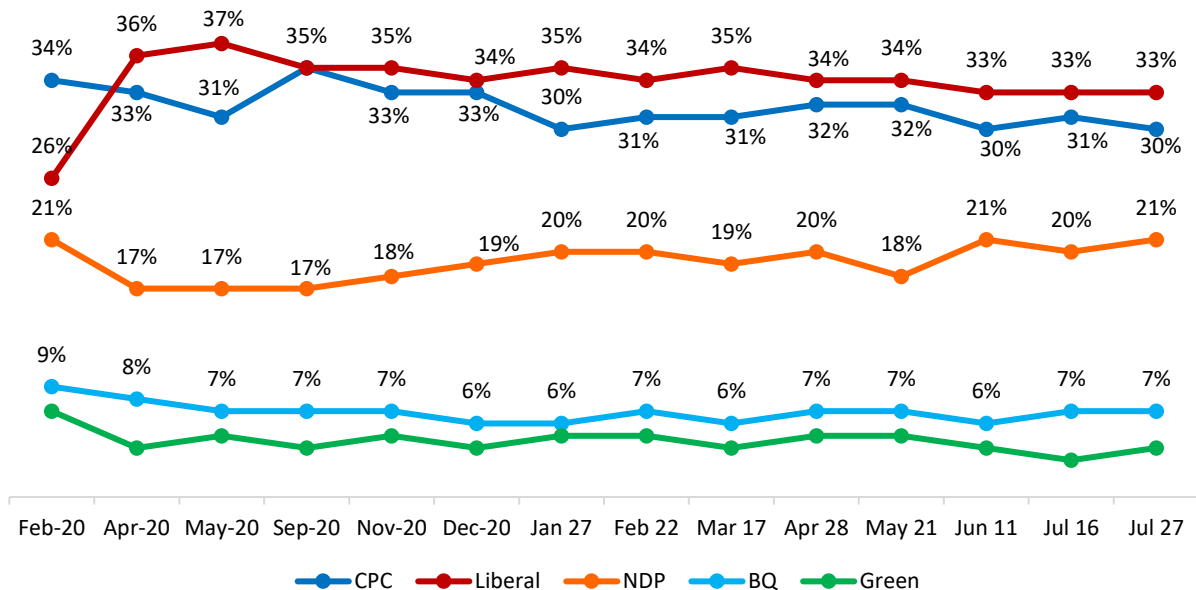
The current electoral picture holds in the Angus Reid Institute's weekly vote intent tracking. The incumbent Liberals holds a slight edge in decided and leaning voters, with one-third saying they would vote for Trudeau's party. Three-in-ten would vote for Erin O'Toole's Conservatives, while the NDP are preferred by one-in-five:

**Federal vote intention  
(Decided and leaning voters, n=1,489)**



A close race between Liberals and Conservatives is a familiar picture for those following ARI's numbers since the beginning of the year. The Conservatives have had between 30 per cent and 32 per cent of vote intention in 2021, while the Liberals have ranged between 33 per cent and 35 per cent. The NDP again sits at its high mark over the past two years, at 21 per cent:

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



## Regional vote intent

The regional data — especially in two key provinces — tell a different story. In B.C., despite an agreement between the federal and provincial government to provide [\\$10-a-day childcare](#) for children under six in the next five years, the Liberals' fortunes have not improved. The race in B.C. continues to be one of the most intriguing in the country with all three parties a major factor. The Liberal Party enjoys a plurality of support in Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada, while the Conservatives maintain their majority support in Alberta and Saskatchewan:

Federal vote intention, including leaners, decided voters only:								
(Unweighted sample sizes)	Total (1,489)	Region						
		BC (185)	AB (142)	SK (116)	MB (113)	ON (408)	QC (368)	ATL (143)
Liberal Party	33%	26%	14%	14%	28%	39%	37%	42%
Conservative Party	30%	31%	60%	50%	39%	30%	14%	30%
NDP	21%	32%	16%	19%	30%	21%	14%	21%
Bloc Québécois	7%	-	-	-	-	-	28%	-
Green Party	4%	7%	2%	-	-	5%	3%	3%
Other Party	5%	3%	9%	17%	4%	5%	4%	4%

## Age and gender

The parties' demographic strongholds [remain consistent](#) in the last two weeks: a plurality of women over 34 say they will vote Liberal, while a plurality of those aged 18 to 34 would vote NDP and men of all ages prefer the CPC. The biggest change is in women aged 55 and older: CPC support amongst that demographic has dropped nine percentage points since mid-July:

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Federal vote intention, including leaners, decided voters only:							
(Weighted sample sizes)	Total (n=1,489)	Age and Gender					
		Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=165)	35-54 (n=270)	55+ (n=300)	18-34 (n=169)	35-54 (n=273)	55+ (n=312)
Liberal Party	33%	24%	30%	27%	30%	38%	42%
Conservative Party	30%	30%	34%	47%	15%	23%	26%
NDP	21%	26%	15%	10%	44%	24%	17%
Bloc Québécois	7%	7%	6%	9%	2%	6%	9%
Green Party	4%	3%	5%	4%	5%	6%	2%
Other Party	5%	9%	10%	3%	3%	3%	4%

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

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