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Latest federal polls suggest a reversal of political fortunes, Laurier researchers find

WATERLOO – For the first time since 2009, an analysis of new polls projects the Liberal Party of Canada with enough support to displace the Conservative Party in power, 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 137 seats for Justin Trudeau's Liberals. Today's projection is based on an aggregation of polls conducted by Ekos, Ipsos Reid and Harris-Decima from April 18 to May 2, 2013, with a blended sample of about 4,000 individuals. The regional swing model also projects 120 seats for the Conservatives, 72 seats for the New Democratic Party, eight seats for the Bloc Québécois and one for the Greens.

While many point to the Liberals' new leader as reason for the surge, LISPOP associate Barry Kay takes a more cautious approach. "At this point, we can only speculate on the causes of the apparent Liberal surge," said Kay, an associate professor of political science at Laurier. "The polls suggest voters are shifting, and doing so in rather great numbers. According to our analysis of the poll numbers, even NDP Leader Tom Mulcair's seat in Outremont is highly vulnerable."

Most of the Liberal seat gains were in Ontario and Quebec, but the polls were held before the impact of the recent Senate scandal had occurred. "It is probable that unless Stephen Harper reverses the negative image of the current Senate spending controversy, support levels for the Conservatives will struggle to recover," said LISPOP Director Andrea Perrella. "However, the general federal election will not take place until 2015, and two years is an enormous amount of time in politics. Lots can change, suggesting that the current apparent Liberal 'surge' can die down."

It should be noted that the LISPOP seat projection model does not reflect the final boundaries that will exist in the 2015 federal election.

- 30 -

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.