FEDERAL POLITICS MORE COMPETITIVE; REVIEWS OF TRUDEAU TRUMP MEETING ARE POSITIVE
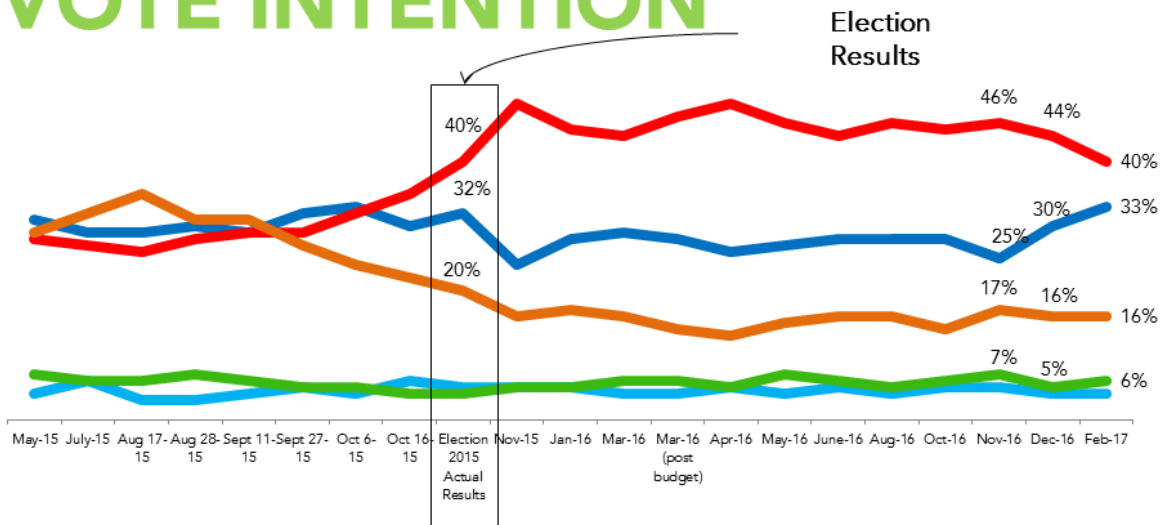
By Bruce Anderson & David Coletto

The Canadian political dynamic is more competitive, largely because of shifting results in Ontario: where the Liberal brand has lost a bit of appeal and we see strengthening interest in the Conservatives. In BC, the Liberals remain well ahead, but the NDP have picked up some ground in the last couple of months.

Nationally, 40% would vote Liberal today, the same number as supported the party in last October's federal election. 32% would vote Conservative, also equal to the result they achieved last Election. Just 16% would vote NDP, which is four points lower than the party's 2015 election result.
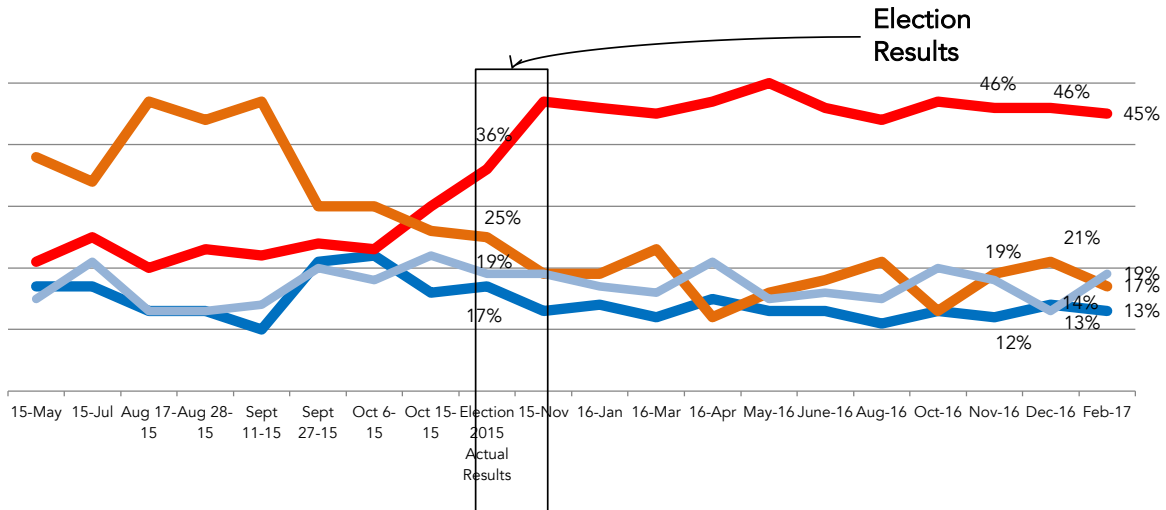
The gap between the two largest parties has narrowed from 21 points in November to 8 points today. This gap remains wide in Atlantic Canada, Quebec, and fairly wide in BC, but is now virtually non-existent in Ontario.
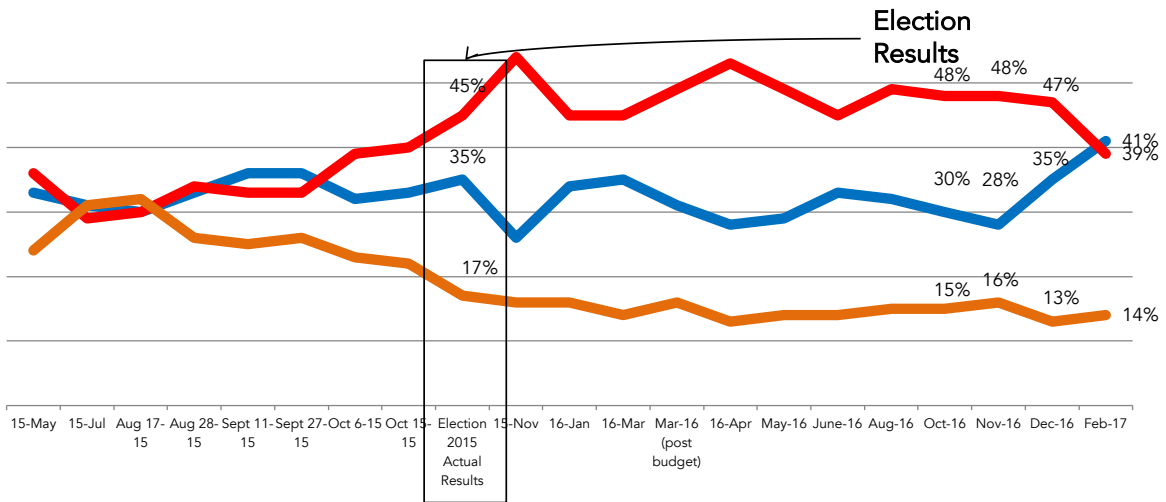

VOTE INTENTION

Election Results

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you vote for in your constituency?

ABACUS DATA

VOTE INTENTION - QUEBEC

Election Results

46%   46%   45%
36%
25%
19%   19%   19%   21%   19%   17%
17%   14%   13%
                 12%

15-May 15-Jul Aug 17-Aug 28- Sept Sept Oct 6- Oct 15- Election 15-Nov 16-Jan 16-Mar 16-Apr May-16 June-16 Aug-16 Oct-16 Nov-16 Dec-16 Feb-17
            15   15   11-15 27-15   15   15   2015
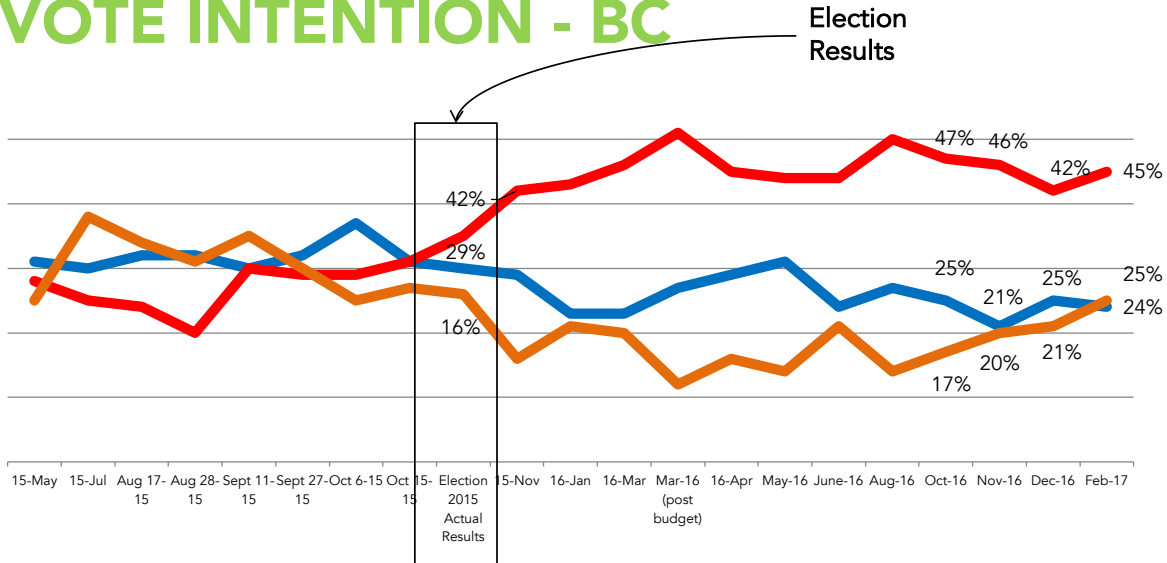   Actual
                                              Results

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you vote for in your constituency?

ABACUS DATA

VOTE INTENTION - ONTARIO

Election Results

48%   48%   47%
45%
                                        41%
35%   39%
                            30%   28%   35%
17%
                      15%   16%   13%   14%

15-May 15-Jul Aug 17- Aug 28- Sept 11- Sept 27- Oct 6-15 Oct 15- Election 15-Nov 16-Jan 16-Mar Mar-16 16-Apr May-16 June-16 Aug-16 Oct-16 Nov-16 Dec-16 Feb-17
            15   15   15   15   2015   (post
                                           Actual   budget)
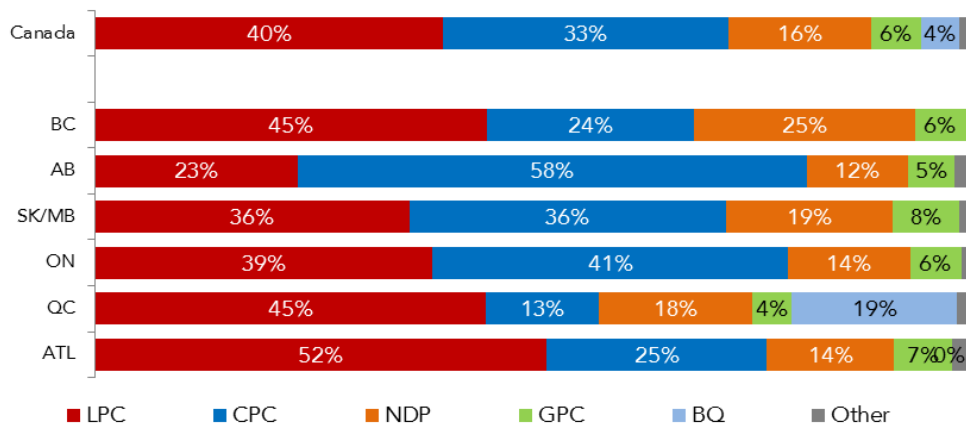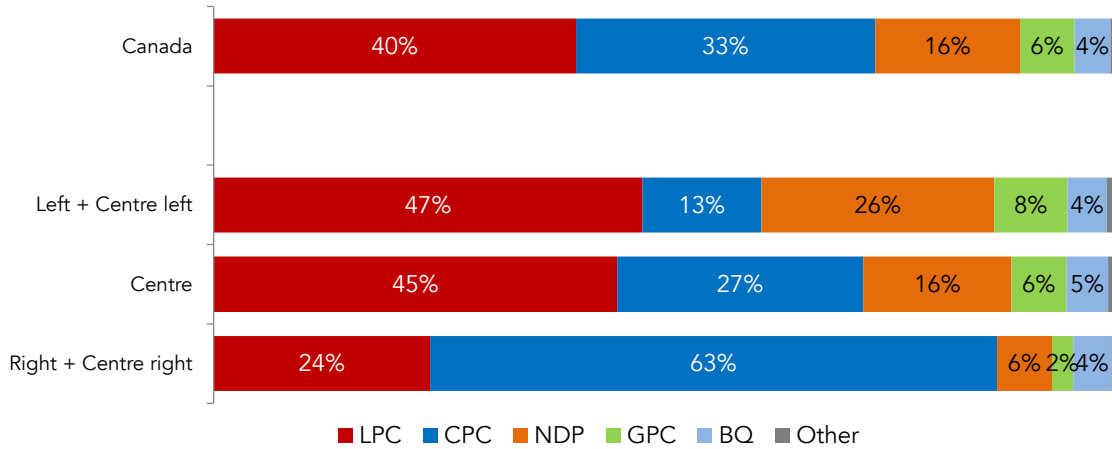   Results

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you vote for in your constituency?

VOTE INTENTION - BC

Election Results

42%
29%
16%
47% 46%
42% 45%
25% 25%
21% 25% 24%
20% 21%
17%

15-May 15-Jul Aug 17-15 Aug 28-15 Sept 11-15 Sept 27-Oct 15 6-15 Oct Oct 15-15 Election 2015 Actual Results 15-Nov 16-Jan 16-Mar Mar-16 (post budget) 16-Apr May-16 June-16 Aug-16 Oct-16 Nov-16 Dec-16 Feb-17

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you vote for in your constituency?

ABACUS DATA

VOTE INTENTION

	LPC	CPC	NDP	GPC	BQ	Other
Canada	40%	33%	16%	6%	4%	
BC	45%	24%	25%	6%		
AB	23%	58%	12%	5%		
SK/MB	36%	36%	19%	8%		
ON	39%	41%	14%	6%		
QC	45%	13%	18%	4%	19%	
ATL	52%	25%	14%	7%	0%	

■ LPC   ■ CPC   ■ NDP   ■ GPC   ■ BQ   ■ Other

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you vote for in your constituency?

ABACUS DATA

Much of the loss in support for the Liberals has come from those who self-identify as left or centre-left on the political spectrum. In December, 56% of those on the left supported the Liberal. Today, it's 47% a decline of 9 points. There has not been any change in support for the Liberals among those in the centre (unchanged from December) or on the right (down 1).

VOTE INTENTION

	LPC	CPC	NDP	GPC	BQ	Other
Canada	40%	33%	16%	6%	4%	
Left + Centre left	47%	13%	26%	8%	4%	
Centre	45%	27%	16%	6%	5%	
Right + Centre right	24%	63%	6%	2%	4%	

■ LPC ■ CPC ■ NDP ■ GPC ■ BQ ■ Other

ABACUS DATA

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you vote for in your constituency?

GOVERNMENT APPROVAL

Today, 49% approve of the performance of the government, while 33% disapprove.

Approval levels have dropped 8 points from their peak last August, and disapproval rose by 9 points. During these months, the Trudeau government made several choices that likely disappointed some on the right, as well as some on the left, of the spectrum. Major announcements included high profile policy choices to tax carbon, approve pipelines, and shelve plans to reform the electoral system.

GOVERNMENT APPROVAL
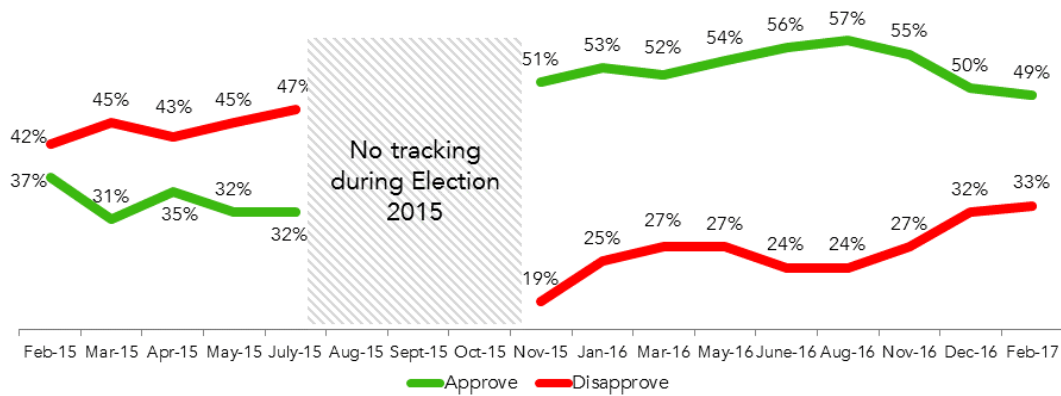
Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the job the federal government led by Stephen Harper/Justin Trudeau is doing?

Ottawa's approval rating is highest in Atlantic Canada (60%), BC (58%), and Quebec (54%) while lowest in Alberta (30%). While our ballot preference question shows a dead heat in Ontario, the Trudeau government approval rating in the province actually improved slightly from December 2016.

(This finding suggests that the appearance of a tighter federal contest may have at least something to do with the downward pressure on the Liberal brand for the provincial Liberal Party. The Ontario Liberal Party is trailing the Conservatives by 14 points in the average of recent provincial polls, and Premier Wynne is struggling with a 70% unfavourable rating.)

The toughest market for the Trudeau government remains Alberta where net approval has continued to decline.
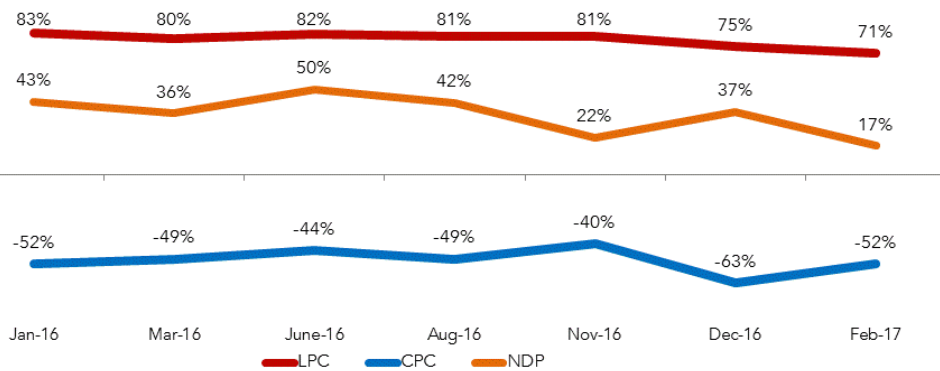
GOVERNMENT NET APPROVAL BY PROVINCE
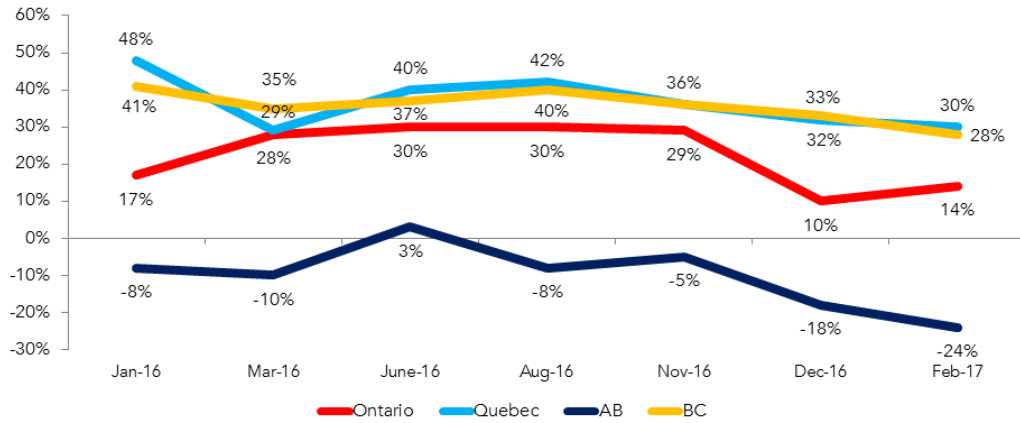
Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the job the federal government led by Justin Trudeau is doing? **(Approve minus Disapprove)**

80% of those who said they voted Liberal in 2015 say they approve of the job performance of the federal government. Only 9% disapprove. Almost half of NDP voters approve (46%) while fewer than one in five Conservative voters (17%) feel positive about the federal government's performance. Looking back to January 2016, the most notable movement has been a shift downward among NDP voters.

GOVERNMENT NET APPROVAL BY 2015 VOTE

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the job the federal government led by Justin Trudeau is doing?

ASSESSING PM TRUDEAU'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON

Public reactions to the visit by Prime Minister Trudeau to Washington to meet President Trump have generally been quite positive reactions:

- Most (67%) said they thought the PM did a good job representing Canadian interests, another 35% said he did an acceptable job. Only 8% felt he did a bad job. These views were unusually similar across partisan and ideological groups.

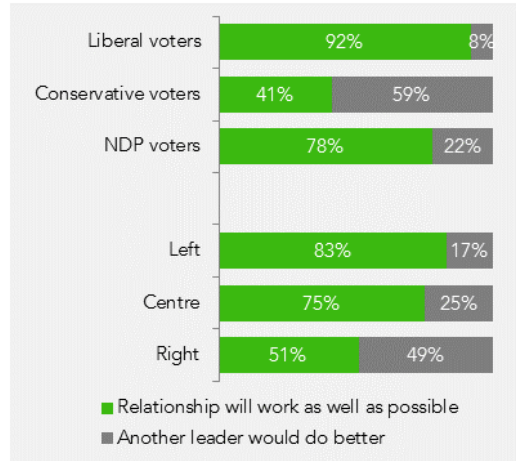## ASSESSING TRUDEAU'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON
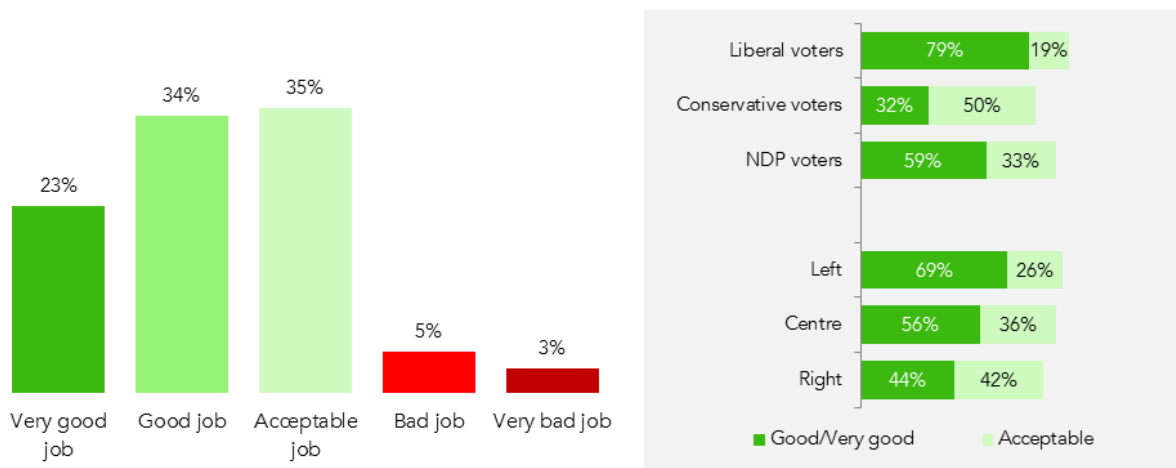
As you may know, Prime Minister Trudeau recently had his first face to face discussions with President Donald Trump.   Based on what you saw or heard about this visit by Mr. Trudeau to Washington, would you say that the Prime Minister did a...

- Most Canadians (72%) think Mr. Trudeau will be able to have as good a relationship with the US president as is possible, while 28% believe another Canadian leader would do better. 92% of Liberal voters and 78% of NDP voters feel Trudeau will be able to have a good relationship with President Trump as possible, as do 41% of Conservative voters.

TRUDEAU'S RELATIONSHIP WITH TRUMP

72%
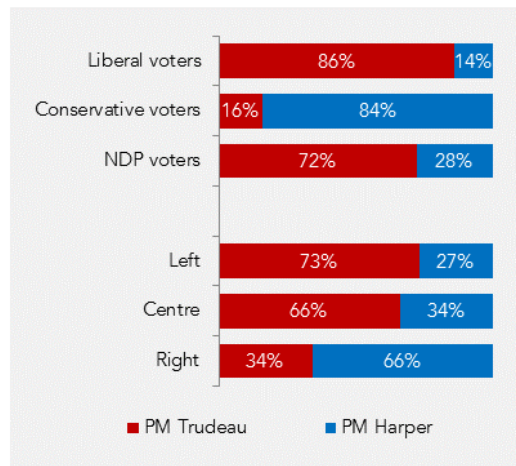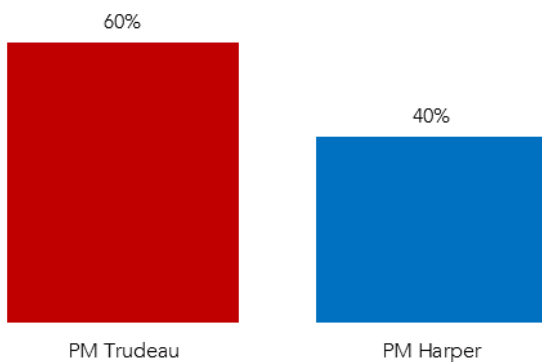Mr. Trudeau will have a relationship with Mr. Trump that works as well as possible for Canadians

28%
Another Canadian leader would do a better job in terms of dealing with Mr. Trump

	Relationship will work as well as possible	Another leader would do better
Liberal voters	92%	8%
Conservative voters	41%	59%
NDP voters	78%	22%
Left	83%	17%
Centre	75%	25%
Right	51%	49%

■ Relationship will work as well as possible
■ Another leader would do better

Do you think Mr. Trudeau will have a relationship with Mr. Trump that works as well as possible for Canadians, or do you think another Canadian leader would do a better job in terms of dealing with Mr. Trump?

ABACUS DATA

- When asked if Stephen Harper or Justin Trudeau would do better in managing Canada's relationship with President Trump, 60% said Trudeau would. Liberal and NDP voters broadly preferred Mr. Trudeau while 84% of Conservatives preferred Mr. Harper.

TRUDEAU VS. HARPER: DEALING WITH TRUMP

60%
PM Trudeau

40%
PM Harper

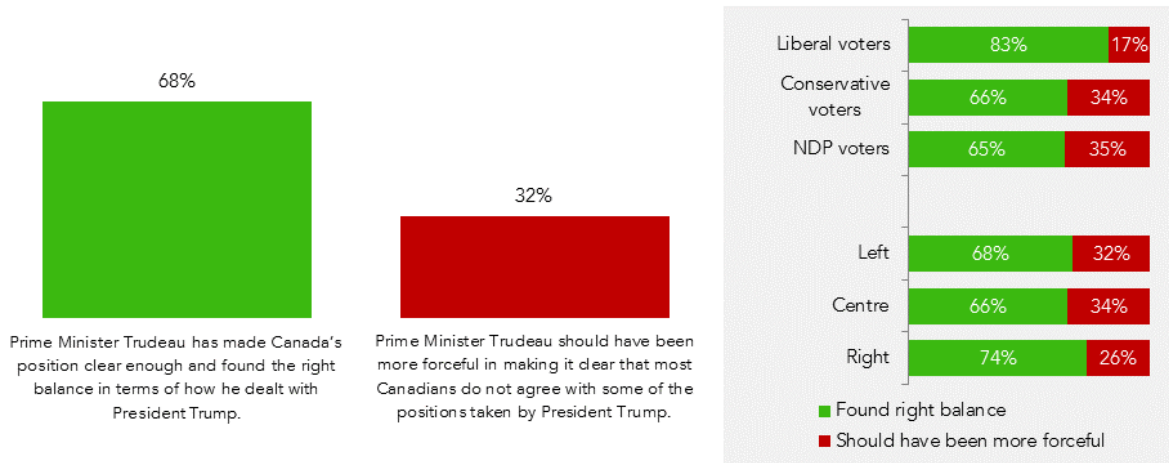|	PM Trudeau	PM Harper
Liberal voters	86%	14%
Conservative voters	16%	84%
NDP voters	72%	28%
Left	73%	27%
Centre	66%	34%
Right	34%	66%

■ PM Trudeau   ■ PM Harper

If the choice were between Stephen Harper and Justin Trudeau…who do you think would do better in terms of dealing with President Trump?

ABACUS DATA

- A substantial majority (68%) said that Mr. Trudeau struck the right balance in how he approached the US President, while 32% said they thought the Canadian PM should have been more forceful in making the point that many Canadians do not agree with some of Mr. Trump's policies. Notably, partisan differences on this question were quite mild.

TRUDEAU'S APPROACH TO TRUMP POSITIONS

68%

Prime Minister Trudeau has made Canada's position clear enough and found the right balance in terms of how he dealt with President Trump.

32%

Prime Minister Trudeau should have been more forceful in making it clear that most Canadians do not agree with some of the positions taken by President Trump.

	Found right balance	Should have been more forceful
Liberal voters	83%	17%
Conservative voters	66%	34%
NDP voters	65%	35%
Left	68%	32%
Centre	66%	34%
Right	74%	26%

Some feel the Prime Minister should have been more forceful in making it clear that most Canadians do not agree with some of the positions taken by President Trump, for example on the treatment of refugees. Others say that the Prime Minister has made Canada's position clear enough and found the right balance in terms of how he dealt with President Trump. Which statement comes closest to your view?

ABACUS DATA

UPSHOT

According to Bruce Anderson:

"Having made a series of policy choices that were bound to disappoint or frustrate some voters in recent months, it's not surprising that our polling is showing some softening and a more competitive dynamic.

At the same time, it's important to distinguish the driving forces behind the shifting landscape. Alberta Conservatives are more unhappy than they were. In BC, the Liberals have seen some ground gained by the NDP, which likely has had to do with decisions on electoral reform and pipelines. In Ontario, the prudent analysis is to disentangle whether voters are softening on the federal Liberals as opposed to expressing frustrations with their Liberal Premier. We'll return to that in our next survey.

Reactions to Mr. Trudeau's visit with President Trump signal ongoing confidence in how Mr. Trudeau is representing Canada's values and interests in his international affairs work. Many Canadians have discomfort with some of the approaches taken by the US President, but it's clear that they see the Prime Minister as having a responsibility to build a constructive dialog, given the importance of the

economic relationship, and the strong links that exist between our countries, separate and apart from politics."

According to David Coletto:

"The political landscape in Canada is far more competitive today than only a few months ago. The post-election boost in Liberal support has subsided and we have reverted to vote intentions that closely mirror the results of the last federal election.

Government approval is down below 50% for the first time since the election but apart from those in Alberta, Canadians in others regions of the country continue to show substantial support for the government's performance. 35% or less disapprove of the Trudeau's government's performance in Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia.
We suspect that the unpopularity of the Wynne government in Ontario is putting pressure on the Liberal brand in the province which may help explains the gap between approval ratings and vote intentions."

METHODOLOGY

Our survey was conducted online with 1,500 Canadians aged 18 and over from February 17 to 19, 2017. A random sample of panelists was invited to complete the survey from a large representative panel of over 500,000 Canadians.

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 1,500 is +/- 2.6%, 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.

ABACUS DATA INC.

We offer global research capacity with a strong focus on customer service, attention to detail and value-added insight. Our team combines the experience of our Chairman Bruce Anderson, one of Canada's leading research executives for two decades, with the energy, creativity and research expertise of CEO David Coletto, Ph.D.

For more information, visit our website at http://www.abacusdata.ca/

DETAILED TABLES

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you vote for in your constituency?

ALL RESPONDENTS

Row %		LPC	CPC	NDP	GPC	BQ	Other	Undecided	Raw	Weighted
Region	Canada	32%	26%	13%	5%	4%	1%	19%	1500	1498
	BC	35%	18% ↓	20% ↑	5%	0% ↓	0%	22%	300	199
	AB	19% ↓	47% ↑	9%	4%	0% ↓	1%	20%	200	174
	SK/MB	26%	26%	14%	5%	0%	1%	29%	100	102
	ON	32%	33% ↑	12%	5%	0% ↓	1%	17%	450	575
	QC	36%	11% ↓	14%	4%	15% ↑	1%	18%	350	348
	ATL	42%	20%	12%	5%	0%	2%	19%	100	101
Gender	Male	33%	30% ↑	12%	4%	4%	1%	16% ↓	750	723
	Female	32%	23% ↓	14%	5%	3%	1%	23% ↑	750	775
Age	18 - 29	29%	24%	14%	9% ↑	1%	2%	20%	254	295
	30 - 44	32%	21%	18% ↑	4%	5%	0%	19%	466	375
	45 - 59	32%	27%	12%	3%	4%	1%	21%	437	404
	60 and over	34%	32% ↑	9% ↓	2%	3%	1%	18%	343	424
Education	HS or less	29%	26%	11%	4%	6% ↑	2% ↑	22%	339	499
	College	29%	29%	14%	5%	3%	1%	19%	566	551
	University	39% ↑	23%	14%	4%	2%	0%	17%	595	448
2015 vote	Conservative Party	7% ↓	83% ↑	0% ↓	0% ↓	0% ↓	0%	9% ↓	320	332
	Liberal Party	71% ↑	4% ↓	8% ↓	3%	0% ↓	1%	14%	481	472
	NDP	12% ↓	6% ↓	63% ↑	3%	2%	0%	14%	212	189

COMMITTED RESPONDENTS

Row %		LPC	CPC	NDP	GPC	BQ	Other	Raw	Weighted
Region	Canada	40%	33%	16%	6%	4%	1%	1211	1208
	BC	45%	24% ↓	25% ↑	6%	0% ↓	0%	236	155
	AB	23% ↓	58% ↑	12%	5%	0% ↓	2%	159	140
	SK/MB	36%	36%	19%	8%	0%	1%	72	72
	ON	39%	41% ↑	14%	6%	0% ↓	1%	372	474
	QC	45%	13% ↓	18%	4%	19% ↑	2%	289	284
	ATL	52%	25%	14%	7%	0%	2%	83	82
Gender	Male	39%	36%	14%	5%	4%	1%	636	609
	Female	41%	29%	18%	6%	4%	1%	575	599
Age	18 - 29	36%	30%	18%	11% ↑	2%	3%	206	237
	30 - 44	40%	26% ↓	22% ↑	5%	6%	0%	384	306
	45 - 59	41%	34%	15%	4%	5%	1%	345	319
	60 and over	41%	39% ↑	11% ↓	3%	4%	1%	276	346
Education	HS or less	37%	33%	14%	5%	8% ↑	3% ↑	264	389
	College	36%	36%	18%	6%	3%	1%	451	446
	University	47% ↑	27% ↓	17%	5%	3%	0%	496	372
2015 vote	Conservative Party	7% ↓	91% ↑	0% ↓	0% ↓	0% ↓	0%	289	301
	Liberal Party	82% ↑	5% ↓	9% ↓	3%	0% ↓	1%	411	405
	NDP	14% ↓	7% ↓	73% ↑	4%	3%	0%	183	163