

Must Trudeau go? Amid chatter of his ouster, potential Liberal replacements offer little room for party to recover

Potential Liberal voters say lack of progress on key issues holding them back more than Trudeau himself

June 24, 2024 – As the ballots are counted from the byelection in Toronto-St. Paul's – a contest that many believe is [pivotal for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's future at the helm of the Liberal party](#), new data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds jettisoning the unpopular prime minister may not do much to improve the party's electoral fortunes.

While Trudeau's [personal unpopularity is viewed](#) as a major drag on the party's support, the data does not suggest a leadership change would close the 21-point gap between the Liberals and the Conservatives.

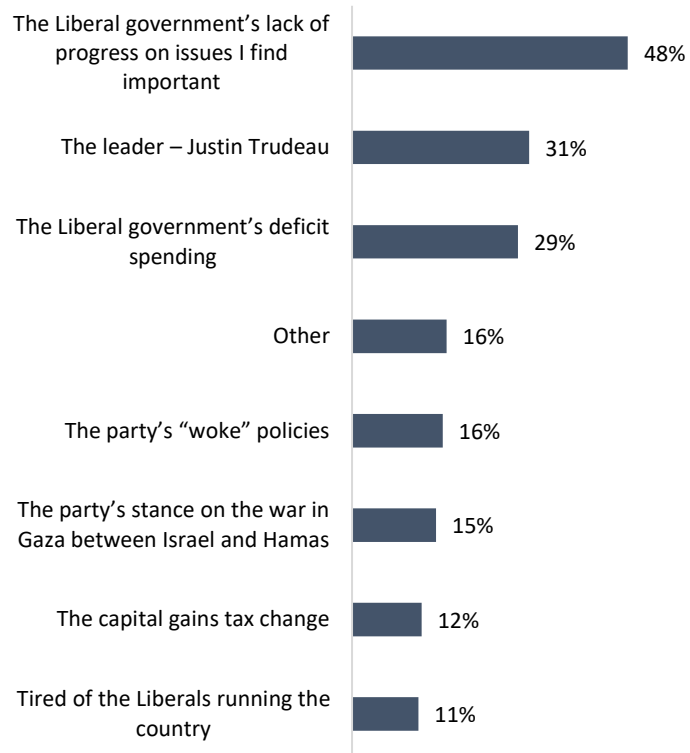
Canadians are more likely than not to say rumoured successors such as Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney, Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc and President of the Treasury Board Anita Anand would drive them away from the party.

Meanwhile, among the two-in-five (37%) Canadians who are mulling voting for the Liberals in the upcoming election, half (48%) say they are hesitant to support the party because the government has not made progress on issues they find important – such as affordability and health care.

More Key Findings:

- Two-thirds (65%) of the two-in-five (42%) decided voters who say they currently support the Conservatives are "very committed" to their choice. Just two-in-five (38%) current Liberal voters and three-in-ten (30%) current NDP voters say the same.

What's holding you back most from supporting the Liberals in the next election? (Among uncommitted voters who would consider voting Liberal)



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from June 14-17, 2024 among a representative randomized sample of 3,082 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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- Adding up the “very committed” supporters, and those among the uncommitted who say they would at least consider voting for the party in the next election, the CPC have the highest support ceiling of 55 per cent. The Liberals (44%) and the NDP (44%) have identical support ceilings considering the same factors.
- Men older than 54 within the potential Liberal vote universe are much more likely than other demographics to say Trudeau’s leadership is a barrier to their support of the party. Two-in-five (40%) say this.

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: Taking stock of the political picture

- **A question of commitment**
- **Who’s still available?**
- **Each party’s current ceiling and floor**

Part Two: Can the Liberals recover?

- **What’s holding people back from supporting the Liberals?**
- **What if Trudeau left after the election?**
- **New leader doesn’t appear to be the answer**

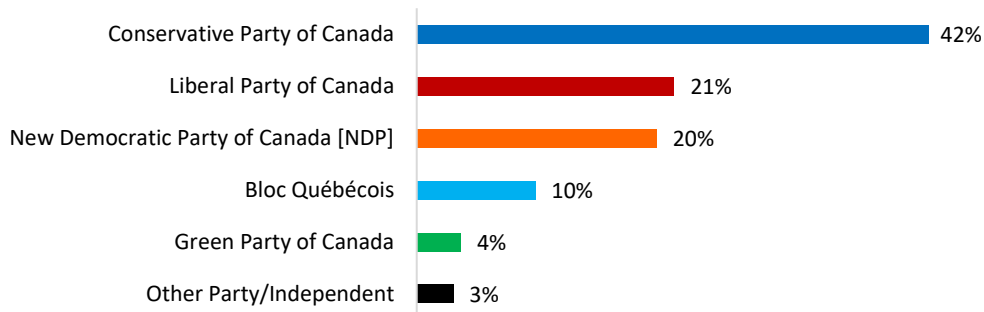
Part One: Taking stock of the political picture

The political landscape has been relatively static in 2024 and for the governing Liberals, that’s not a good thing. While the Conservatives and Liberals have vacillated between leading in vote intent over Justin Trudeau’s term as leader, the CPC has taken a commanding and comfortable lead since late 2023. That lead is now at its highest level over the past decade, with 42 per cent support for the Conservatives and 21 per cent for the incumbents:

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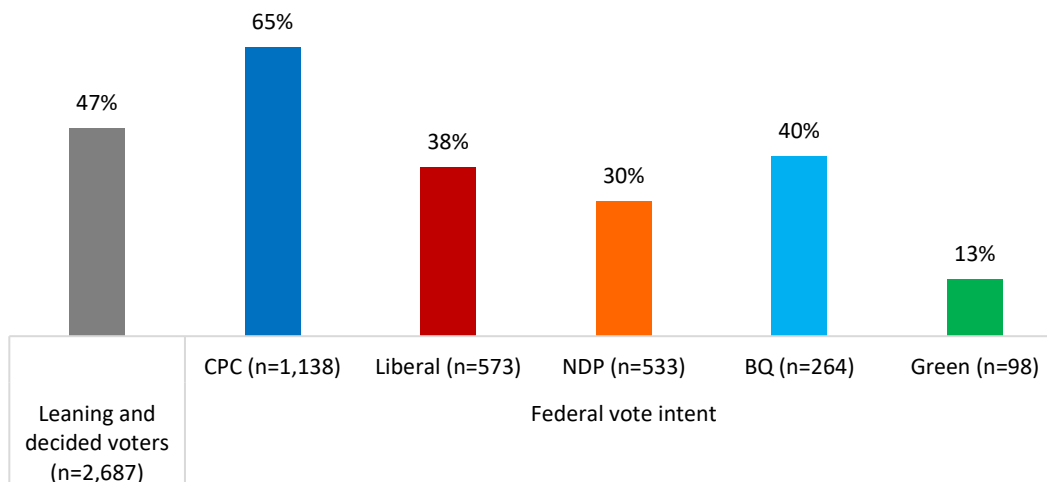
**Federal Vote Intent
(Leaning and decided voters, n=2,687)**



A question of commitment

Ahead of a potential 2025 election, the governing party faces not only a question of volume of voters, but one of commitment among those whose top choice is the Liberals. While two-thirds of CPC voters are “locked in”, saying they are very committed, just 38 per cent of Liberal voters say the same. This is not a phenomenon unique to Trudeau’s party, as other major federal parties, too, struggle to garner commitment:

Percentage of voters saying they are "very committed" to the party they chose



Who’s still available?

With more than one year until an expected election, scheduled for October 2025 at the latest, parties have time to woo millions of potential voters. Among all Canadian adults, many of whom, admittedly will not vote, 60 per cent can be classified as uncommitted to any party. The CPC, the largest and most

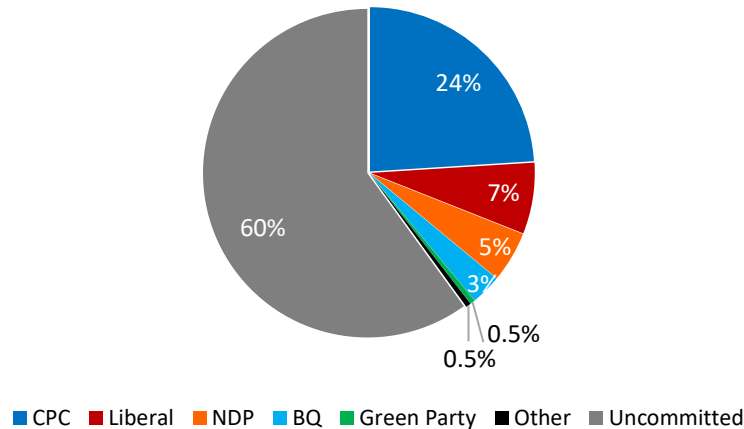
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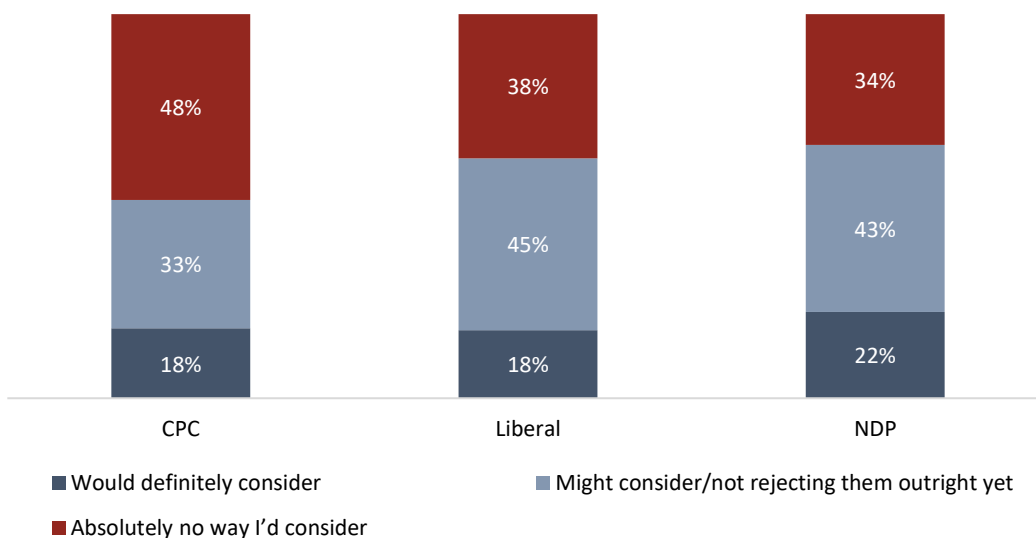
committed base, hosts one-quarter of the 18-plus population within its tent. For the rest of the federal parties, a fraction are locked in as supporters:

Current federal vote intent based on fully committed voters
(All respondents, n=3,082)



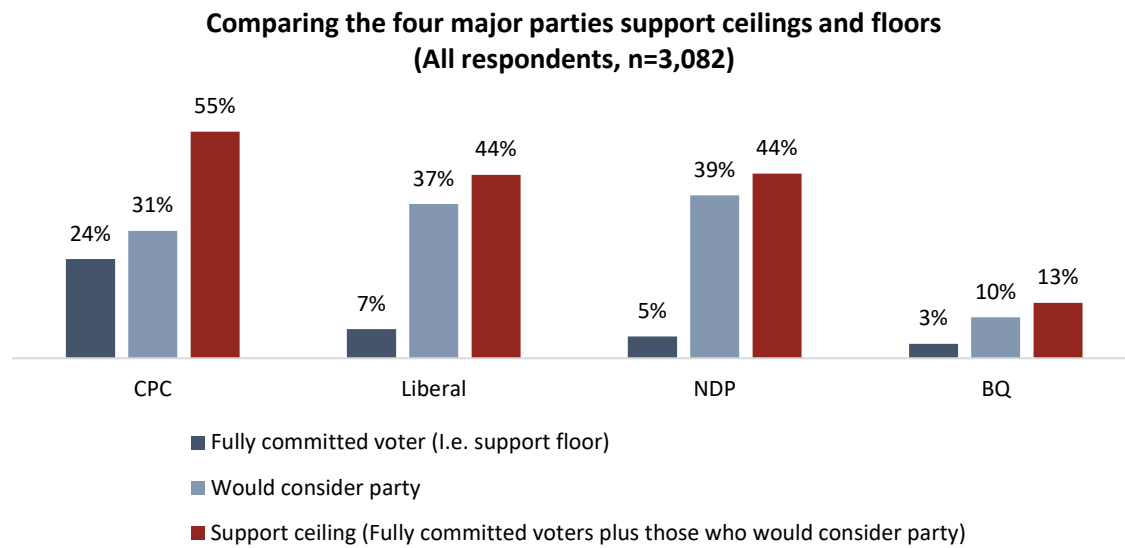
Those who are not committed, that aforementioned 60 per cent of the population, were asked which parties they would consider to be options in a future federal election. Here, the Liberals and New Democrats make up some ground, with a slightly larger group of considering Canadians interested in their parties:

Would you consider each of the following:
(Among uncommitted voters, n=1,830)



Each party's current ceiling and floor

What this all means is that given the number of people who either already support a party or say they could, given the right circumstances, the CPC is drawing from a pool considerably larger than the Liberals and NDP. That said, both of those parties have a large enough pool to become competitive in the next election if they can galvanize enough voters:



Part Two: Can the Liberals recover?

As the Liberals continue to lag the Conservatives in the polls, Liberal MPs have begun to question whether it's possible for the governing party to turn things around. The government has reportedly taken an approach to gradually close the gap between themselves and the opposition, first by narrowing it by five points by July. The spring budget was expected to provide the Liberals with some polling lift, but that has yet to materialize.

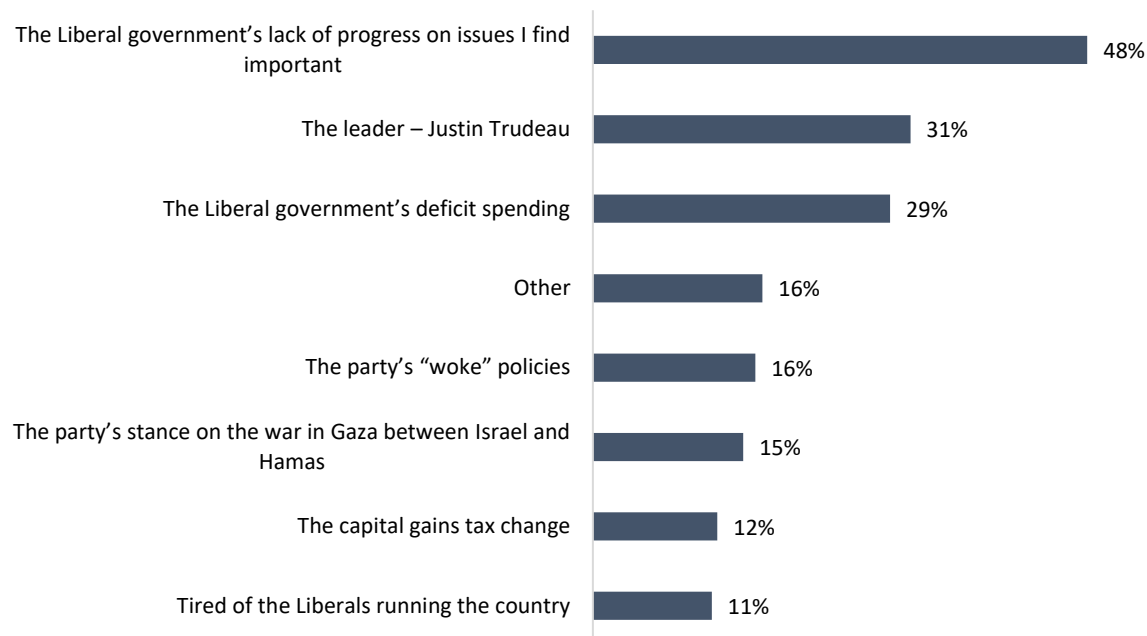
What's holding people back from supporting the Liberals?

The Angus Reid Institute asked uncommitted voters who were considering the Liberals what was making them hesitant to support the party. Half (48%) say it is the lack of progress on issues they find important. Three-in-ten (31%) point to Trudeau's continued leadership as a barrier to their support, while a similar number (29%) say it is the government's deficit spending. Specific policy elements, such as the party's stance on the war between Israel and Hamas and the recent capital gains tax change, are less likely to be a barrier, but still at least one-in-eight potential supporters say those policies are causing hesitation:

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**What's holding you back most from supporting the Liberals in the next election?
(Among uncommitted voters who would consider voting Liberal)**



For the large group of potential voters that cite a lack of progress on key issues as a barrier to their support for the Liberals, their top issues are much more likely to be the rising cost of living, health care, housing affordability and climate change than others ([see detailed tables](#)).

The Liberal government attempted to address housing affordability in the budget [with major measures](#), but the effects of which are not likely to be felt until [years down the line](#).

Health care has also received significant attention from the Liberals in their current term. Last year, the federal government boosted its health transfer to the provinces by \$46.2 billion, but at the same time, many Canadians said [they believed](#) that money alone would not be enough to solve the health care crisis. This year, the government broadened universal health care coverage to include prescriptions and dental benefits, but there remain significant concerns of access to many other elements of the health-care system, including family doctors and necessary surgeries.

[Related: After a 'decade of decline' in health care, Canadians not convinced that money is enough to solve the crisis](#)

Meanwhile, the issues of the rising cost of living and climate change have become [competing priorities](#) in recent months due to controversy over the carbon tax, a signature climate change policy of the Liberal government first instituted in 2016. As [a plurality \(45%\) believe](#) it is increasing their own personal cost of living, despite quarterly rebates which redistributes more money to most than they pay in according to the government, others questioned the Liberals' commitment to the environmental measure as they carved out an exception for home heating oil in what seven-in-ten (68%) Canadians felt was [a politically motivated move](#) to boost support in Atlantic Canada.

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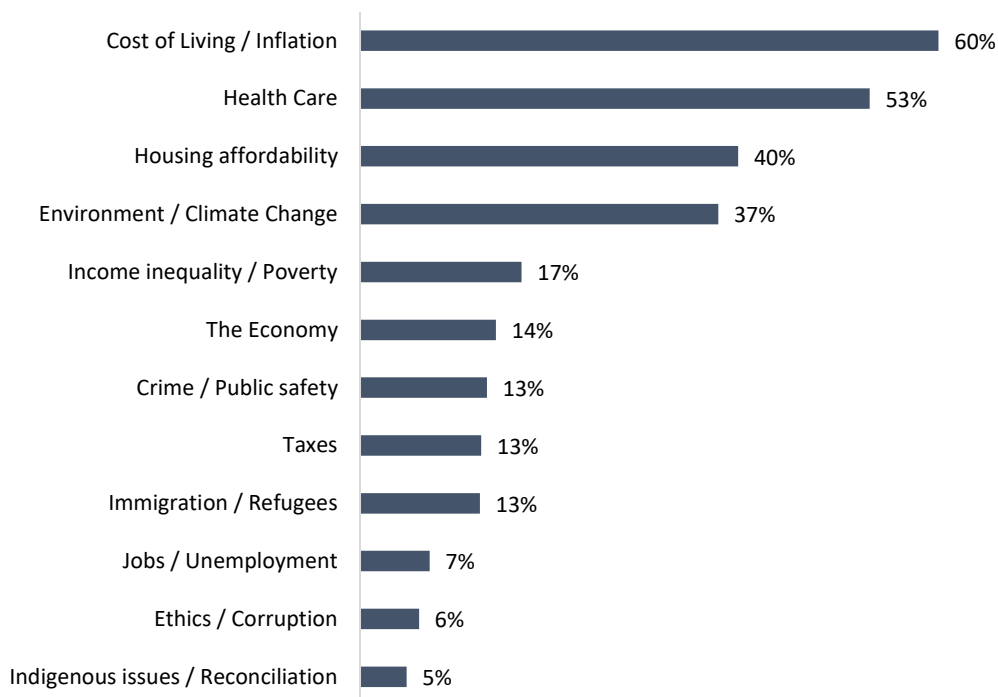
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Related:

- [Carbon Tax: Perceptions of insufficient rebates, cost of living concern & questions over efficacy send support plummeting](#)
- [Raise, pause, abolish? Centre-left voters rally around carbon tax, but majority would still reduce or eliminate it](#)

**Top issues for those who say "the Liberal government's lack of progress on issues I find important" is their main reason for not currently supporting the party:
(n=545)**



While a plurality of all demographics say the Liberals' lack of progress on issues they find important is holding them back from voting for the governing party in the next election, there are some differences depending on the age and gender of the respondent.

Older Canadians are more likely to cite the government's spending habits as a barrier to their support than younger ones.

Women under 35 are the most likely (22%) to say the government's stance on the war between Israel and Hamas is making them hesitate in supporting the Liberals.

Two-in-five (40%) men older than 54 say it is Trudeau at the helm that is the biggest obstacle to their support:

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What's holding you back most from supporting the Liberals in the next election? (Among those who would consider the party)							
	Total (n=1,143)	Male			Female		
		18-34	35-54	55+	18-34	35-54	55+
The Liberal government's lack of progress on issues I find important	48%	64%	44%	42%	51%	43%	49%
The leader – Justin Trudeau	31%	24%	28%	40%	29%	29%	32%
The Liberal government's deficit spending	29%	22%	21%	37%	20%	26%	37%
The party's "woke" policies	16%	19%	24%	14%	12%	16%	13%
The party's stance on the war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas	15%	18%	13%	12%	22%	17%	9%
The capital gains tax change	12%	8%	11%	11%	14%	13%	13%
Tired of the Liberals running the country	11%	19%	14%	11%	9%	9%	11%
Other	16%	12%	23%	11%	19%	19%	14%

What if Trudeau left after the election?

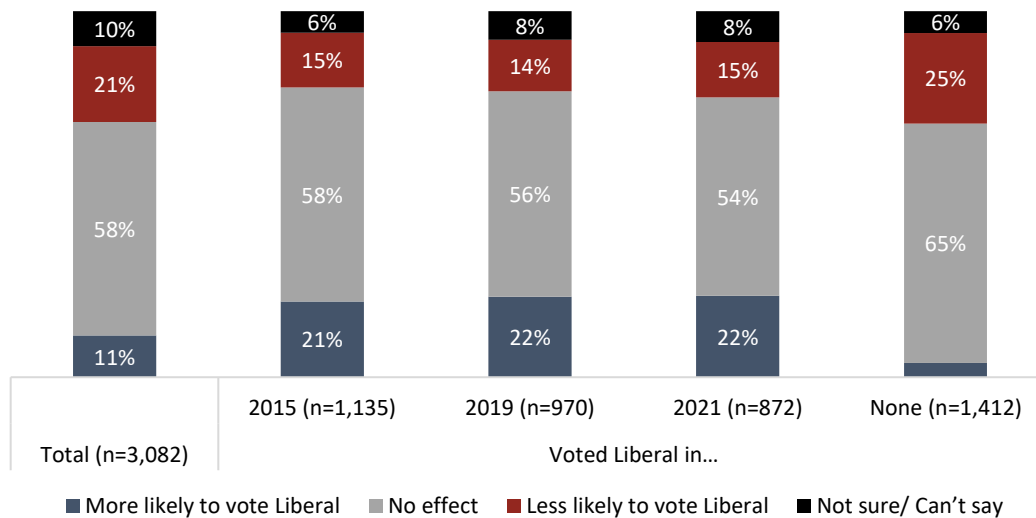
Whether it happens before the election or after it, Trudeau's leadership of the party appears to be approaching its eventual end. ARI asked respondents to consider a scenario where Trudeau helms the party through the next election, but promises to step down to be replaced by a successor after it, a scenario not without precedence.

By a two-to-one ratio, this hypothetical pushes more people away from the Liberal party (21%) than towards it (11%); most say it would make no difference (58%). Trudeau vacating the leadership of the party after the next election does not move the needle for a majority of those who voted Liberal in 2015, 2019, or 2021 either, though at least one-in-five of each group of past Liberal voters say this would make them more likely to vote Liberal again:

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Suppose Trudeau said he would run in the next election but promised to step down shortly after the election and allow a new leader to come forward...



New leader doesn't appear to be the answer

Though Trudeau has been insistent he plans to lead the party into the next election, the pressure for him to step aside could grow if the party does not achieve its internal goal of shrinking the vote intention gap between itself and the rival Conservatives.

ARI canvassed Canadians on a broad list of names including current Liberal ministers and prominent Canadians outside the party to assess how a change of leadership might impact the next election. Overall, it appears that even a replacement leader would not in the near-term sway the general voting public to the Liberals. Current Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland draws in a positive number of Canadians who “would definitely consider” voting Liberal but is neutral among those who “might consider” the party. Former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney is net positive among all three groups. Notably, none of the potential leaders resonate highly with those who would “maybe consider” the Liberals, a massive contingency of undecided voters:

Considering the following people, if they were leading the Liberal Party in the next federal election, would that make you more or less likely to support the party? (More likely minus less likely shown)			
	Liberal vote universe		
	Committed Voter	Definitely Consider	Maybe consider
Chrystia Freeland	37%	13%	0%
Mark Carney	10%	14%	5%
Dominic LeBlanc	3%	0%	-4%
Sean Fraser	0%	4%	-4%
Anita Anand	-3%	-1%	-2%
Bill Morneau	-9%	-3%	-6%
Mélanie Joly	-12%	-4%	-3%
François-Phillippe Champagne	-12%	-5%	-4%
Mark Miller	-13%	2%	-4%
Navdeep Bains	-17%	-2%	-9%
Christy Clark	-21%	-9%	-8%
Caroline Mulroney	-33%	-2%	-4%

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

For detailed results by reasons holding people back from voting Liberal, [click here](#).

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