



# Media Release

## Cold Comfort in Liberal Lead Voters Dissatisfied with Martin Handling of Sponsorship Scandal

Ottawa – April, 27, 2004 – A national SES/CPAC survey of Canadians completed last night by polling firm SES Canada Research Inc. indicates that the mood of Canadians has soured on the Martin government and that Canadians are dissatisfied with Martin’s handling of the sponsorship scandal. Likewise, the current appetite for changing the government is strong.

Current SES polling among decided voters puts the federal Liberals at 40% (down 8%), the Conservatives at 27% (up 4%), the NDP at 17% (up 2%), the Bloc Québécois at 12% (up 1%) and the Green Party at 4% (up 1%). Seventeen percent of Canadians were undecided in the most recent wave of SES polling. The ninety day drop for the Liberals (down 8%) has seen all opposition parties pick up support with the newly-merged Conservative Party picking up one half of the Liberal loss.

Of concern for the Liberals is the fact that at the time of the poll, 50% of Canadians thought it was time for a change, while only 28% thought the Martin led Liberals deserved to be re-elected (15% were unsure and 8% agreed with neither position).

“The Liberals can take no comfort in their current lead over the Conservatives”, according to SES President Nikita Nanos. “Measuring the appetite for change is a key variable in measuring government vulnerability and electoral volatility. We should expect that voters will turn their attention to the opposition parties and leaders to see if they have what it takes.”

Asked to rate Prime Minister Paul Martin’s performance regarding his handling of the advertising scandal, six in ten Canadians (60%) were dissatisfied, while a little over one in four (27%) were satisfied (13% were unsure how to rate his performance).

“Polling clearly indicates that Paul Martin has expended personal capital and goodwill with the electorate on the advertising scandal,” according to Nanos. “One consolation for the Liberals is that support for the newly merged Conservative Party is eight points below the combined CA/PC total from two years. This is likely indicative of the fact that not all



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Canadians have a firm opinion of the new entity. One of the key upcoming battles between the Liberals and Conservatives will involve defining Stephen Harper and the new Conservative Party.”

SES’s National Omnibus Survey is conducted every three months. It is based on a random telephone sample of 1,000 Canadians, 18 years of age and older and was conducted between April 20<sup>th</sup> and April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The margin of accuracy for the aggregate survey results is 3.1 percentage points, plus or minus, 19 times out of 20. Within the larger sample sub-groups may have a wider margin of accuracy. Validation of the demographic profile of respondents indicates that the poll is a fair representation of the Canadian populace. The survey was registered with the Canadian Survey Research Council of which SES is a member.

Established in 1987, SES Canada Research Inc. is a full service marketing and public opinion research firm.

For a detailed review of the survey tables, please visit the SES Research website at <http://www.sesresearch.com> in the on-line polling library.

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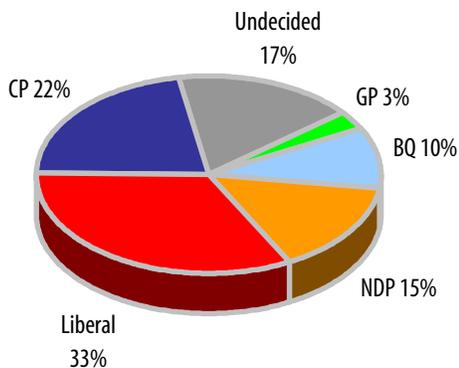
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**THE BALLOT**  
(committed & undecided)



**COMMENTARY**

The federal Liberals have dropped 8 points since February, while the Conservative Party (CP) and NDP have gained (4 and 2 points respectively).

It seems that the confession of NDP MP Svend Robinson has not affected NDP support, particularly in British Columbia, while the Bloc has surpassed the Liberals in Quebec.

Although the Conservatives have increased their support over the past 90 days, the support is still lower than the combined CA/PC support measured two years ago in the second quarter of 2002 (Conservative Party 2004Q2 – 27%, CA/PC Parties Combined 2002Q2 – 35%).

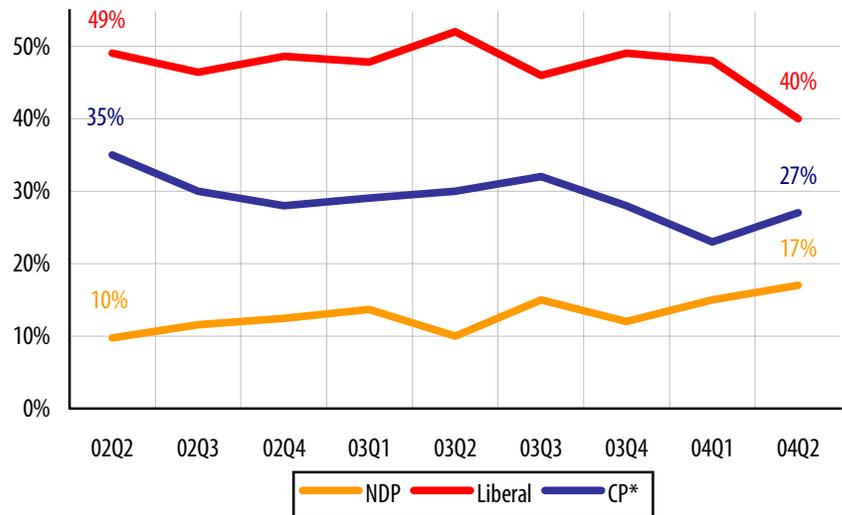
Polling also indicates that the Green Party has increased its support in both BC (8%) and Ontario (7%).

**THE METHODOLOGY**

Between April 20<sup>th</sup> and April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2004, SES conducted a total of 1,000 telephone interviews across Canada with eligible voters as part of the SES National Quarterly Omnibus. Aggregate results of the survey are accurate  $\pm 3.1\%$ , 19 times out of 20. Validation of the demographic profile of respondents indicates that the poll is a fair representation of Canadian voters.

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**LONGITUDINAL BALLOT TRACKING (committed only)**



\* CP – Combined CA/PC support from 2002Q2 to 2003Q4.

**Target Groups**  
(+/- index score)

	LIB	CP	NDP	BQ	Und
Atlantic	+13	+12	+4	-10	-17
Quebec	-3	-14	-8	+30	-4
Ontario	+7	-1	-3	-10	+4
West	-8	+8	+6	-10	+5
Men	-1	+3	-4	+3	-1
Women	+1	-2	+3	-3	+1
18 to 29	+5	-10	+2	+2	-2
30 to 39	-2	+8	-5	0	-1
40 to 49	-4	-1	0	+2	+2
50 to 59	+3	+1	+1	-3	-4
60 plus	-2	+1	0	-2	+4

Note: Plus/minus index scores are based on the difference between the sub-group and the sample average. For example a +13 score for the Liberals in Atlantic Canada would indicate that their support is 13% higher in Atlantic Canada than the national average. Considering the sample size of 1,000 voters, readers should focus on scores of +/-5 or greater.

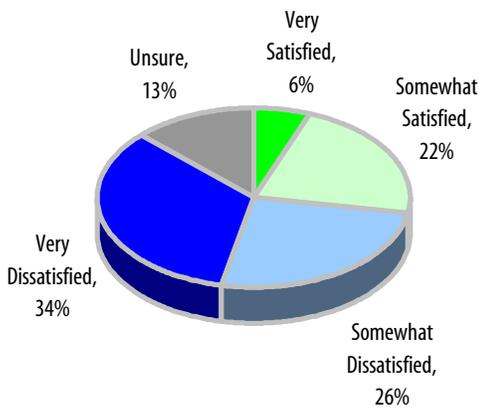
**ABOUT SES**

Established in 1987, SES Canada Research Inc. is a full service public opinion research and management consulting firm. In order to maximize turn-around time and increase efficiency, SES has a 150-line call centre complete with a predictive dialer. SES is regularly called upon by corporate, government and para-public clients in Canada and the United States to conduct research and provide strategic advice.

For more information on our full range of services please visit our website [www.sesresearch.com](http://www.sesresearch.com) or contact:

Mr. Nikita Nanos at (613) 234-4666 ext.237 or [nnanos@sesresearch.com](mailto:nnanos@sesresearch.com)

## HANDLING OF THE SCANDAL (N=1,000)



## COMMENTARY

With six of every ten Canadians dissatisfied with Paul Martin's handling of the sponsorship scandal this is a clear vulnerability for the new Martin-led Liberal government.

Quebecers are particularly dissatisfied with Martin's performance on this issue (41% are very dissatisfied compared to other voters, 9 points above the national average).

Of concern to the Prime Minister is that even among committed Liberal voters, almost one half (47%) are very/somewhat dissatisfied on this issue.

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## THE QUESTION

As you may know, the Auditor General of Canada has reported that at least \$100 million of the \$250 million in government sponsorship money was misspent and went directly to advertising agencies and firms closely linked to the federal Liberals. Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with how Prime Minister Paul Martin has handled this issue?

### Target Groups (+/- index score)

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Unsure
Atlantic	0	+11	-7	-7	+2
Quebec	+2	-5	-4	+9	-3
Ontario	-2	0	+8	-8	+1
West	-1	-1	-1	+2	0
Men	+2	+2	0	-1	-3
Women	-2	-3	+1	+1	+2
18 to 29	-2	+1	+8	-6	-1
30 to 39	-1	-1	+1	+1	-1
40 to 49	0	+4	+1	-3	-3
50 to 59	+2	-5	-6	+7	0
60 plus	-1	-2	-3	+2	+3
Liberal voters	+6	+9	0	-14	-3
CPC voters	-3	-3	-1	+10	-4
NDP voters	-4	-6	+3	+7	-1
BQ voters	-3	-10	+7	+12	-6
Undecided	-5	-5	-1	-6	+15

Note: Plus/minus index scores are based on the difference between the sub-group and the sample average. For example the +6 score noted above among Liberal voters indicates that they are 6 per cent more likely to be very satisfied with the handling of the scandal compared to the average Canadian voter. Readers should focus on scores greater than +/-5.

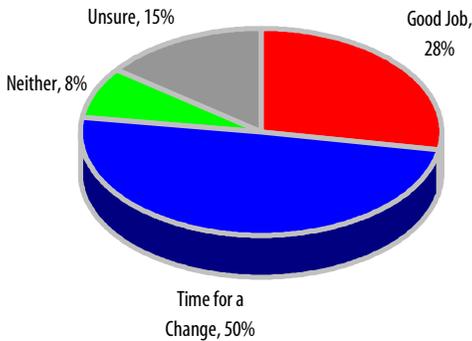
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**TIME FOR CHANGE?  
(N=1,000)**



**COMMENTARY**

With one of two Canadians believing the Liberals have been in power too long, the appetite for change is currently quite significant.

Not surprisingly, committed Liberals were the most likely to oppose change (60%, believe the Liberals are doing a good job, 32 points above the national average). Of concern is the fact that one of every five committed Liberals think it is time for a change.

Regionally, Atlantic Canadians were more likely to believe the Liberals were doing a good job while Westerners were more likely to think it was time for a change.

**THE METHODOLOGY**

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Validation of the demographic profile of respondents indicates that the poll is a fair representation of Canadian voters.

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**THE QUESTION**

Some people think that the Liberals have done a good job running the country and that Paul Martin would be strong Prime Minister. Others think that the Liberals have been in power too long and that it's time for a change. Which of these two opinions best reflects your views?

Target Groups (+/- index score)	Liberals Doing a Good Job	Liberals in Too Long	Agree with Neither	Unsure
Atlantic	+6	-7	-2	+2
Quebec	-1	-1	+2	-1
Ontario	+1	-7	0	+4
West	-3	+8	-1	-4
Men	+2	+2	-2	-2
Women	-3	-2	+2	+2
18 to 29	+3	+2	-5	-1
30 to 39	+4	0	-4	-1
40 to 49	-4	-2	+6	0
50 to 59	-1	-1	-1	+2
60 plus	-5	+1	+3	0
Liberal voters	+32	-30	0	-3
CP voters	-21	+32	-4	-8
NDP voters	-12	+14	+5	-8
BQ voters	-15	+15	+3	-4
Undecided	-17	-10	0	+26

Note: Plus/minus index scores are based on the difference between the sub-group and the sample average. For example the +32 score noted above among Liberal voters indicates that they are 32 per cent more likely to think that the Liberals are doing a good job compared to the average Canadian voter. Readers should focus on scores greater than +/-5.

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