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Canada Votes

Thu, December 29, 2005

Harper honest, Martin isn't: Poll

By **BILL RODGERS**, PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU

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LETTER TO
THE EDITOR



For the first time since the federal election began, Conservative Leader Stephen Harper has edged out Prime Minister Paul Martin on issues of leadership that are being tracked daily by a national public-opinion polling firm.

Harper edges out Martin on trust and vision for Canada, according to the SES-CPAC nightly tracking survey. The poll of 1,200 people, taken last Friday night, has Martin beating Harper on the issue of competence by just four points and the Tory leader is closing the gap on who would make the best prime minister.

The daily barometer, taken as the leaders wound down their campaigns for Christmas, shows Harper with 23 points on the issue of trust and Martin with 17.

'TORTOISE AND THE HARE'

The poll also found Harper leading on the issue of vision for Canada at 25 points and Martin at 20. The prime minister edges out Harper on competence 27 to 23.

The overall leadership index score now has Harper in front with 71 points and Martin with 64 - the first time the Conservative leader has scored higher than Martin since the SES-CPAC survey began on Dec. 1.

SES's Nik Nanos said Harper started the campaign 23 to 24 points behind Martin on the index.



YOUR TURN

Did you give to a charitable organization over the holiday season?

- ☐ Yes, it's a family tradition to help the less fortunate
- ☐ No, money is too tight at this time of year

SUBMIT

Results

Christmas Guide
Christmas Lights
Christmas Charity
Canada Votes
Tsunami: 1 Year
After
U2 in Ottawa

SUNshine Girl



He compared the Harper strategy to the "tortoise and the hare," saying his gradual rise can be attributed to sticking to a positive, policy focused campaign.

The survey also shows the Conservative leader closing in on Martin when Canadians are asked who would make the best prime minister. On that front, Martin leads by just three points at 28% to Harper's 25%.

Nanos said so far Harper seems more engaged and relaxed, improving his image, a vulnerability for the Tory leader when the campaign began.

"So, it's not surprising that the Liberals are throwing everything but the kitchen sink at them," said Nanos. "The Liberals still haven't found anything that will stick to Harper. The bogeyman argument, right now, doesn't have traction."

The challenge for the Conservatives, Nanos added, is convincing the wavering and undecided the first three weeks weren't a flash in the pan. He believes if Harper goes negative in the second half of the campaign, the party risks losing the gains it has made.

Last Friday's nightly tracking by SES showed little change in the party standings. Among decided voters, 38% said they would vote Liberal, 31% Conservative and 15% NDP. The regional Bloc Quebecois had 12% and the Green party stood at 5%.

The undecided comprised 18%.

The poll is considered accurate within 3.2%, plus or minus, 19 times out of 20.

SES-CPAC poll

PARTY STANDINGS

(AMONG DECIDED VOTERS AS OF DEC. 23)

Liberal: 38%

Conservative: 31%

NDP: 15%

Bloc Quebecois: 12%

Green: 5%

Poll considered accurate 3.2%, plus or minus, 19 times out of 20.

LEADERSHIP INDICATORS

- Trust

Harper: 23

Martin: 17

- Vision for Canada

Classifieds:

Classified Extra
Jobboom
Autonet
Homes for Sale
Career
Connection

On Canoe:

Lotteries
Comics
Crossword
Horoscopes
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Harper: 25

Martin: 20

- Competence

Martin: 27

Harper: 23

LEADERSHIP INDEX SCORE

Harper: 71

Martin: 64

BEST PRIME MINISTER

Martin 28%

Harper 25%

Layton 13%

Duceppe 5%

Harris 2%

None 10%

Undecided 17%

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