

Federal Politics: Concern over immigration quadruples over last 24 months

Conservatives lead by 22 points in vote intent nationally and hold advantage in all provinces but Quebec

September 4, 2024 – While the number of Canadians galvanized over the cost of living and inflation is beginning to decrease, their attention is fixating on an issue that was once only glancingly thought of: immigration.

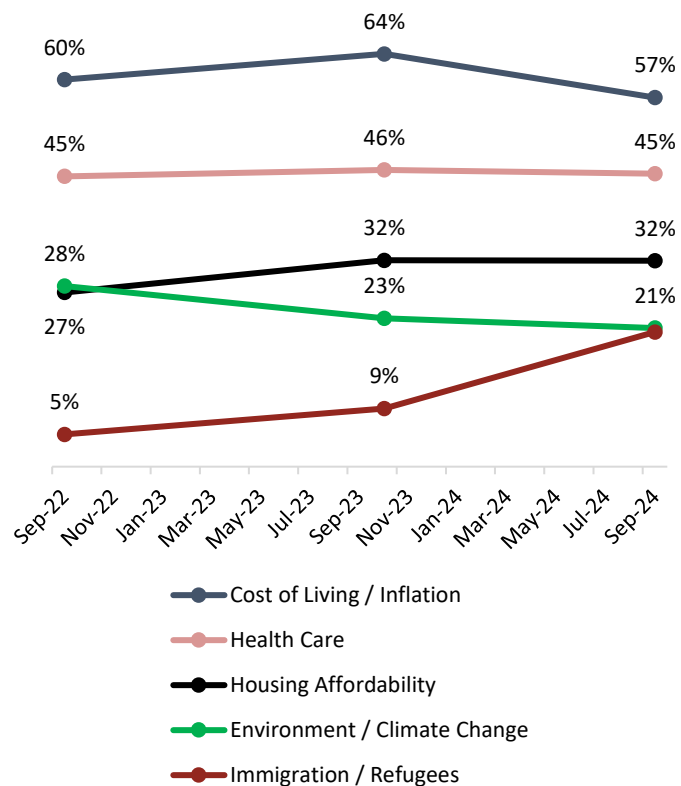
New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians' concern over immigration has risen four-fold over the last two years, prompting the federal government to announce plans to shrink the Temporary Foreign Workers program. One-in-five (21%) say "Immigration/refugees" is one of the top issues facing the country, putting it in a tie with climate change (21%), though still far off from the high cost of living (57%), health care (45%) and housing affordability (32%).

The latter concern perhaps represents a ripple effect from Canada's booming population driven by immigrants, both temporary and permanent. Another may be unemployment, especially among younger Canadians, who encountered an especially difficult summer job market influenced by a growing number of temporary foreign workers. One-in-five (19%) 18- to 34-year-olds say the lack of jobs is a top issue facing the country, as two-in-five (40%) that age fret over housing affordability as well.

As noted above, the Liberal government will be rolling back some of the pandemic-era changes to the Temporary Foreign Workers program,

but this has had no impact on vote intentions so far. The Liberals are still operating with a large support deficit which has lasted more than a year. Among decided voters, more than two-in-five (43%) say they would vote Conservative if the election were today, while similar sized groups of one-in-five say they would support the Liberals (21%) and the NDP (19%).

**Top issues facing Canada over time
(Top five current issues shown)**



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from Aug. 29 to Sept. 3, 2024 among a representative randomized sample of 1,420 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 +/- 2.5 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 @shachikurl

Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

In the nearly two years since the party elected Pierre Poilievre as leader, the CPC have made gains across nearly all demographics and regions at expense of the Liberals. Support for the Liberals has declined double digits in Ontario (-13) and Atlantic Canada (-17), with the Conservatives enjoying concurrent nine- and ten-point positive swings in those places respectively. The CPC have also seen at least eight-point increases in support among women 18- to 34-years-old (+8) and older than 54 (+8) and men aged 35-54 (+10).

While the vote intention story is all about gains for the Conservatives since he became leader, Poilievre himself has made little progress at improving his personal favourability. Half (52%) say they have an unfavourable view of the CPC leader, statistically identical to the figure seen when he was first elected (51%). The same is true of his favourability (36% now; 35% Sept. 2022). He has made inroads on this front among men aged 35-54 (+9 favourability) and women 18-34 (+5), though for the latter opinions are still overwhelmingly negative (52% unfavourable). And any demographic gains are offset by a decline (-15 favourability) among 18- to 34-year-old men over the past two years.

More Key Findings:

- In 2022, women older than 54 were the most likely to approve of Trudeau. That's still the case now, but opinions of Trudeau among this demographic have declined the most – 13 points – from 50 per cent approval in September 2022 to 37 per cent now.
- NDP leader Jagmeet Singh has seen his own personal popularity suffer in the past two years – perhaps by association with the unpopular Trudeau through the supply-and-confidence agreement signed by the NDP and Liberals in 2022. Favourability of Singh has declined across all demographics and 10 points overall.
- While still selected by one-in-five (21%) Canadians, climate change is declining as a priority in general. In 2022, approaching three-in-ten (28%) said it was one of the top issues facing the country. Now, it is surpassed by housing affordability (32%) and is in a statistical tie with immigration (21%) and crime and public safety (19%).

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 issues

- **Concern over immigration nearly quadruples over past two years**
- **One-in-five young Canadians worry about jobs, unemployment**

Part Two: Vote intent

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

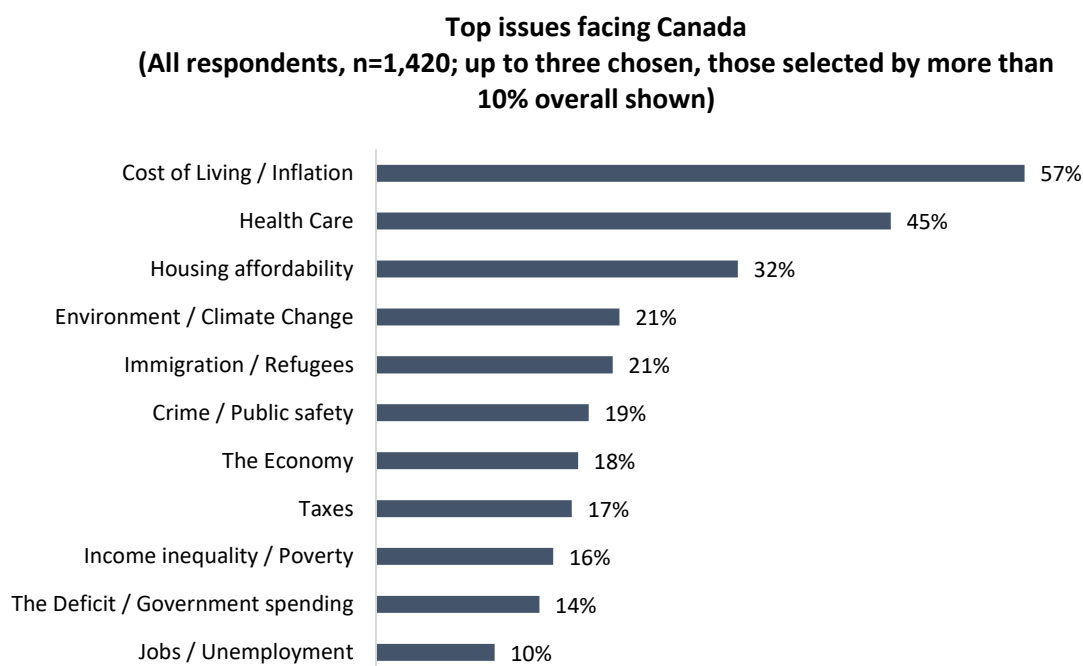
- **Two years of Poillievre: CPC make gains across most demographics, regions**

Part Three: Leadership

- **Net negative opinions of big three federal leaders**

Part One: Top issues

When parliament resumes seating later this month, there will be a full docket of issues waiting to be addressed. A majority of Canadians (57%) believe the cost of living is one of the top issues facing the country at the moment, while more than two-in-five (45%) say the same of health care. Behind that, one-in-three worry over housing affordability. Other concerns trail far behind those three, but at least one-in-five say climate change (21%), immigration (21%), and crime and public safety (19%) are key challenges for Canada:



Concern over immigration nearly quadruples over past two years

Some issues are lingering – cost of living, health care, and housing affordability have consistently been selected by Canadians as top issues over the past two years – while others have grown more pressing in according to Canadians. The proportion of Canadians that select Immigration / Refugees as a top issue has nearly quadrupled over the past two years.

Perhaps at issue is growing attention over the ripple effects of the federal government's Temporary Foreign Workers program, which had been expanded as the country dealt with a [post-pandemic labour shortage](#). In 2023, the federal government allowed employers to hire nearly [240,000 temporary foreign workers](#), more than double the amount it allowed in 2018. After a cabinet retreat focused on housing and immigration, the federal Liberal government announced plans to scale back the program. There will be

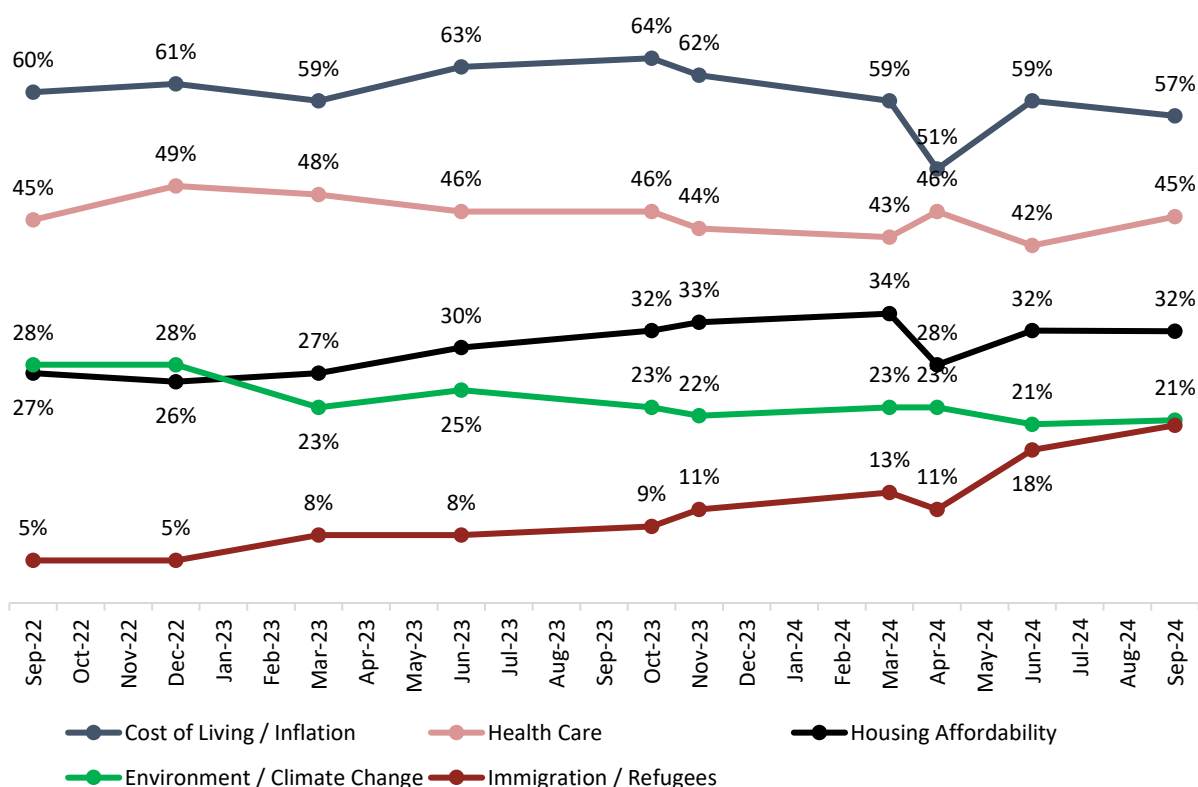
CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

more to come on Canadian public opinion on the Temporary Foreign Workers program in a forthcoming report.

**Top issues facing Canada over time
(Top five current issues shown)**



Those who say they will vote Conservative if the election were held today are the most likely to be concerned about immigration. It's the second most chosen issue behind the high cost of living among those likely voters. Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre has said a government led by him would reduce immigration, [keeping population growth lower than the number of new homes](#).

The issues concerning likely Liberal voters remain consistent from two years ago, while those who say they will vote NDP are becoming increasingly concerned with housing affordability (+9) and less so with climate change (-11):

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

Top issues facing Canada (Up to three chosen; top five in each region shown; change from Sept. 2022 noted)				
Total (n=1,420)	Federal Vote Intent (Decided and leaning voters)			
	CPC	Liberal	NDP	BQ
Cost of Living 57% (-3)	Cost of Living 57% (-10)	Health Care 60% (+1)	Cost of Living 60% (+6)	Cost of Living 56% (-4)
Health Care 45% (0)	Immigration 36% (+30)	Cost of Living 52% (-4)	Health Care 57% (+3)	Health Care 50% (+3)
Housing Affordability 32% (+5)	Health Care 33% (+2)	Climate Change 36% (-2)	Housing Affordability 44% (+9)	Housing Affordability 38% (+21)
Climate Change 21% (-7)	Taxes 29% (+4)	Housing Affordability 31% (+1)	Climate Change 35% (-11)	Climate Change 35% (-9)
Immigration 21% (+16)	The Deficit 28% (-9)	Income Inequality/ Poverty 20% (+1)	Income Inequality/ Poverty 33% (+3)	Income Inequality/ Poverty 26% (+6)

Regionally, cost of living remains a key concern. Underneath that, there have been notable shifts in the past two years. Climate change has fallen off as a concern in B.C., typically a place where residents put a higher emphasis on environmental issues. Taxes – perhaps with an eye on the federal government’s [unpopular carbon tax](#) and the recent changes to the [capital gains tax](#) – have grown in importance among Albertans and those in Saskatchewan.

Related:

- [Raise, pause, abolish? Centre-left voters rally around carbon tax, but majority would still reduce or eliminate it](#)
- [Capital Gains Tax: One-in-five say increasing inclusion rate will cost them more over next five years](#)

Immigration has risen significantly as a concern across the country, and regionally in Alberta (+21), Saskatchewan (+17), Ontario (+18) and Quebec (+14). Ontario led the country in 2023 accepting an estimated 200,000 immigrants [according to Statistics Canada](#), but as a percentage of population, Saskatchewan accepted the most immigrants with an estimated 25,000 immigrants incoming to that province in 2023, roughly two per cent of its population:

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

Top issues facing Canada (Up to three chosen; top five in each region shown; change from Sept. 2022 noted)							
Total (n=1,420)	Region						
	BC (n=184)	AB (n=136)	SK (n=101)	MB (n=108)	ON (n=395)	QC (n=379)	ATL (n=117)
Cost of Living 57% (-3)	Cost of Living 60% (+4)	Cost of Living 59% (-6)	Cost of Living 66% (-1)	Cost of Living 60% (-2)	Cost of Living 56% (-3)	Cost of Living 52% (-8)	Cost of Living 67% (0)
Health Care 45% (0)	Health Care 44% (+1)	Health Care 43% (+7)	Health Care 47% (+8)	Health Care 55% (+5)	Health Care 43% (-2)	Health Care 47% (-1)	Health Care 52% (-9)
Housing Affordability 32% (+5)	Housing Affordability 37% (0)	Taxes 29% (+12)	Taxes 30% (+8)	Crime/ Public Safety 26% (+4)	Housing Affordability 34% (+2)	Housing Affordability 35% (+14)	Housing Affordability 33% (+11)
Climate Change 21% (-7)	Climate Change 20% (-10)	Immigration 23% (+21)	The Economy 25% (+1)	Housing Affordability 22% (+3)	Immigration 24% (+18)	Climate Change 33% (-3)	Climate Change 23% (0)
Immigration 21% (+16)	Crime/ Public Safety 20% (+1)	The Deficit 21% (0)	Immigration 20% (+17)	Climate Change 20% (-1)	Crime/ Public Safety 24% (+9)	Immigration 21% (+14)	Income Inequality/ Poverty 21% (+3)

One-in-five young Canadians worry about jobs, unemployment

A likely ripple effect of the government's expansion of the Temporary Foreign Workers program is youth unemployment, which rose to 13.5 per cent in June, double the national average, and the highest it had been since [September 2014](#). One-in-five (19%) 18- to 34-year-olds say "unemployment" is a top issue facing the country. Older Canadians express a higher concern for public safety, while immigration is also a rising concern among those older than 54:

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

Top issues facing Canada (Up to three chosen; top five in each region shown; change from Sept. 2022 noted)						
Total (n=1,420)	Male			Female		
	18-34 (n=192)	35-54 (n=232)	55+ (n=264)	18-34 (n=194)	35-54 (n=242)	55+ (n=290)
Cost of Living 57% (-3)	Cost of Living 62% (0)	Cost of Living 56% (-8)	Health Care 45% (-3)	Cost of Living 75% (+9)	Cost of Living 65% (-1)	Health Care 61% (-2)
Health Care 45% (0)	Housing Affordability 41% (+10)	Housing Affordability 35% (+14)	Cost of Living 45% (-7)	Health Care 42% (-2)	Health Care 55% (+11)	Cost of Living 48% (-9)
Housing Affordability 32% (+5)	Health Care 31% (+7)	Health Care 31% (-3)	The Deficit 28% (+3)	Housing Affordability 40% (-2)	Housing Affordability 35% (+6)	Crime/ Public Safety 28% (+8)
Climate Change 21% (-7)	Climate Change 25% (-1)	The Economy 29% (+4)	Immigration 27% (+21)	Climate Change 24% (-15)	Climate Change 21% (-6)	Climate Change 28% (-1)
Immigration 21% (+16)	Taxes 22% (+6)	Taxes 25% (+6)	Climate Change 21% (-2)	Jobs/ Unemployment 20% (+12)	Income Inequality/ Poverty 18% (-1)	Housing Affordability 26% (+1)

Part Two: Vote intent

As the House of Commons prepares for what is more than likely the final fall sitting period of the 44th Parliament, the vote intent picture remains relatively static – the Conservatives enjoy a large lead of more than 20 points, while the incumbent Liberal Party and its supply-and-confidence partner NDP are the choice of one-in-five.

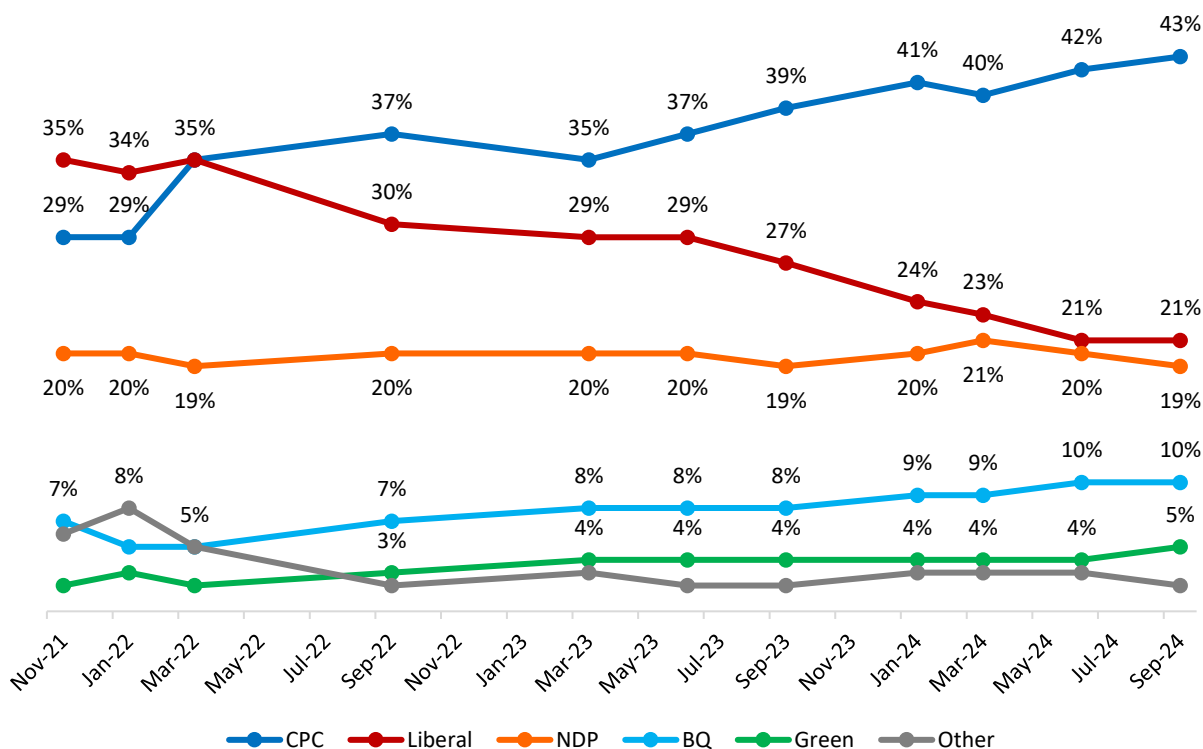
Vote intent for the Conservatives has risen to the highest it has been in ARI tracking [dating back to 2014](#), the year before Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Liberals were elected to a majority government. Meanwhile, 21 per cent of vote intention represents a record low for the Liberals also dating back to 2014.

The erosion of Liberal support, and the Conservatives' concurrent rise, began in earnest in September 2022, when Pierre Poilievre stepped into the role of leader of the Conservative Party. Since then, the gap between the two parties has tripled from seven-points in 2022 to 22 now:

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

Federal vote intent over time (Decided and leaning voters)



Two years of Poilievre: CPC make gains across most demographics, regions

Traditionally, the Angus Reid Institute compares vote intent quarterly, but for this report, is comparing data from September 2022 to show how much has changed in the two years since Poilievre was elected as leader of the Conservative party.

Support of the Conservatives has grown across all age-and-gender demographics except 18- to 34-year-old men in the past two years. That includes double digit gains among men older than 34 and eight-point gains among young women and women older than 54. Vote intention for the Liberals has meanwhile declined across all age-and-gender demographics, headlined by a near 20-point drop among women older than 54.

The NDP have made some gains among some of the demographics who have moved away from the Liberals but have also lost ground among men older than 34 who make up the largest portion of the Poilievre Conservative base. The net result for the NDP is little movement in their national vote intention number over the past two years:

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

Federal vote intent (Decided and leaning voters; change from Sept. 2022 noted)							
	Total (n=1,228)	Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=150)	35-54 (n=210)	55+ (n=241)	18-34 (n=156)	35-54 (n=196)	55+ (n=260)
Conservative Party of Canada	43% (+6)	40% (-8)	57% (+10)	49% (+3)	31% (+8)	36% (+4)	38% (+8)
Liberal Party of Canada	21% (-9)	8% (-7)	15% (-9)	24% (-7)	13% (-11)	22% (-14)	28% (-18)
New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP)	19% (-1)	35% (+9)	13% (-6)	6% (-3)	44% (+2)	26% (+5)	17% (+4)
Bloc Québécois	10% (+3)	9% (+5)	7% (+1)	13% (-2)	4% (-1)	6% (+1)	15% (+7)
Green Party of Canada	5% (+2)	6% (+3)	6% (+4)	4% (+2)	5% (0)	8% (+4)	1% (-2)
Other	2% (0)	1% (-3)	3% (+1)	3% (+2)	2% (+1)	1% (-1)	1% (0)

The national lead for the Conservatives is also a story of regional dominance outside of Quebec. The CPC lead in vote intent in every part of the country – except Quebec – and have made gains largely at the Liberals' expense. For example, the Conservatives lead in Atlantic Canada, which has elected at least 24 Liberals in the available 32 seats in each of the last three elections, after vote intention for the Liberals there has declined by 17 points. The Liberals have also seen a double-digit (-13) drop in support in Ontario since September 2022.

In Quebec, the Bloc Québécois has been the largest beneficiary from the Liberals' fall as Poilievre and the CPC have made little headway in the province since he was elected leader:

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

Federal vote intent (Decided and leaning voters; change from Sept. 2022 noted)								
	Total (n=1,228)	Region						
		BC (n=160)	AB (n=122)	SK (n=94*)	MB (n=94*)	ON (n=339)	QC (n=318)	ATL (n=105)
Conservative Party of Canada	43% (+6)	39% (+3)	64% (+9)	62% (+1)	50% (+7)	48% (+9)	24% (+1)	46% (+10)
Liberal Party of Canada	21% (-9)	23% (-6)	12% (-3)	11% (0)	16% (-9)	23% (-13)	21% (-9)	23% (-17)
New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP)	19% (-1)	28% (+1)	21% (-3)	23% (0)	33% (+5)	20% (0)	10% (-5)	21% (+3)
Bloc Québécois	10% (+3)	-	-	-	-	-	42% (+13)	-
Green Party of Canada	5% (+2)	9% (+2)	2% (+1)	0% (-1)	1% (-1)	6% (+3)	1% (-1)	8% (+5)
Other	2% (0)	1% (0)	1% (-3)	4% (+1)	0% (-2)	3% (+2)	2% (0)	2% (-1)

*Smaller sample size, interpret with caution

Part Three: Leadership

Net negative opinions of big three federal leaders

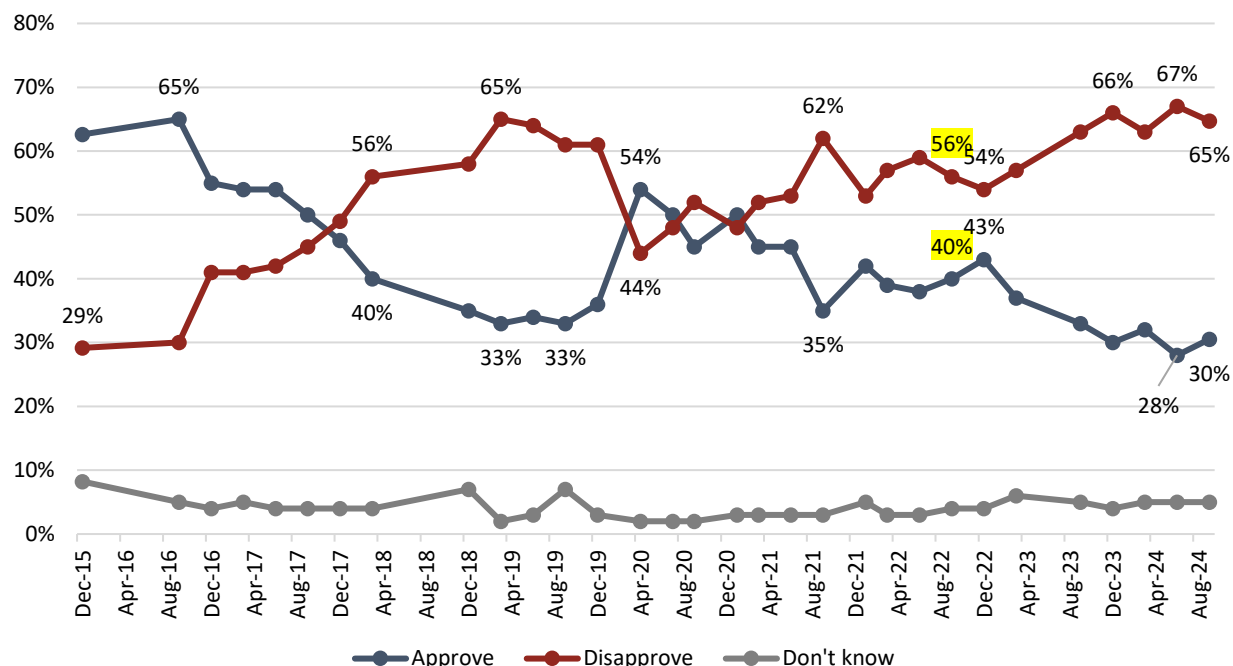
Whether an election comes next summer [in June](#) when the Liberals' supply-and-confidence deal with the NDP expires, or in October, the last possible date for an election to be held, it is the final year of Trudeau's third term. The prime minister remains in a valley of low approval. Three-in-ten (30%) say they approve of Trudeau, while more than double instead have a negative impression (65%). Since September 2022, approval of Trudeau has declined by 10 points while disapproval has risen nearly as much (+9).

Despite his persistent unpopularity, Trudeau has [waved away](#) any suggestions he could follow the example of U.S. President Joe Biden and step away from the Liberal leadership before the next election. However, a byelection in the typically Liberal-friendly Montreal riding of LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, necessitated by the resignation of former Justice Minister David Lametti looms as another [potential pivot point](#).

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

Approval of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau over time



Opinions of Trudeau have deteriorated across all age and gender groups. In September 2022, half of women older than 54 said they approved of the prime minister. They are still the most likely demographic to have a positive opinion of Trudeau, but now fewer than two-in-five (37%) do.

A majority of all demographics say they disapprove of Trudeau, which wasn't the case two years ago:

CONTACT:

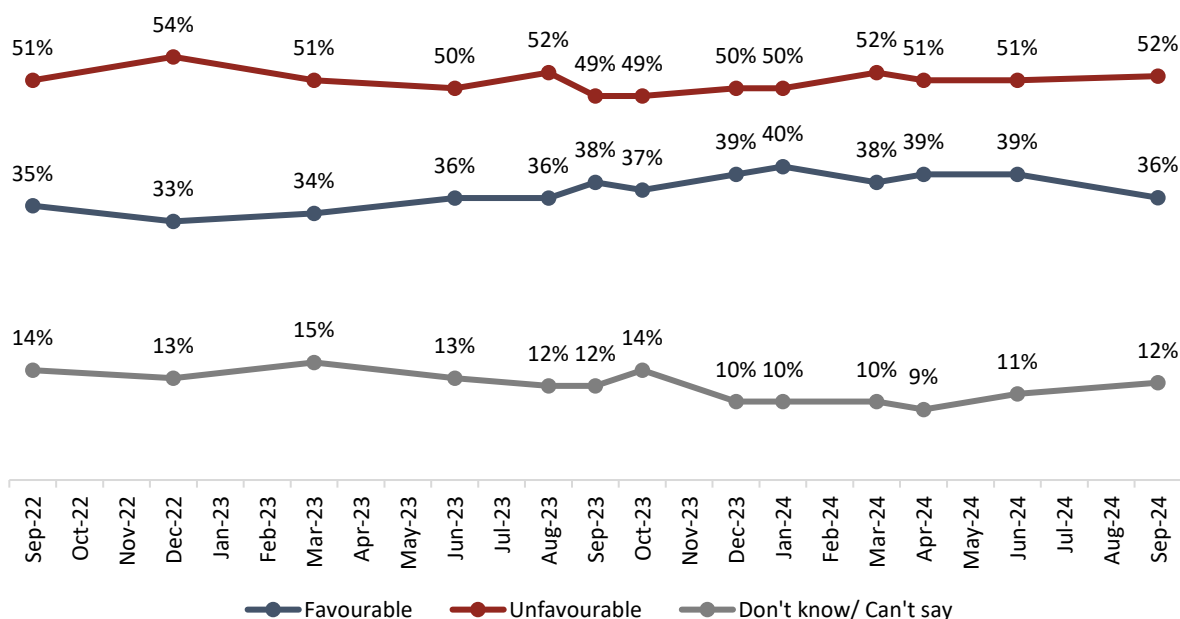
Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

Approval of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Change from Sept. 2022 noted)							
	Total (n=1,420)	Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=192)	35-54 (n=232)	55+ (n=264)	18-34 (n=194)	35-54 (n=242)	55+ (n=290)
Approve	30% (-10)	24% (-7)	26% (-7)	24% (-9)	34% (-12)	36% (-9)	37% (-13)
Disapprove	65% (+9)	73% (+7)	70% (+5)	74% (+8)	58% (+13)	56% (+7)	58% (+12)
Don't know/ Can't say	5% (+1)	2% (0)	3% (+1)	2% (+1)	8% (-1)	8% (+2)	5% (+2)

While his party has capitalized in the polls since he became leader, opinions of Poilievre himself are relatively unchanged on the surface since he won the CPC leadership race in September 2022. Half (52%) say they have an unfavourable view of the Conservative leader, more than one-third (36%) say they have a positive one. In the past two years, the latter has peaked at two-in-five at the beginning of 2024, while the former has only fallen to as low as 49 per cent:

Favourability of Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre over time



The relatively stable overall opinion of Poilievre masks subtle changes underneath the surface. Opinions of the Conservative leader have improved among men older than 34 and women aged 18-34, while remaining statistically similar among women older than 34. But this has been offset by a double-digit decline among younger men, of whom approaching three-in-five (57%) say they have an unfavourable view of Poilievre:

CONTACT:

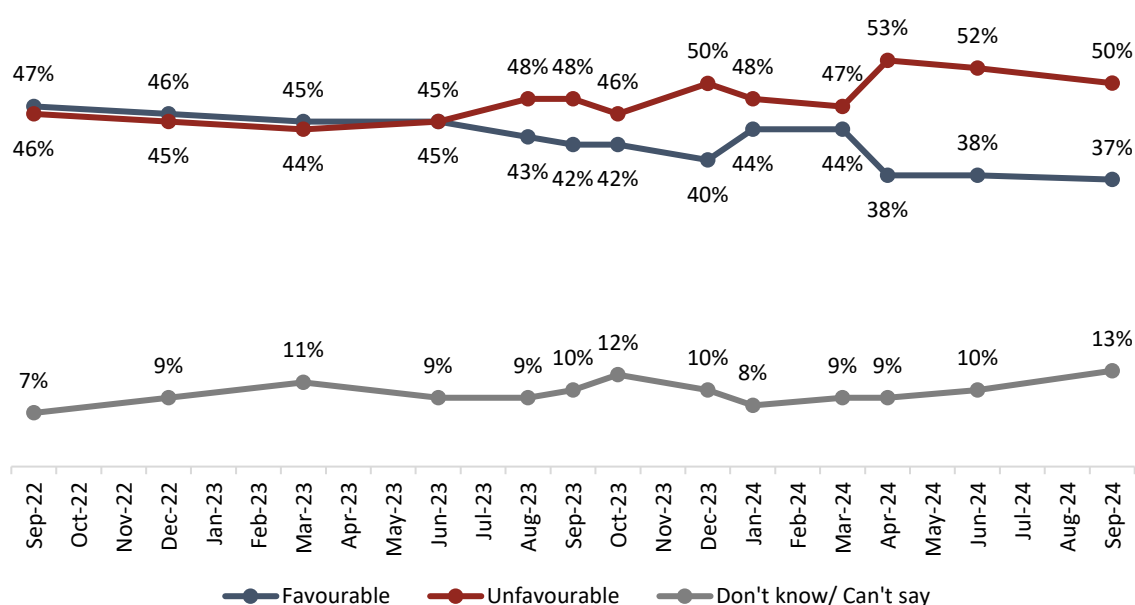
Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

Favourability of Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre (Change from Sept. 2022 noted)							
	Total (n=1,420)	Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=192)	35-54 (n=232)	55+ (n=264)	18-34 (n=194)	35-54 (n=242)	55+ (n=290)
Favourable	36% (+1)	34% (-15)	52% (+9)	45% (+3)	27% (+5)	28% (0)	29% (+2)
Unfavourable	52% (+1)	57% (+15)	39% (-8)	50% (-1)	52% (-4)	56% (+5)	56% (0)
Don't know/ Can't say	12% (-2)	9% (0)	10% (+1)	5% (-2)	21% (-1)	16% (-5)	15% (-3)

Jagmeet Singh and the NDP may have advanced significant policy priorities – dental care, anti-scab legislation, pharmacare – through their supply-and-confidence agreement with the minority Liberal government, but perhaps at the cost of attaching themselves to a deeply unpopular prime minister. Singh had previously enjoyed a favourability advantage among federal leaders but has seen a decline in opinion over the past two years.

Favourability of NDP leader Jagmeet Singh over time



CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org

Across all demographics, fewer say they have a favourable view of the NDP leader than did two years ago. However, assessments of Singh among women are still more positive than negative:

Favourability of NDP leader Jagmeet Singh (Change from Sept. 2022 noted)							
	Total (n=1,420)	Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=192)	35-54 (n=232)	55+ (n=264)	18-34 (n=194)	35-54 (n=242)	55+ (n=290)
Favourable	37% (-10)	33% (-8)	29% (-10)	29% (-10)	44% (-15)	45% (-5)	45% (-9)
Unfavourable	50% (+4)	60% (+5)	64% (+8)	64% (+7)	33% (+4)	38% (+1)	41% (+3)
Don't know/ Can't say	13% (+6)	7% (+3)	7% (+2)	8% (+5)	23% (+11)	17% (+5)	14% (+6)

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

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 jon.roe@angusreid.org