

POLITICS ANYONE?

By Bruce Anderson & David Coletto

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In next year's federal election well over 1,000 people will register as candidates for different parties or as independent candidates. This willingness to participate in the political process is important to the health of any democracy. We recently explored the idea of political candidacy in our polling. Here are the highlights of what we found:

- 6% of Canadians say they **would consider** running for office, and another 15% say they **might consider** it. While the vast majority of people wouldn't consider running, the 21% represents a considerable pool of potential political talent, the equivalent of millions of Canadians.
- The persistent gender imbalance in politics is reflected in the fact that men are quite a bit more (28%) inclined to run compared to women (18%). The instinct to consider standing for office peaks between the ages of 30 and 45 (27%)
- Of those who would consider running, 35% think they would (definitely or probably) win. While men are more likely to consider running, women are slightly more confident than men that if they ran they would win.

Across the population as a whole, asked which party they would run for, the Liberal and Conservative brands have the most appeal: 22% would run for the Liberal Party, 20% for the Conservatives, and 14% for the NDP. In Quebec 12% would run for the BQ.

Conservative and Liberal voters are most likely to say they would run for the party they plan to vote for. Only 12% of Conservative voters, and 13% of Liberal voters would consider carrying another banner or running as an independent. 22% of NDP voters would do so.

In terms of how people feel about their current representatives:

- 41% say they could name their federal MP, and another 17% say they probably could.
- 17% say their MP deserves to be re-elected and another 24% say "probably". In Alberta, the province with the largest proportion of presumed "safe" incumbents the number of

voters who think their MP deserves to be re-elected is only marginally higher than average (45%).

- In Quebec and Ontario, the two provinces with the most seats, 45% and 40% think their MP deserves re-election.
- Women (38%) are considerably less likely than men (44%) to support incumbents.
- Among those who say they know the name of their MP, 56% say their MP deserves re-election, 36-points higher than those who cannot or probably cannot name their MP.

THE UPSHOT?

While there has been plenty of evidence of voter frustration with politics over the years, a considerable number of people believe that they can make politics better, and are open to participating as candidates. A good number also believe that they would have a chance to win.

In our first past the post system, incumbents often win with considerably less than 50% of support. Notwithstanding that, voters seem less critical when evaluating the performance of their own MP than of the system or a party as a whole. The numbers also show how valuable it can be for local MP's to become well known among constituents, it clearly tends to condition people towards supporting incumbents.

Finally, the gender balance in our politics seems to have more to do with women feeling less able or willing to consider a run for office – and is less about confidence in their prospects of victory: women are if anything more confident than men that they could win if they ran.

METHODOLOGY

Our survey was conducted online with 1,850 Canadians aged 18 and over from October 30 to November 4, 2014. A random sample of panelists was invited to complete the survey from a large representative panel of Canadians, recruited and managed by Research Now, one of the world's leading provider of online research samples.

The Marketing Research and Intelligence Association policy limits statements about margins of sampling error for most online surveys. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/- 2.3%, 19 times out of 20. The data were weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched Canada's population according to age, gender, educational attainment, and region. Totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

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Would you ever consider running for office?

Sample size: 1,850

Comparable MoE: ± 2.3%, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: October 30 to November 4, 2014

		Yes	I might consider it	No	Raw	Weighted
Region	Canada	6%	15%	79%	1850	1820
	BC	5%	16%	80%	600	238
	AB	12%	13%	75%	120	197
	SK/MB	2%	14%	84%	80	126
	ON	7%	16%	77%	300	693
	QC	4%	14%	83%	650	431
	ATL	3%	14%	83%	100	135
Gender	Male	10%	18%	73%	944	877
	Female	3%	12%	86%	906	943
Age	18 - 29	6%	23%	70%	523	418
	30 - 44	7%	16%	77%	523	511
	45 - 59	6%	11%	83%	459	535
	60 and over	4%	8%	87%	345	357
	Conservative Party	9%	13%	78%	461	558
2011vote	Liberal Party	6%	16%	78%	363	339
	NDP	4%	13%	82%	428	425
	Green Party	8%	20%	72%	85	58
	Bloc Quebecois	4%	13%	82%	147	88
	Another party	3%	30%	67%	29	9
	Did not vote	4%	17%	79%	337	343

If you ran at the federal level, which party would you run for?

Sample size: 1,850

Comparable MoE: $\pm 2.3\%$, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: October 30 to November 4, 2014

	Row %	LPC	CPC	NDP	GPC	BQ	Other	IND	Unsure	Raw	Weighted
Region	Canada	22%	20%	14%	5%	4%	0%	6%	28%	1850	1820
	BC	19%	23%	11%	6%	2%	0%	7%	32%	600	238
	AB	12%	37%	12%	1%	3%	0%	6%	29%	120	197
	SK/MB	24%	17%	10%	4%	0%	0%	8%	37%	80	126
	ON	25%	21%	12%	8%	3%	0%	7%	25%	300	693
	QC	22%	9%	22%	4%	12%	1%	5%	26%	650	431
	ATL	23%	17%	16%	4%	1%	0%	5%	33%	100	135
Gender	Male	21%	25%	12%	6%	4%	0%	7%	24%	944	877
	Female	22%	15%	16%	5%	4%	0%	6%	32%	906	943
Age	18 - 29	22%	15%	16%	8%	5%	1%	6%	28%	523	418
	30 - 44	20%	17%	14%	7%	7%	0%	6%	29%	523	511
	45 - 59	21%	20%	13%	4%	3%	0%	7%	32%	459	535
	60 and over	25%	30%	13%	3%	2%	0%	6%	21%	345	357
2011 vote	Conservative Party	11%	55%	1%	2%	2%	0%	5%	22%	461	558
	Liberal Party	66%	2%	5%	3%	1%	0%	4%	19%	363	339
	NDP	14%	3%	44%	3%	2%	0%	9%	24%	428	425
	Green Party	7%	5%	2%	41%	2%	0%	12%	31%	85	58
	Bloc Quebecois	6%	2%	15%	5%	48%	1%	3%	22%	147	88
	Another party	23%	2%	4%	2%	8%	3%	19%	38%	29	9
	Did not vote	12%	7%	10%	9%	4%	0%	6%	52%	337	343

If you ran, do you think you would win the election?

Sample size: 403, Only those who would consider running for office

Comparable MoE: $\pm 5.0\%$, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: October 30 to November 4, 2014

		Definitely	Probably	Probably not	Definitely not	Unsure	Raw	Weighted
Region	Canada	10%	25%	38%	6%	22%	403	377
	BC	8%	23%	39%	6%	24%	131	48
	AB	9%	30%	32%	3%	26%	31	50
	SK/MB	12%	15%	39%	0%	34%	17	21
	ON	12%	24%	45%	7%	13%	75	160
	QC	6%	30%	27%	10%	27%	127	75
	ATL	9%	15%	37%	0%	39%	22	23
Gender	Male	9%	24%	44%	6%	18%	267	241
	Female	11%	26%	28%	5%	29%	136	136
Age	18 - 29	13%	20%	38%	6%	23%	141	124
	30 - 44	12%	31%	33%	7%	17%	137	118
	45 - 59	3%	28%	34%	7%	29%	78	90
	60 and over	6%	14%	61%	2%	18%	47	45
2011 vote	Conservative Party	11%	28%	38%	5%	18%	106	124
	Liberal Party	13%	27%	38%	9%	13%	83	73
	NDP	3%	33%	35%	5%	24%	82	74
	Green Party	19%	19%	33%	5%	24%	26	17
	Bloc Quebecois	0%	23%	45%	3%	29%	26	15
	Another party	0%	35%	36%	17%	11%	12	3
	Did not vote	9%	9%	42%	5%	35%	68	70

Could you name your federal MP?

Sample size: 1,850

Comparable MoE: ± 2.3%, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: October 30 to November 4, 2014

		Yes	Probably	Probably not	No	Raw	Weighted
Region	Canada	41%	17%	23%	20%	1850	1820
	BC	43%	18%	20%	19%	600	238
	AB	52%	16%	21%	11%	120	197
	SK/MB	43%	17%	26%	14%	80	126
	ON	38%	18%	26%	19%	300	693
	QC	37%	17%	19%	27%	650	431
	ATL	44%	12%	24%	20%	100	135
Gender	Male	45%	17%	21%	17%	944	877
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	Green Party	41%	9%	17%	33%	85	58
	Bloc Quebecois	41%	13%	20%	26%	147	88
	Another party	49%	23%	10%	17%	29	9
	Did not vote	18%	12%	31%	40%	337	343

Do you think your federal MP deserves to be re-elected?

Sample size: 1,850

Comparable MoE: $\pm 2.3\%$, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: October 30 to November 4, 2014

		Yes	Probably	Probably not	No	Unsure	Raw	Weighted
Region	Canada	17%	24%	15%	12%	32%	1850	1820
	BC	17%	20%	14%	16%	33%	600	238
	AB	22%	23%	15%	14%	25%	120	197
	SK/MB	13%	19%	12%	20%	36%	80	126
	ON	15%	25%	19%	7%	33%	300	693
	QC	19%	26%	11%	14%	31%	650	431
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	NDP	20%	26%	10%	12%	32%	428	425
	Green Party	14%	27%	12%	9%	38%	85	58
	Bloc Quebecois	15%	27%	12%	18%	28%	147	88
	Another party	0%	25%	28%	31%	17%	29	9
	Did not vote	5%	15%	10%	10%	60%	337	343