NDP, Conservatives Capture Early Ballot Shaping Resonance while Liberals Miss Mark, Fizzle on Major Planks

TORONTO, August 19, 2021—A Maru Public Opinion poll released today finds that the top issues currently shaping Canadian's ballot box choice in the federal election called by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last Sunday, are to make the cost of living and affordability better for themselves and/or their family (28%), to preserve the environment, reduce greenhouse gasses, and reverse climate change (23%), to curtail federal government spending so the deficit does not grow (19%), and to create jobs and grow the economy (17%).

The survey findings confirm what many observers and pundits have been saying so far in the early days of the campaign—that there is no overarching "ballot question" dominating the 36-day election—but that there may be some themes emerging.

However, these results suggest that the two parties most likely getting the most resonance fresh out of the starting blocks are the New Democrats under NDP leader Jagmeet Singh who have banged the cost of living and affordability drum the loudest, while the Erin O'Toole Conservatives have staked out the jobs and the economy (and anti deficit) planks. By contrast, the Trudeau Liberals have been diffuse on what their ballot question is (except for a vote to do more of what they have been doing) and yet clearly share the stage with the NDP with significant credibility on environment and climate change issues (along with the Green Party led by Annamie Paul).

More worrisome for the Trudeau Liberals should be the fact that many of their other signature campaign planks—including their recent agreements with eight provinces to provide low-cost day care—receive very short shrift by Canadians as to help shape their ballot box vote intentions:

- To keep Canadians safe from COVID (15%)
- To produce a COVID vaccine passport/identification certificate (9%)
- To provide more social housing and support for people in need (9%)
- To solve issues affecting our Indigenous peoples (7%)
- To keep the COVID personal, business, and other financial programs in place (4%)
- To mandate that employees in all of the federal government and its regulated companies, agencies (including the RCMP) be fully vaccinated or be fired (4%)
- To stop racism and promote immigration (3%)
- To do more to restrict the use of firearms (2%)
- To provide your province with funding for a low-cost daycare program (2%)
- To invest in infrastructure projects like transportation and recreation sites in my community (2%)

On face value, the NDP and the Conservatives appear to have more voter issue alignment at this stage in the campaign than the minority governing Liberals.

The Issues Currently Shaping the Voter Ballot Box Choice

When people go to the ballot box and vote there are usually a couple of issues or needs that they want addressed by a new government as opposed to just electing a Prime Minister based on personality. At the outset of this election campaign, we've asked Canadians to select the two issues or needs that they want to be addressed by the politicians and are currently shaping their ballot box choice.

The following is a ranked order of the combined two choice selections:

- To make the cost of living and affordability better for me and/or my family (28%)
- To preserve the environment, reduce greenhouse gasses, and reverse climate change (23%)
- To curtail federal government spending so the deficit does not grow (19%)
- To create jobs and grow the economy (17%)
- To strengthen the healthcare system by giving more targeted money to the provinces (15%)
- To keep Canadians safe from COVID (15%)
- To do more to look after Canada's seniors (14%)
- To not increase or reduce personal income taxes (11%)
- To produce a COVID vaccine passport/identification certificate (9%)
- To provide more social housing and support for people in need (9%)
- To solve issues affecting our Indigenous peoples (7%)
- To address international concerns caused by countries like China (6%)
- Paying attention to the needs and aspirations of the people who live in my province (5%)
- To keep the COVID personal, business, and other financial programs in place (4%)
- To mandate that employees in all of the federal government and its regulated companies, agencies (including the RCMP) be fully vaccinated or be fired (4%)
- To stop racism and promote immigration (3%)
- To do more to restrict the use of firearms (2%)
- To provide your province with funding for a low-cost daycare program (2%)
- To invest in infrastructure projects like transportation and recreation sites in my community (2%)
- Other (5%)

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Methodology

These are some of the findings released by Maru Public Opinion from a survey undertaken between August 13-15, 2021, by the sample and data management experts at Maru/Blue of 1511 randomly selected Canadian adults (18+) who are Maru Voice Canada online panelists. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size has an estimated margin of error (which measures sampling variability) of +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been weighted by education, age, gender, and region (and in Quebec by language) to match the population according to census data which ensures the sample is representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals when compared to the data tables are due to rounding.

Maru/Blue https://www.marugroup.net/maru-blue is rooted in the Maru/HUB technology platform and offers on-demand, high quality, highly scalable online community samples of deeply engaged, known respondents. Maru Public Opinion posts its polling releases, accompanying data tables, and a description of its services at https://www.marugroup.net/polling.

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