

Election 44: Most view this vote as “more important” than 2019; personal stakes involved for three-quarters

On issues, climate change, COVID-19 bolster Liberals; economic issues and transparency boost CPC

August 27, 2021 – As the verbal war of words heats up between party leaders over [health care](#), Afghanistan, [child care](#) and [mandatory vaccination](#), new data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds the top issue identified by voters in driving their ballot choice is climate change.

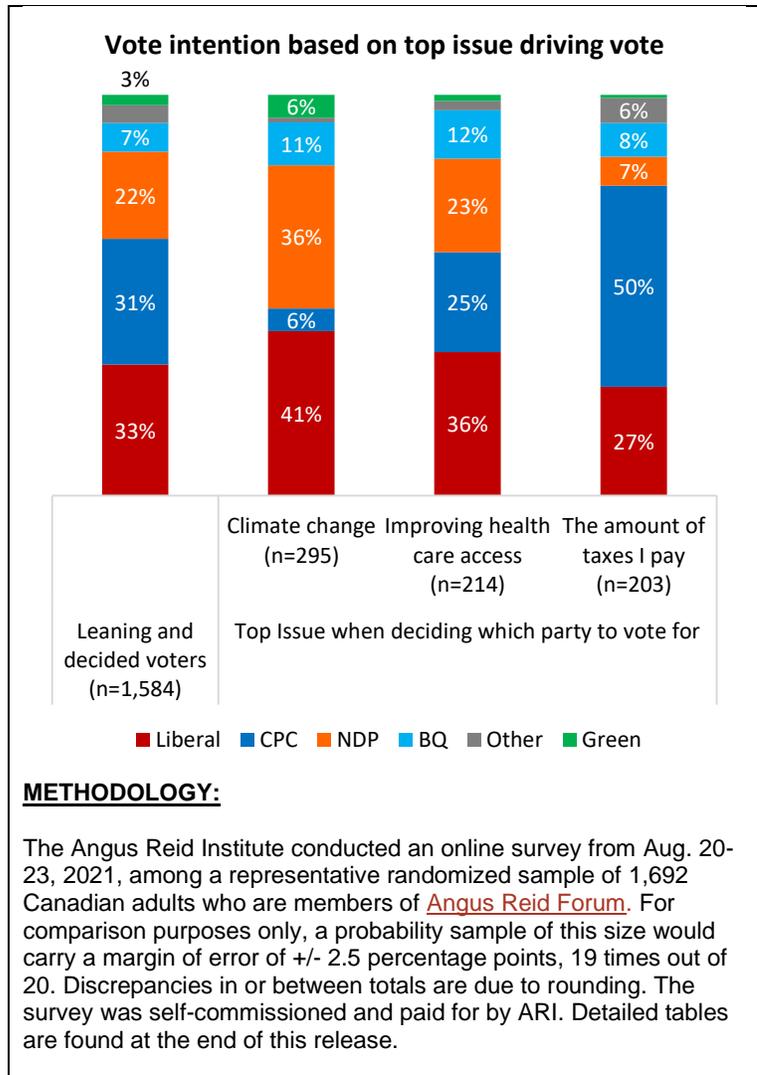
Notwithstanding discussion about a wave of early summer heat in western Canada and wildfires in [B.C.](#) and [Ontario](#), the issue has yet to claim the a plurality of headlines during the two-week campaign.

Despite this, one-in-five Canadians (18%) say climate change is the most important issue to them when it comes to considering which party they will support in this federal election, while 13 per cent choose improving health care access and the amount of taxes they pay.

Are any parties poised to benefit based on voter priorities? Consider that two-in-five voters (41%) who say climate change is their top issue are also currently planning to vote for the incumbent Liberals, followed by the NDP at 36 per cent. Those who choose health care as their core concern give the Liberals an 11-point advantage.

But for Canadians preoccupied with financial issues, [Erin O’Toole’s Conservative party has an edge](#). A majority who say the amount of taxes they pay (50%) and management of the federal deficit (73%) are their top issues report that they intend to vote Conservative. O’Toole is also the choice (50%) for those who are most concerned with transparency and honesty in the federal government.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives appear to be the most galvanised of any party base. A majority (55%) of those who say they will be voting for O’Toole’s party say there is “a lot” at stake in this election, compared to 37 per cent of likely NDP and one-third of Liberal (33%) voters who say the same.



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More Key Findings:

- Liberal leader Justin Trudeau continues to hold a position of strength in voters' minds when it comes to his COVID-19 response. Three-in-five (59%) who choose the pandemic as their top issue say they will be voting Liberal, an issue a majority of Canadians (56%) rate a six or seven on a seven-point scale when asked how much they care about the issue personally.
- Three-quarters of Canadians rank transparency and honesty in the federal government as a six or seven on the seven-point scale, including: 86 per cent of CPC voters, 72 per cent of NDP voters and 68 per cent of Liberal voters ([see detailed tables](#)).
- Half of Bloc Québécois voters (48%) say not very much or nothing is at stake in this election, the highest number of any party's supporters.

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: How important is this election?

Held against the backdrop of skyrocketing COVID-19 infections driven by the highly transmissible [Delta variant](#), and [a lull in the uptake](#) of vaccinations by Canadians, voter turnout for this election will likely be affected by the pandemic. COVID-19 has already caused one voter outreach casualty: Elections Canada cancelled [the vote on campus](#) program, which allowed post-secondary students to vote in their home ridings while away at school.

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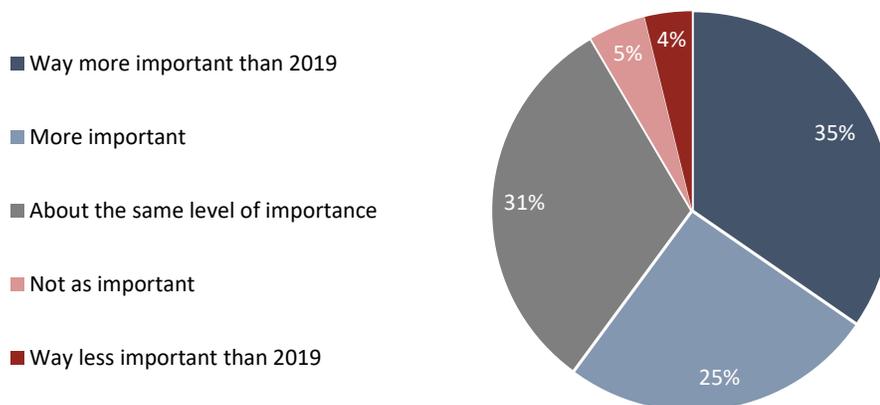
The results have been poor on the balance for the three provincial elections held since 2020. While voter turnout held steady in New Brunswick, B.C. reported a historic low and Nova Scotia reported its second lowest turnout ever.

Given the timing of the campaign was entirely at the discretion of the Trudeau government, it may be more difficult to convince voters this election is important enough to mark a ballot, pandemic notwithstanding.

Most say election more important than 2019, but said the same in 2019 of 2015

Still, a majority believe this election to be more important than 2019, including 35 per cent who say that it's "way more important":

**How important would you say is this forthcoming election is for Canada? Compared to the last federal election almost two years ago, would you say this election is...
(All respondents, n=1,692)**

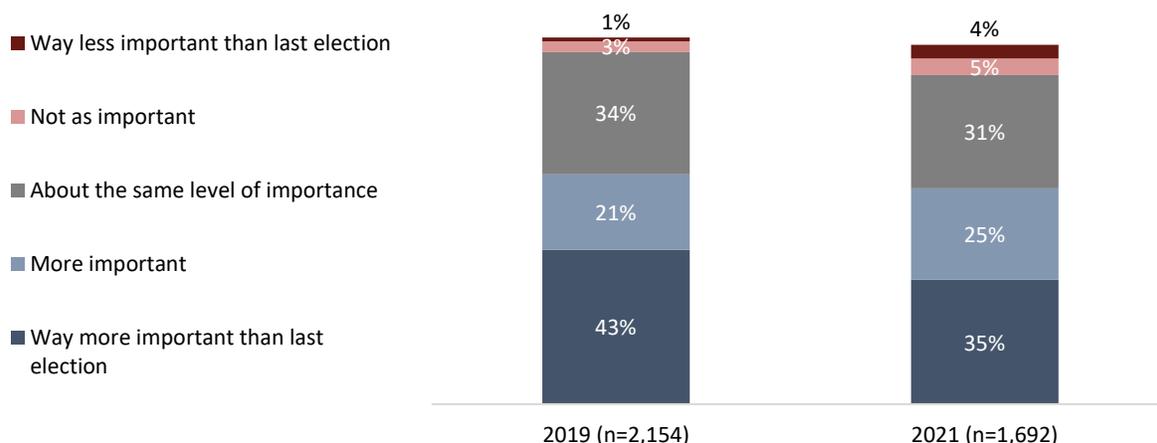


That said, it must be noted that the same proportion said the same in 2019 of the 2015 election. Thus it may be more instructive to look at the intensity of voters' current feelings. There has been an eight-point decrease in the number of Canadians saying this election is "way more important" than the prior, and a doubling of those who say that it is in fact, less important:

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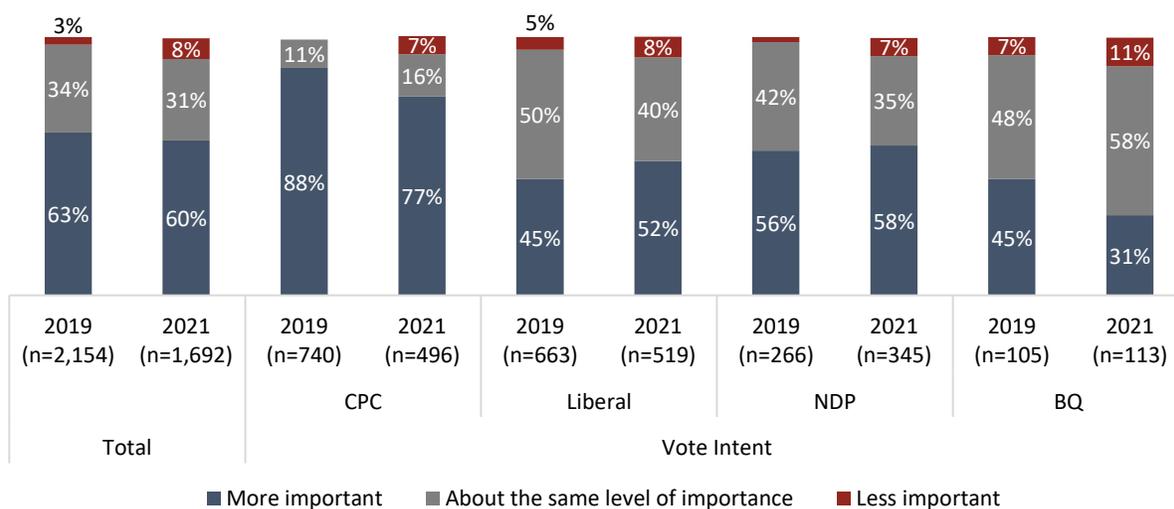
**How important would you say is this forthcoming election is for Canada?
Compared to the previous federal election, would you say this election is...**



The belief of the gravity of this election is strongest among likely CPC voters, of whom four-in-five (77%) say this election is more important than 2019. Half of Liberal voters (52%) and three-in-five NDP voters (58%) believe the same.

But the strong level of belief from Conservative supporters represents a decrease from 2019, when nine-in-ten (88%) said that election was more important than the one in 2015. Meanwhile, Liberals are more likely - and NDP supporters are about as likely - to call the upcoming election more important than the preceding one when compared to 2019:

**How important would you say is this forthcoming election is for Canada?
Compared to the previous federal election, would you say this election is...**



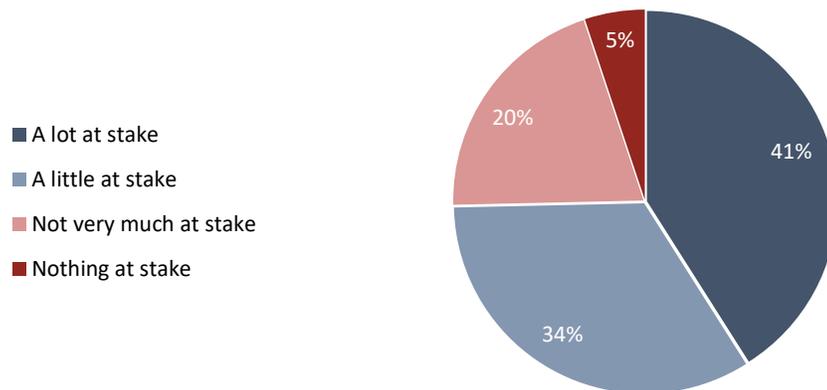
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Two-in-five say ‘a lot’ at stake in election

And what about the impact on voters, personally? Two-in-five voters believe a lot is at stake for them on Sept. 20 whereas one-quarter believe there is nothing or not very much at stake:

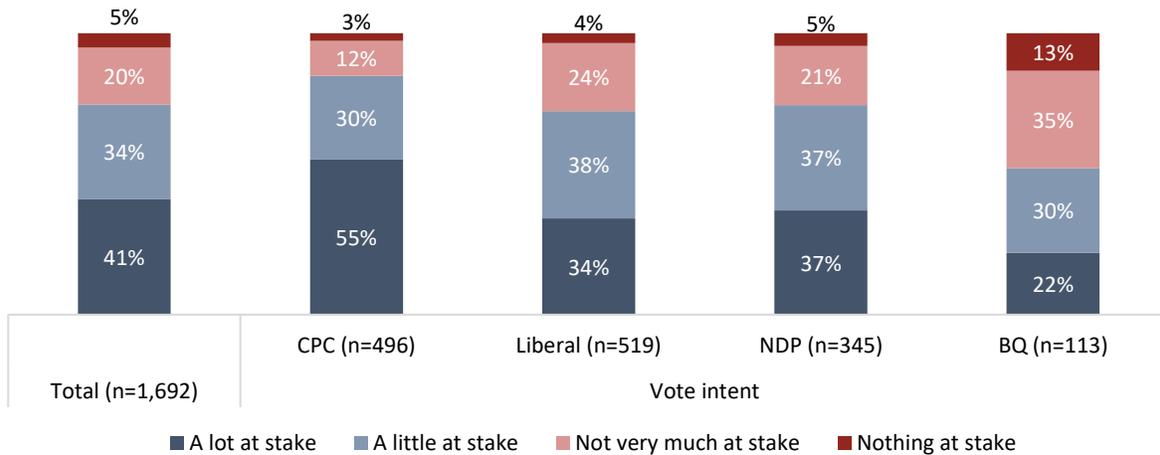
**How much is at stake for you personally in this election – will the result have a big impact on your own life?
(All respondents, n=1,692)**



As the political landscape becomes more favourable for O’Toole and the Conservative party, it also appears the party’s supporters are the most galvanized. A majority of those who say they will vote for O’Toole say there is a lot at stake for them personally.

On the other end of the spectrum, Bloc Québécois voters are the least likely to believe the upcoming election will have a big impact on their life. Quebec will be a key battleground over the coming weeks, and Yves-Francois Blanchet will be hoping to convince his own party’s supporters of the election’s importance:

How much is at stake for you personally in this election – will the result have a big impact on your own life?

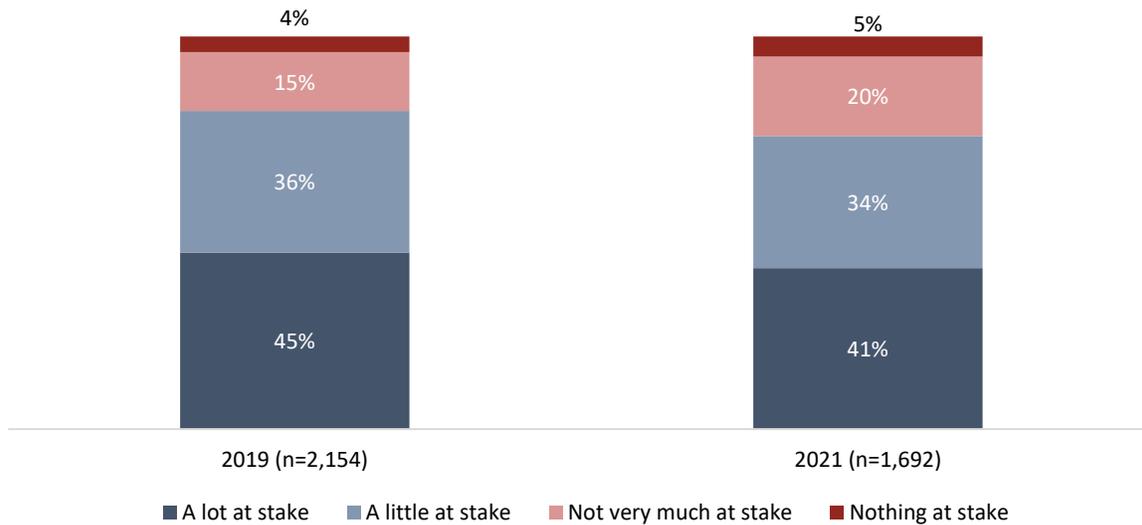


Younger men are more likely to believe a lot is at stake than younger women. Half of men aged 18 to 54 say there is a lot at stake in this election, while just one-third of women the same age say the same ([see detailed tables](#)).

Ongoing pandemic has not increased stakes in election

Over the last two years, the top issues for voters have remained **very similar** with one obvious exception: COVID-19. But while Trudeau says he called a fall election two years ahead of the set election date because he wants **a mandate** to rebuild the country’s economy after the pandemic, the electorate does not feel the same sense of investment. The number of Canadians who believe that either a lot or a little is at stake for this election are very similar to the one called two years ago:

How much is at stake for you personally in this election – will the result have a big impact on your own life?

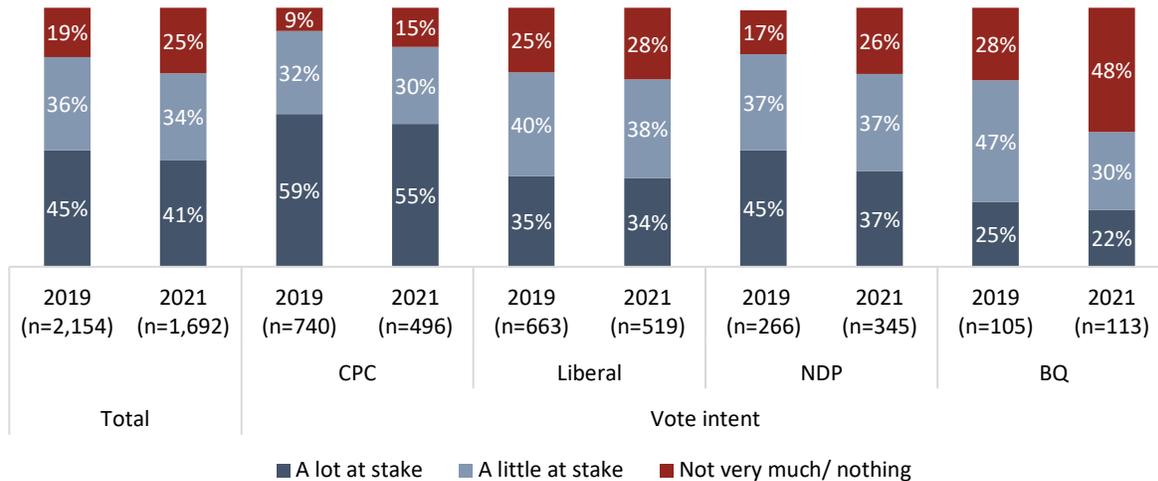


The lack of personal investment in the federal election has increased the most in Alberta, where double the number of people say there is not very much or nothing at stake compared to 2019 (9% to 20%). Those in Quebec continue to lead the country in believing there is not much or nothing at stake for them in the federal election ([see detailed tables](#)).

Conservatives, as was the case in 2019, are most likely to say that there is a lot at stake for them in this election. Overall, more than half (55%) do so, compared to 34 per cent of those who intend to support the Liberals and 37 per cent of those who say they will vote for the NDP.

Among decided voters, there is also an increase in those saying not much or nothing is at stake compared to 2019. The increase is greatest among those who say they will vote for the Bloc:

How much is at stake for you personally in this election – will the result have a big impact on your own life?



Part Two: Key Issues

It has been a challenging start to the campaign for the Liberal party, who have had the embarrassing distinction of being the first party to have a tweet flagged for “manipulated media” by Twitter. The video tweet, sent by Chrystia Freeland, attempted to paint O’Toole as pro-private health care while omitting context from the rest of the Conservative leader’s answer. Further, opinions of Trudeau are trending in the wrong direction.

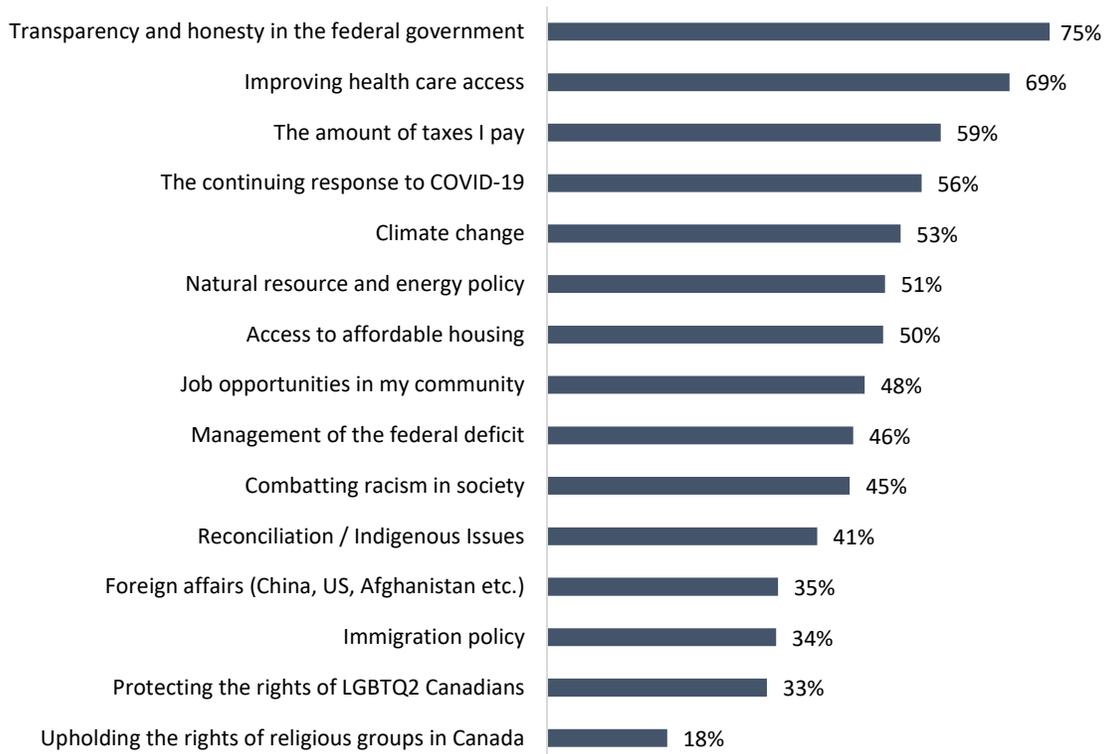
Federal government transparency jumps to the forefront

The Twitter gaffe highlighted a critique often lobbed at Trudeau and the Liberals since they took power in 2015: the lack of transparency from his government. The issue is front of mind for voters. Three-quarters of Canadians rank transparency and honesty in the federal government a six or seven on a seven-point scale when it came to issues they care about personally. Health care, often an issue Canadians highlight as a top one facing the country, was second, while climate change, another consistently top issue, was fifth:

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**For each listed, please tell us how much you care them personally
(Percentage rating each as a 6 or 7 on 7-point scale)
(All respondents, n=1,692)**



Older voters are the most likely to care about transparency and honesty from their federal government. Four-in-five men and women aged 55 and older rank it at a six or seven, and at least two-thirds of every other age-gender group do the same ([see detailed tables](#)).

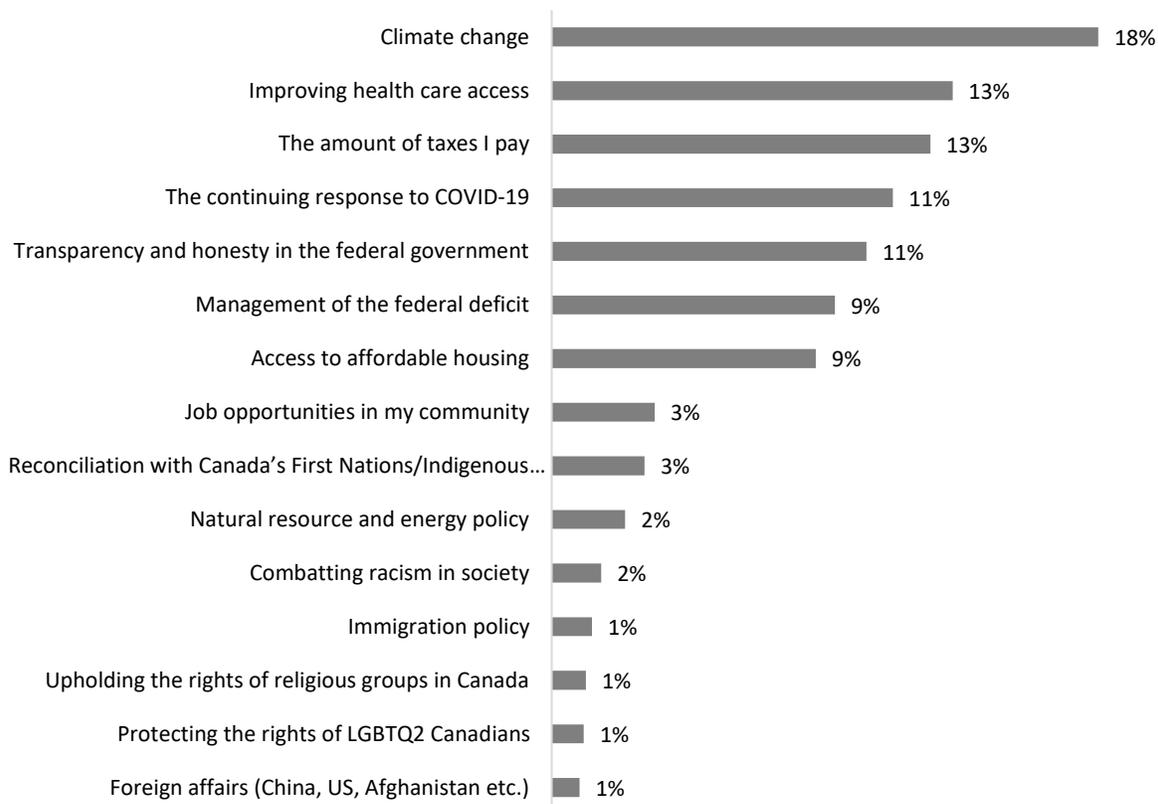
Climate change a top issue for all age-gender groups

The list of issues changes when respondents are asked to list just the single issue that will drive their vote in this campaign. Climate change jumps to first by that metric, with one-in-five Canadians (18%) saying it is the primary issue on which they will choose the party they'll support:

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**And if you had to pick just one... which of these issues is most important to you personally when you consider the party you will support in this federal election campaign?
(All respondents, n=1,692)**



Climate change ranks in the top five for every age-gender group. Women over the age of 34 rank improving health care access as their top issue, while men over the age of 34 are the only demographic to rank the deficit in the top five. Affordable housing is a top issue for younger age groups, while COVID-19 factors into the top five of every age-gender group except men aged 55 and older:

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Age and Gender (Weighted sample sizes)					
Male			Female		
18-34 (n=184)	35-54 (n=297)	55+ (n=332)	18-34 (n=199)	35-54 (n=321)	55+ (n=359)
Climate change 27%	The amount of taxes I pay 19%	Transparency and honesty in government 17%	Climate change 28%	Improving health care access 19%	Improving health care access 20%
Access to affordable housing 15%	Climate change 17%	Management of the federal deficit 16%	Access to affordable housing 14%	Climate change 17%	Climate change 16%
The amount of taxes I pay 12%	Management of the federal deficit 13%	The amount of taxes I pay 14%	COVID-19 11%	COVID-19 13%	COVID-19 13%
COVID-19 10%	COVID-19 13%	Improving health care access 13%	Improving health care access 8%	The amount of taxes I pay 11%	The amount of taxes I pay 12%
Transparency and honesty in government 7%	Improving health care access 7%	Climate change 13%	Transparency and honesty in government 8%	Access to affordable housing 10%	Transparency and honesty in government 11%

Taxes a top priority everywhere except Atlantic Canada

There is much regional variance among the top priorities. Taxes rank in the top three priorities of every province, except for those found in Atlantic Canada, while climate change is the top issue for B.C., Ontario, and Quebec. For Alberta and Manitoba, the continuing response to the pandemic doesn't even rank in the top five:

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Region (Unweighted sample sizes)						
BC (n=294)	AB (n=158)	SK (n=120)	MB (n=113)	ON (n=459)	QC (n=395)	ATL (n=150)
Climate change 24%	The amount of taxes I pay 19%	Management of the federal deficit 20%	Improving health care access 21%	Climate change 18%	Climate change 24%	Improving health care access 22%
The amount of taxes I pay 12%	Transparency and honesty government 13%	The amount of taxes I pay 14%	Transparency and honesty government 17%	COVID-19 14%	Improving health care access 17%	Climate change 16%
Access to affordable housing 11%	Management of the federal deficit 11%	Transparency and honesty government 13%	The amount of taxes I pay 13%	The amount of taxes I pay 12%	The amount of taxes I pay 12%	Access to affordable housing 13%
Transparency and honesty government 10%	Improving health care access 11%	COVID-19 10%	Management of the federal deficit 12%	Improving health care access 12%	COVID-19 10%	Transparency and honesty government 11%
COVID-19 10%	Climate change 10%	Improving health care access 10%	Climate change 10%	Access to affordable housing 11%	Transparency and honesty in the federal government 10%	COVID-19 10%

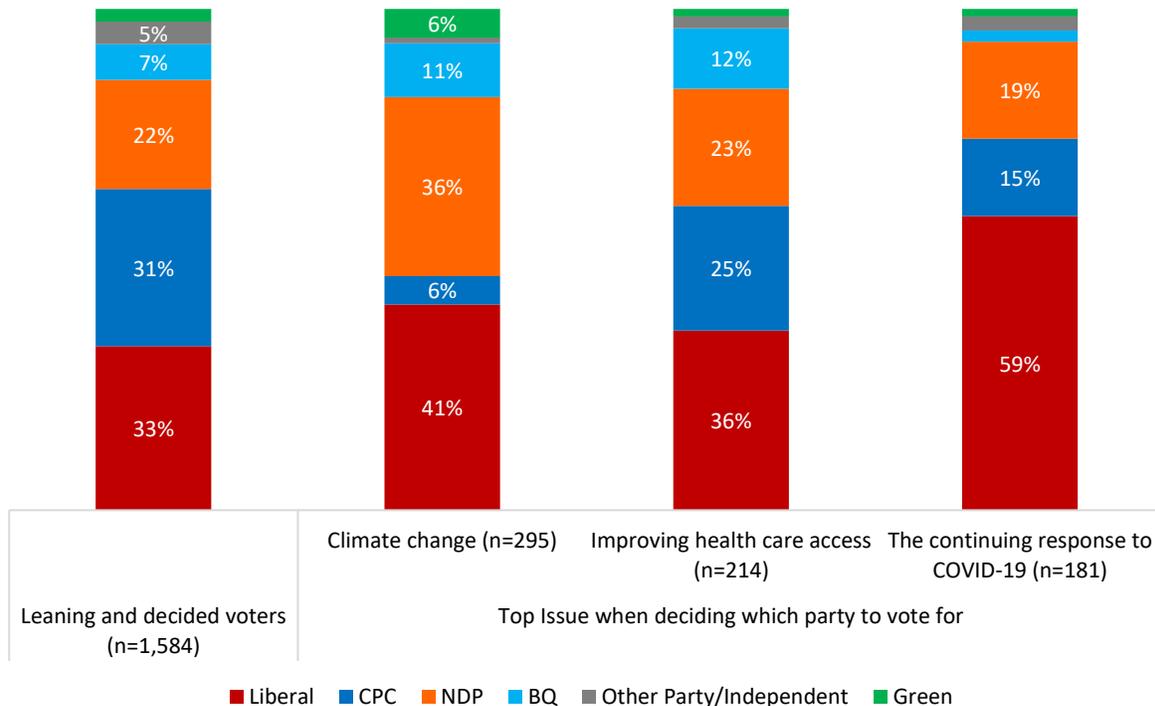
Liberals strengthened by climate change, housing, COVID-19

In the first two weeks of the campaign, each of the major parties find themselves drawing voters with diverse motivations. For Liberals, three main areas provide impetus for voter support: climate change, access to health care, and COVID-19 response. Among those who say their top voting concern is this latter topic, 59 per cent say they will vote for the Liberals:

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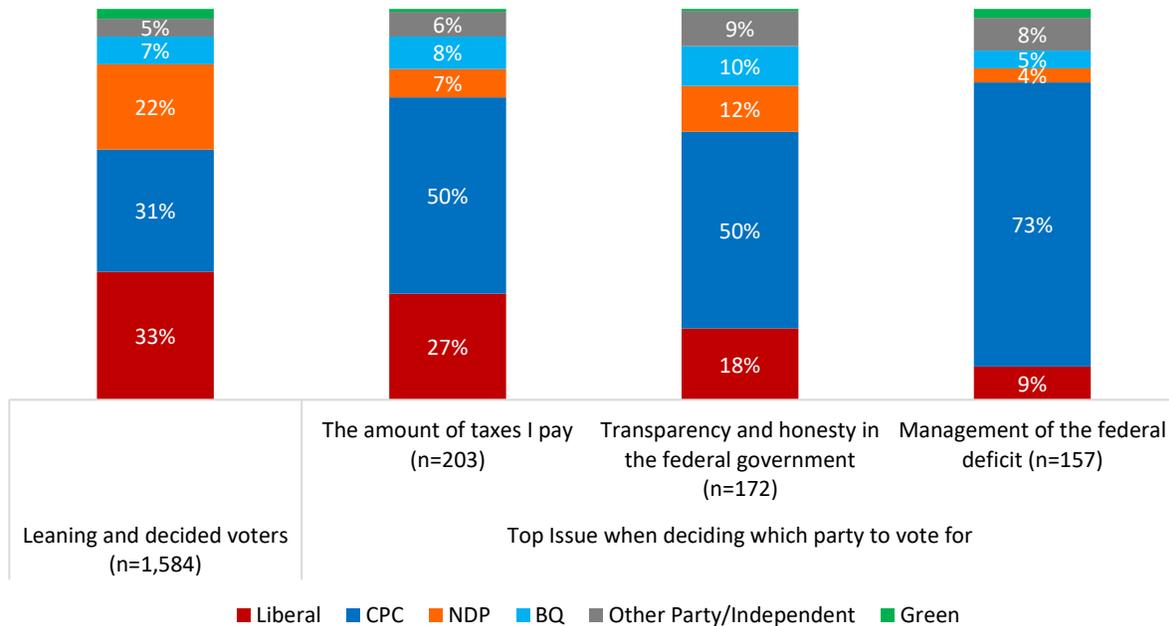
Which of these issues is most important to you personally when you consider the party you will support in this federal election campaign?



Conservatives bolstered by government transparency, economic issues

O’Toole’s Conservatives have their own strengths, which largely reside in economic issues. Those who choose their own taxes and the federal deficit as their key vote-motivator are overwhelmingly supportive of the CPC. The party also receives a 50 per cent vote share among those who are concerned about transparency and honesty in the federal government:

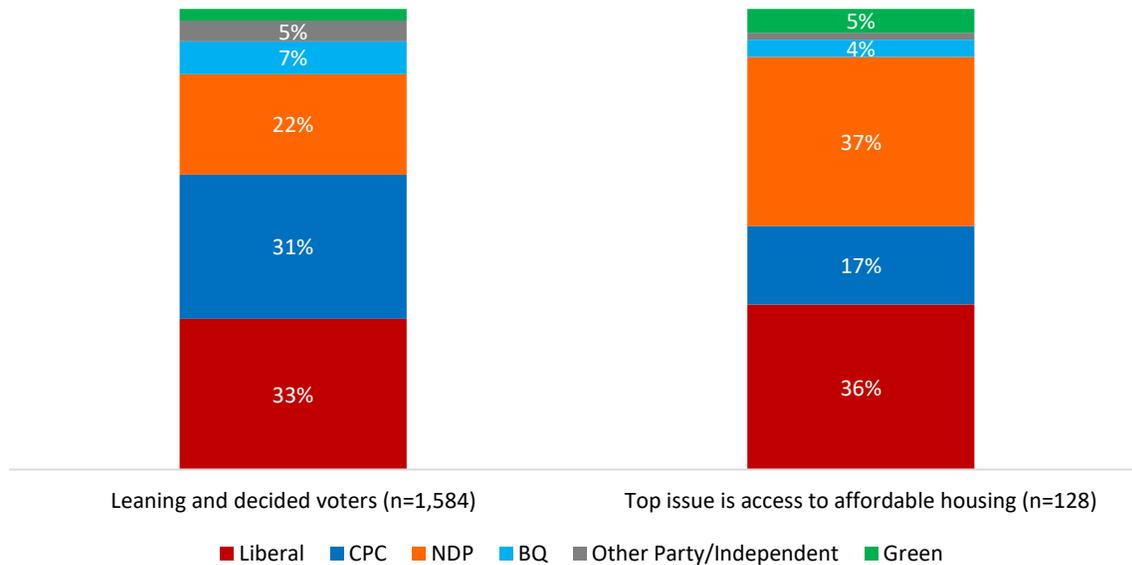
Which of these issues is most important to you personally when you consider the party you will support in this federal election campaign?



Housing affordability policy yet to sway voters to one side

The housing file is a key issue for young people looking to enter the market, and for homeowners who want to protect their assets. For voters who say this is the most important election issue, there is no clear choice on which party to support. Among the seven top issues, this is the most favourable for Jagmeet Singh and the NDP. That said, the NDP and Liberal Party split the vote equally among those who consider housing their top issue:

Which of these issues is most important to you personally when you consider the party you will support in this federal election campaign?



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

For detailed results by top issue, [click here](#).

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