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NL Election 2015: Topsail-Paradise Premier Davis in tough, trails Rex Hillier by 21 points.

By David Coletto & Bruce Anderson

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VOCM News commissioned Abacus Data to conduct surveys in four provincial electoral districts in Newfoundland and Labrador. Today, we report the results of a survey of 500 eligible voters living in Paradise-Topsail, an electoral district outside of St. John's on the Avalon Peninsula.

Liberal candidate Rex Hillier has a 21-point lead over PC candidate, incumbent MHA, and NL Premier Paul Davis. Mr. Hillier has the support of 56% of decided voters in the district, followed by Mr. Davis at 35% with NDP candidate Chris Bruce in third at 9%. 24% of respondents said they were undecided or not voting in the election.

Along with vote intention, the survey also measured the mood of voters in the district, their perceptions of the party leaders, and what issues were most important to them. Here's what we found:

- 71% of eligible voters think it is time for a change in government (8 points lower than the provincial average).
- In Topsail-Paradise, 71% of eligible voters would consider voting Liberal (2 points less than the provincial average), 46% would consider voting PC (14 points higher than provincial average) and 27% would consider voting NDP (10 points lower than the provincial average).
- The economy and jobs (33%), and health care (21%) are the top issues in the district, similar to what we found provincially.
- Liberal Leader Dwight Ball and PC Leader Paul Davis have similar impressions among voters in the electoral district. A majority have a positive impression of both leaders (51% for Mr. Ball and 51% Mr. Davis) although Mr. Davis' negatives are 7 points higher than Mr. Ball. NDP Leader Earle McCurdy is viewed positively by 18% of those in Topsail-Paradise and viewed negatively by 33%. Mr. Ball's net impression score is on par with the provincial average (NL +40, Topsail-Paradise +38) while Mr. Davis' numbers are substantially higher (NL +7, Topsail-Paradise +31). Mr. McCurdy's personal numbers are weaker in Topsail-Paradise than they are provincially (NL +4, Topsail-Paradise -15)
- While the Mr. Davis and the PCs are trailing the Liberal candidate by 21 points in the district, 61% think the province is headed in the right direction.
- 80% of voters think the Liberal Party will win the provincial election, 4 points higher than the province wide average. When it comes to who will win in Topsail-Paradise, expectations are much closer with 44% thinking the Liberal candidate will win compared 38% think the PC candidate will win the district.

- 60% of those we surveyed voted Liberal in the recent federal election, 14% voted NDP and 6% voted Conservative. 68% of those who voted Liberal federally say they will vote for the NL Liberals while 25% will vote for the PCs. The sample sizes for federal NDP and Conservative voters are too small to make confident estimates.

The Upshot

Even Premier Paul Davis is not immune from the mood for change among voters as he trails Liberal candidate Rex Hillier by 21 points in his home district of Topsail-Paradise. 71% of voters in his electoral district think it would be good to have a change in government.

Despite this difficult political environment, Premier Davis is well regarded in his riding. 51% of eligible voters in Topsail-Paradise have a positive impression of him personally, 19-points higher than the provincial average from a survey we did earlier this month. Moreover, most in the district believe the province is headed in the right direction. The results provide additional evidence that the provincial election is about change, not the economy or leadership.

The only upside in these numbers for Mr. Davis is that 46% of eligible voters would consider voting PC, 14 points higher than the provincial average. To win, Davis will need to convert all these potential supporters into actually PC voters while at the same time hoping the NDP can eat into some of the Liberal Party's support. Not impossible with two weeks remaining in the campaign, but made more difficult by the fact that Mr. Davis is busy campaigning across province.

Download the full results deck here: <http://abacusdata.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Abacus-Newfoundland-and-Labrador-Political-Survey-Topsail-Paradise-Nov-2015.pdf>

Methodology

The random live-interview telephone survey was conducted with 500 eligible voters living in the provincial electoral district of St. John's West. The survey was completed from November 8 to 12, 2015.

The margin of error for a probability-based random sample of 500 respondents using a probability sample is +/- 4.5%, 19 times out of 20.

The data was statistically weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched population of the electoral district.

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.

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

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

Would you vote...

Sample size 500

Comparable MoE: $\pm 4.5\%$, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: November 8 to 12, 2015

		PC candidate Paul Davis	Liberal candidate Rex Hillier	NDP candidate Chris Bruce	Other	UND/N V	Raw	Weighted
Gender	Topsail-Paradise	27%	42%	7%	0%	24%	500	492
	Male	27%	46%	6%	0%	21%	212	235
	Female	27%	39%	8%	0%	26%	288	257
Age group	18 to 39	20%	46%	15%	0%	19%	97	128
	40 to 59	31%	39%	3%	0%	27%	248	218
	60+	26%	44%	6%	0%	24%	148	146
Education	HS or less	23%	47%	10%	0%	21%	90	133
	College	31%	40%	5%	0%	24%	142	186
	University	26%	41%	6%	1%	26%	261	172

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

Would you vote...

Sample size 364

Comparable MoE: $\pm 5.2\%$, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: November 8 to 12, 2015

		PC candidate Paul Davis	Liberal candidate Rex Hillier	NDP candidate Chris Bruce	Other	Raw	Weighted
	Topsail-Paradise	35%	56%	9%	0%	364	374
Gender	Male	34%	59%	7%	0%	158	185
	Female	36%	53%	10%	1%	206	189
Age group	18 to 39	25%	57%	18%	0%	72	104
	40 to 59	42%	53%	4%	1%	183	159
	60+	35%	58%	8%	0%	109	111
Education	HS or less	28%	59%	12%	0%	69	105
	College	40%	53%	7%	0%	105	141
	University	35%	56%	9%	1%	190	127