

NL Election Kick-Off Liberals storm to a 47-point lead. It Isn't About the Economy.

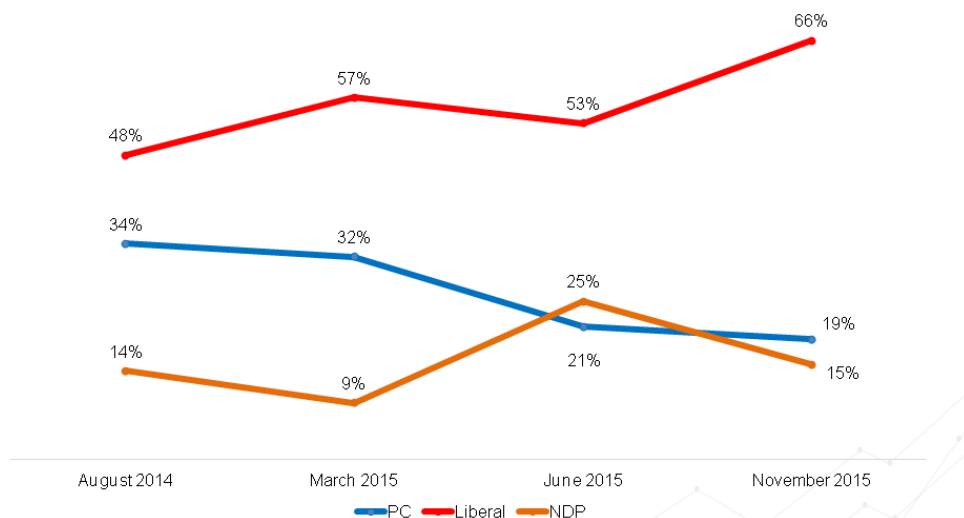
By David Coletto & Bruce Anderson

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Coming off of a Liberal sweep of Newfoundland and Labrador in October's Federal Election, provincial Liberals in Newfoundland and Labrador have stormed into a 47-point lead province-wide in our latest survey of 800 eligible voters in the province.

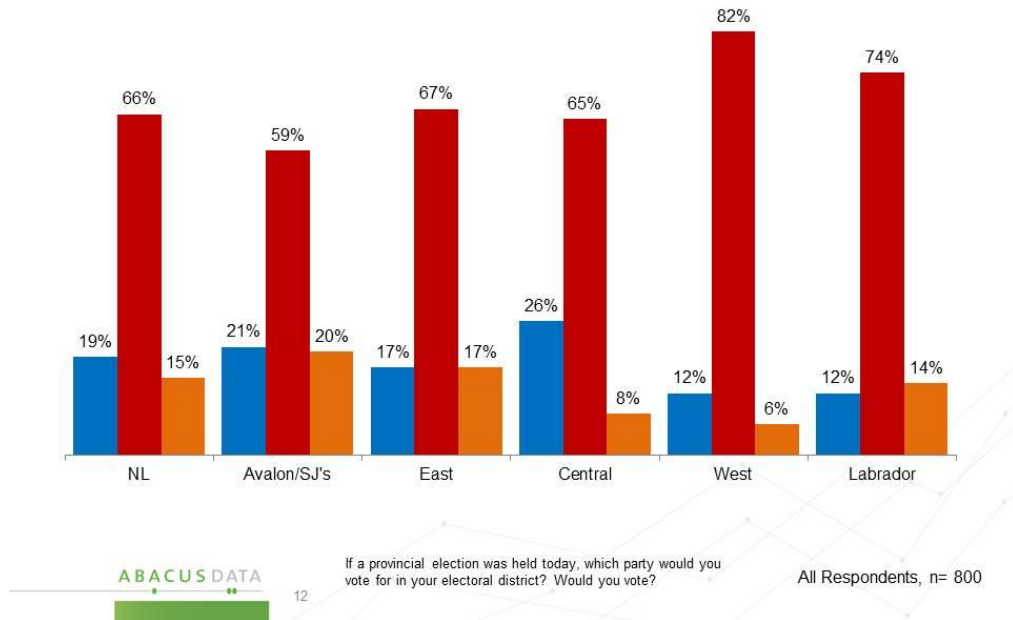
Liberal support is at 66% compared with 19% for the PCs and 15% for the NDP. The 13-point rise in support for the Liberals comes largely at the expense of the NDP, which has lost 10 points since our last survey.

Provincial Horse Race



The NL Liberals lead by a wide margin in every region of the province including in Avalon/St. John's where in June, we saw a much closer race.

Provincial Horse Race - Regional

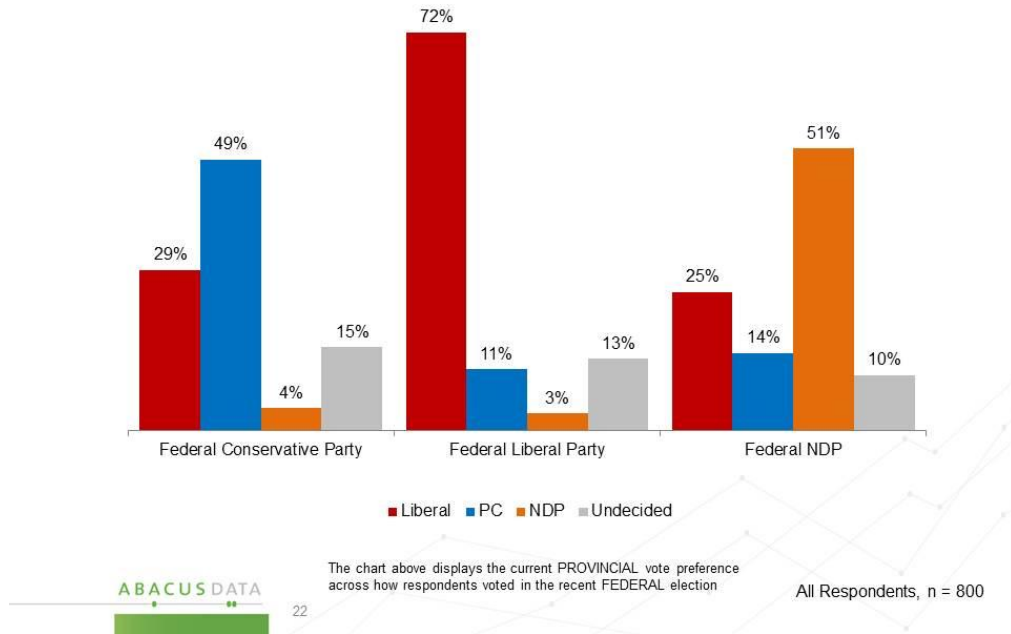


To put these results in context, in the last provincial election, the Conservatives won a large majority of 37 seats with 56% of the vote.

The provincial Liberal support number is virtually identical to the support received by the federal Liberal Party (65%) in the election held on October 19.

Notably, 72% of those who voted for Justin Trudeau say they are voting for the NL Liberals. The NL NDP is only holding 51% of those who voted for the NDP federally while the NL PC Party are only earning the support of 49% of those who voted for the federal Conservative Party in October.

Comparing FEDERAL and PROVINCIAL Vote

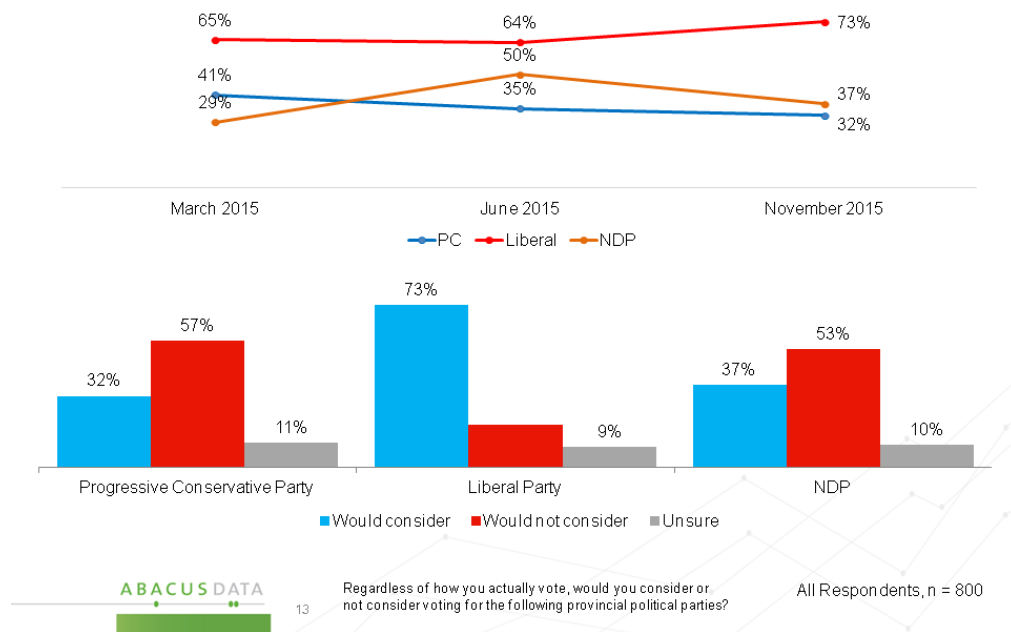


Accessible Voters

Not only has Liberal ballot support grown since June, but so has its pool of accessible voters. 73% of eligible voters in NL say they would consider voting Liberal, up 9 since June. The Liberal pool is almost twice as large as the NDP or PC accessible voter pools (37% and 32% respectively). The NDP pool is down 13-points since June.

Again, it is worth noting that the support level for the provincial NDP has followed a pattern similar to that of the federal NDP, with a sharp rise earlier in the year and then a significant drop more recently.

Accessible Voters



Direction of the Province

Remarkably, given the challenges facing the incumbents in this election, most think that the province is headed in the right direction, a view that has not really changed since June.

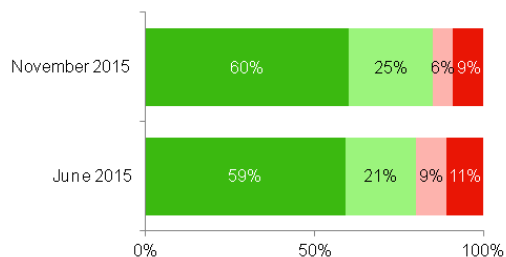
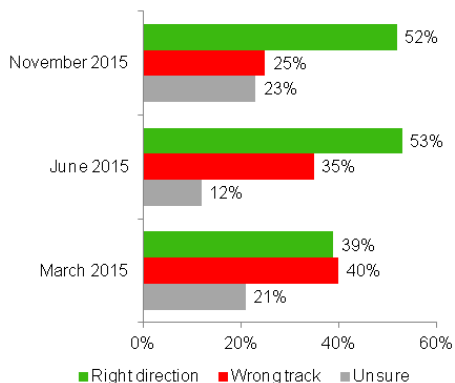
The desire for change in the province remains strong, with 85% wanting change and 60% saying they definitely want a change in government. These numbers are some 15 points higher than the expressed desire for change we measured in the federal election, which of course resulted in a defeat for the incumbents.

Among those who definitely want a change in government, 68% are voting Liberal, 18% are voting NDP, and 11% are undecided at this point. The massive Liberal lead is built on the fact that it has consolidated those who want change.

Direction of the Province and Time for Change

Generally speaking, do you think things in Newfoundland and Labrador are headed in the right direction or are they off on the wrong track?

Which of these views comes closest to yours?



- It's definitely time for a change in government in Newfoundland and Labrador
- It would be good to have a change, but not really all that important to me
- It would be good to continue with the same party in power, but it's not all that important to me
- It's definitely best to keep the PCs in office

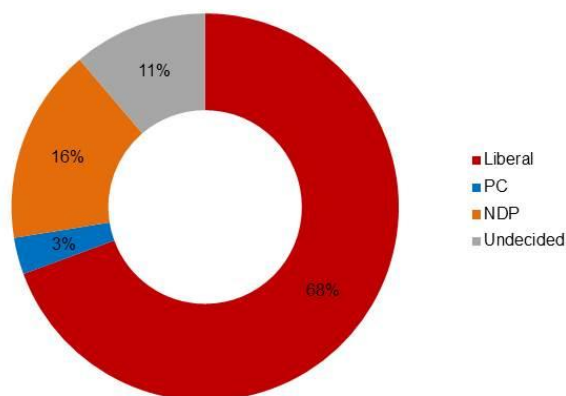
All Respondents, n = 800

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How are Change Voters Voting?

It's definitely time for a change in government



The chart above displays the voting intentions for those who said it's definitely time for a change in government

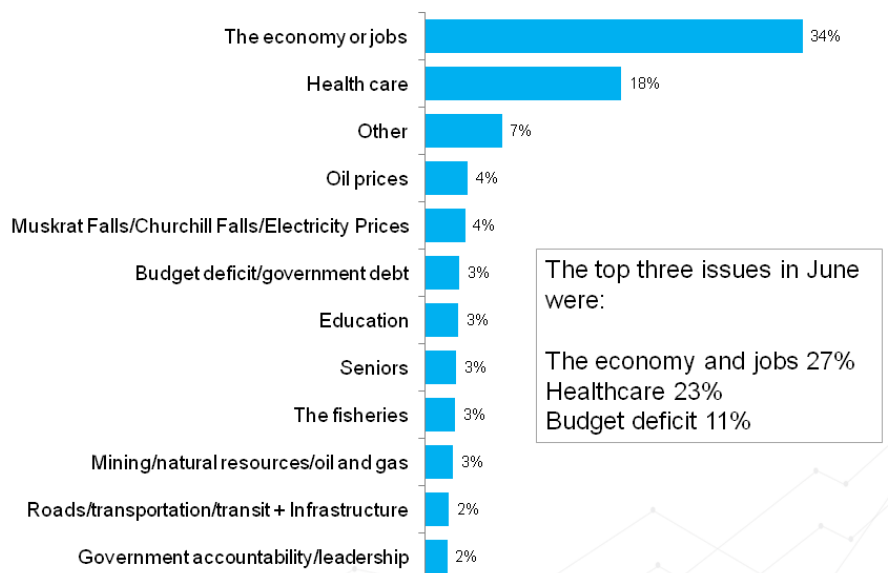
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Top Issues

Respondents were asked, unprompted, to name the most important issue facing Newfoundland and Labrador. The economy and health care were the top issues mentioned, largely unchanged since June. It appears that the budget deficit has receded a bit in top of mind importance.

Top Issues



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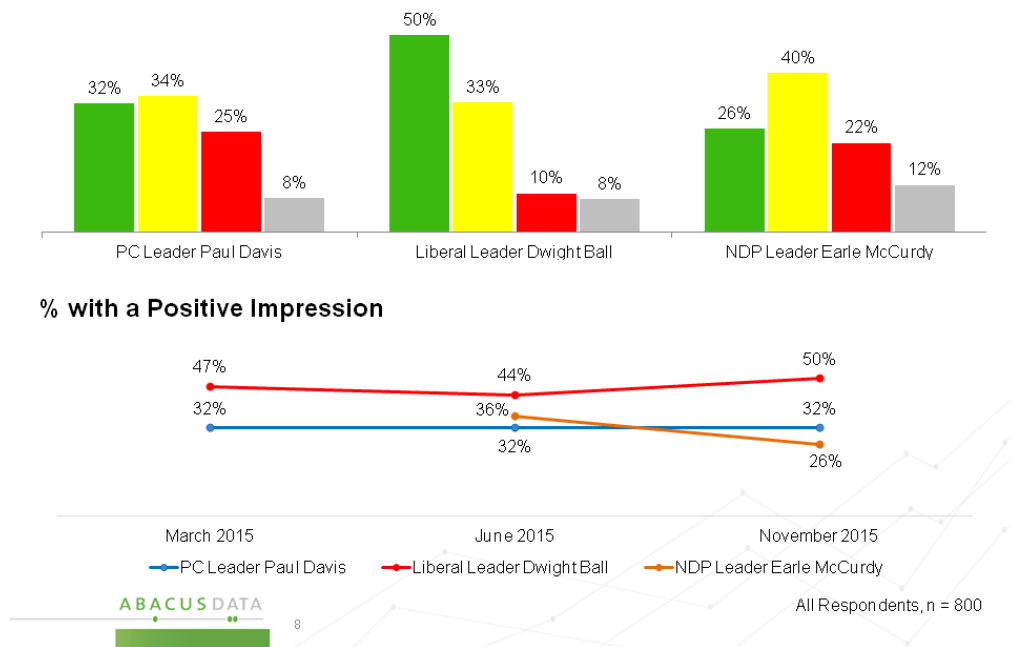
What do you think is the most important issue facing Newfoundland and Labrador? [unprompted]

All Respondents, n = 800

Leadership: Ball now 18 points ahead of Davis

Dwight Ball remains the most popular political leader in the province with 50% having a positive impression of the Liberal leader and only 10% saying they have a negative impression of him. Since our last survey, Mr. Ball's personal numbers are up 6 points while PC Leader Paul Davis' ratings have held steady. Meanwhile, NDP leader Earle McCurdy's personal numbers have dropped by 10 points since June to 26%, below Mr. Davis.

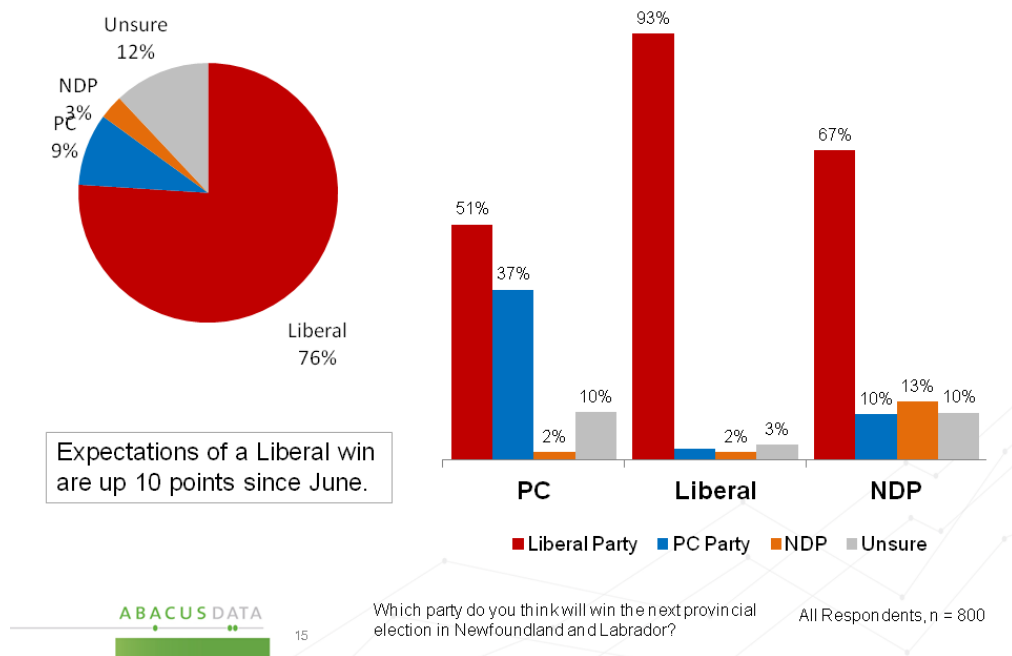
Leadership Favourability



Who Voters Think Will Win

When asked who they think will win the provincial election in Newfoundland and Labrador on November 30th, the Liberals were selected by 75% of eligible voters in Newfoundland and Labrador, a 10-point increase since June. Even a majority of PC and NDP voters think the Liberals will win the election.

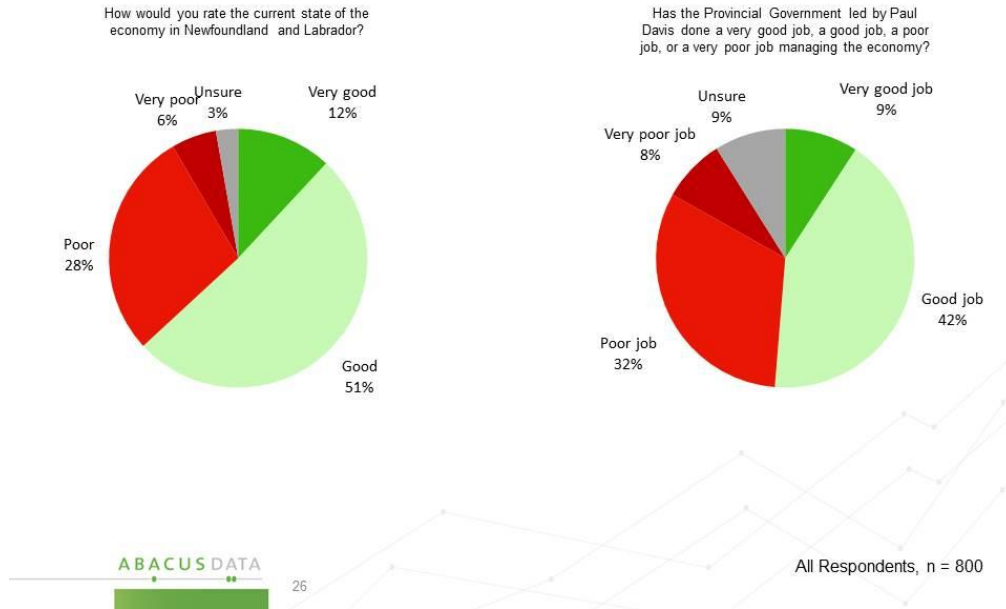
Who will win the next PROVINCIAL election?



The Economy in Newfoundland and Labrador

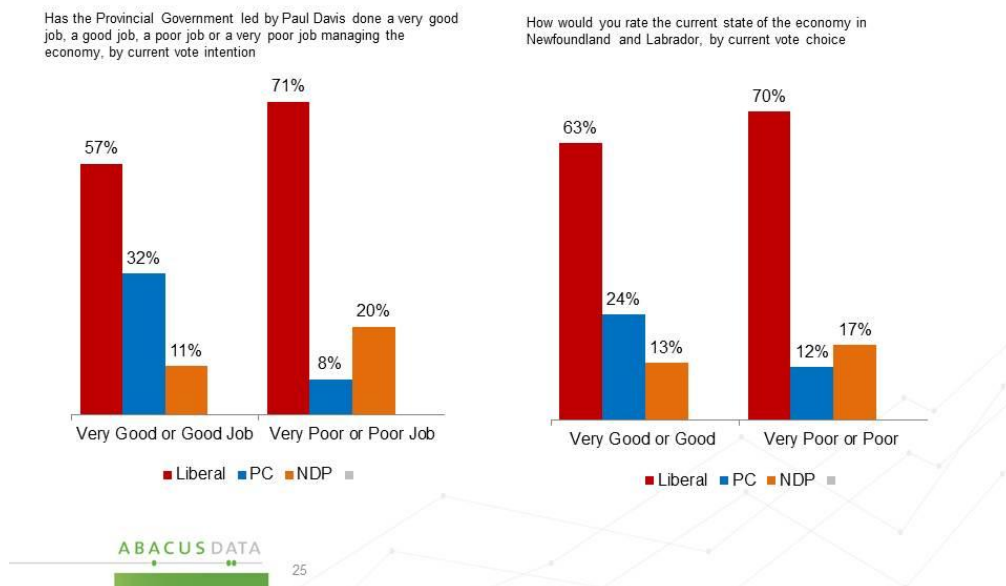
While voting intentions are weak for the PC Party, voters are feeling relatively good about the state of the economy and the performance of the incumbent government in managing it. 63% describe the economy in NL as either very good or good, and 51% think the provincial government has done a good job managing the economy.

State of the Economy



The problem for the PCs is that only 32% of those who think the government has done a good job managing the economy are planning on voting PC, evidence that the desire for change is overshadowing any other perceptions or attitudes towards the Davis government.

Vote Intention and the Economy



The Upshot

As the 2015 Newfoundland and Labrador provincial election begins, the Liberal Party led by Dwight Ball is in a very solid position to defeat the incumbent Progressive Conservative Government.

This election, at least about the outset, is not about the economy, nor is it a function of deep unpopularity of the current Premier.

A majority of Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans think the province is headed in the right direction and that the provincial government has done a good job managing the economy. And only 25% have a negative feeling about Premier Davis.

Nevertheless, 85% want a change in government including 60% saying they definitely want change. Only 9% think it would be definitely best to keep the PCs in power.

The confluence of this mood for change with a good affinity for the Liberal brand and Mr. Ball personally, means the Liberals are heavy favourites to win the election.

While campaigns can always bring unexpected disruptions and shifts, the challenges facing the Conservatives and the NDP are very significant according to this poll. And there seems little doubt that part of the wind in the sails of the provincial Liberals has something to do with the recent success of their federal cousins. The opposite effect is in evidence for the NDP.

Methodology

The random live-interview telephone survey was conducted with 800 eligible voters living in Newfoundland and Labrador. The survey was completed from October 30 to November 4, 2015.

The margin of error for a probability-based random sample of 800 respondents using a probability sample is +/- 3.5%, 19 times out of 20.

The data was statistically weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched population of Newfoundland and Labrador. The tables within this report detail the weighted and unweighted counts for the sample.

Note the small sample sizes when reviewing results in subgroups.

For more information about the poll's methodology or the results, please contact David Coletto, CEO at david@abacusdata.ca or at 613-232-2806.

Abacus Data Inc.

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If a provincial election was held today, which political party would you vote for in your local electoral district?

Would you vote...

Sample size 800

Comparable MoE: $\pm 3.5\%$, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: October 30 to November 4, 2015

		PC	Liberal	NDP	Other	WNV	UND	Ref	Raw	Weighted
Region	NL	15%	52%	12%	0%	2%	17%	3%	800	787
	Avalon Peninsula/St. John's Region	16%	46%	15%	0%	2%	17%	3%	328	389
	Eastern Newfoundland	13%	51%	13%	0%	5%	18%	0%	141	88
	Central Newfoundland	20%	50%	6%	1%	1%	19%	2%	140	150
	Western Newfoundland	10%	69%	5%	0%	1%	12%	3%	109	119
	Labrador	9%	57%	11%	0%	2%	19%	2%	82	41
Gender	Male	17%	54%	9%	1%	2%	17%	2%	386	378
	Female	13%	49%	14%	0%	2%	17%	3%	414	409
Age	18 to 39	10%	54%	14%	0%	2%	18%	2%	177	249
	40 to 59	18%	47%	11%	0%	2%	19%	3%	347	332
	60+	17%	56%	9%	0%	2%	13%	3%	273	206

If a provincial election was held today, which political party would you vote for in your local electoral district?

Would you vote...

Sample size 615

Comparable MoE: $\pm 4.0\%$, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: October 30 to November 4, 2015

	Row %	PC	Liberal	NDP	Other	Raw	Weighted
Region	NL	19%	66%	15%	0%	615	618
	Avalon Peninsula/St. John's Region	21%	59%	20%	0%	251	303
	Eastern Newfoundland	17%	67%	17%	0%	106	68
	Central Newfoundland	26%	65%	8%	1%	107	117
	Western Newfoundland	12%	82%	6%	0%	88	100
Gender	Labrador	12%	74%	14%	0%	63	32
	Male	21%	67%	11%	1%	304	303
	Female	17%	64%	19%	0%	311	316
Age	18 to 39	13%	69%	18%	0%	136	195
	40 to 59	23%	61%	15%	1%	260	255
	60+	21%	69%	10%	0%	219	168