

NEWS RELEASE



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Liberals cutting into Harper majority, research institute finds

WATERLOO – An analysis of new polls projects another minority for the Conservative Party, according to The Laurier Institute for the Study of Public Opinion and Policy (LISPOP).

A LISPOP analysis of recent polls projects a seat distribution of 150 seats for the Harper Conservatives, a loss of seven seats over two weeks. Today's projection is based on an aggregation of polls conducted by Nanos Research, Ekos and Leger Marketing between March 28 and April 2, 2011, with a blended sample of about 8,000 individuals. The regional swing model also projects 74 seats for the Liberals, 33 seats for the NDP and 51 seats for the Bloc Québécois.

Much of the shift has occurred in seat-rich Ontario, where the Liberals have recaptured some lost ground, although this currently translates only to a modest three-seat gain, all at the expense of the Conservatives.

The Conservative numbers hold amid a string of ethical controversies that carried into the campaign.

"The story at the moment is that there hasn't been much change in the last two months despite the political games," said Barry Kay, an associate of LISPOP. "As with other recent projections since early February, the overall numbers represent only marginal shifting which hardly exceeds sampling error in most regions."

A tightening of the race is not a surprise.

"Historically, whoever is leading at the beginning of the campaign usually loses support, sometimes dramatically," said Kay. "The most dramatic were John Turner in 1984 and Kim Campbell in 1993. Both were ahead in pre-campaign polls, but lost 20 points."

The seat projection is one of several features on LISPOP's election tracker coverage of the 2011 campaign. Visitors to www.wlu.ca/lispop can view a map of all federal constituencies, colour-coded to reflect the standing of each of the main parties and general level of competitiveness, as per LISPOP's analysis of the latest surveys.

Currently, 32 seats are designated as "too close to call," which is an increase from 26 ridings from LISPOP's March 25 projection. Another 29 show one party "leaning": eight for the Conservatives, nine for the Liberals, 10 for the NDP, and two for the Bloc Québécois.

Three Toronto-area ridings – Don Valley West, York Centre and Ajax-Pickering – show a slight Liberal lead, a change from LISPOP's previous projection which had these ridings categorized as "too close to call." Liberal standing in Bramalea-Gore-Malton has improved from "leaning" to the more comfortable "leading."

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Liberal gains in Ontario are also making some seats more hotly contested. Kitchener-Centre, Kitchener-Waterloo, Mississauga-Erindale, Oak Ridges-Markam, Brampton-West previously showed a slight Conservative lead, but are now too close to call.

Updates will be announced through LISPOP's Twitter account, @LaurierInst.

About LISPOP: The Laurier Institute for the Study of Public Opinion and Policy is a research centre at Wilfrid Laurier University which studies issues pertaining to the creation, use and representation of public opinion in the policy process. The institute serves as a catalyst to promote individual and collaborative research on these issues. In addition, the institute monitors the practices and claims of the public opinion and interest group industries, and serves as an educational resource to the university and the larger community on questions and issues pertaining to those claims and practices.