

# NEWS RELEASE



## **MEDIA INQUIRIES:**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Federal Liberals maintain lead over Conservatives**

#### **Two thirds oppose niqab in citizenship ceremonies**

TORONTO March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - In a random sampling of public opinion taken by the Forum Poll™ among 1370 Canadian voters, more than a third (36%) will vote Liberal if a federal election were held today, while just one third would vote Conservative (32%). One fifth would vote for the NDP (21%), but few would vote Green (6%), Bloc Quebecois (4%) or for any other party (1%). This represents a slight decline for the Liberals since last month (February 11 - 39%) and stasis for the Conservatives (February - 32%).

In Quebec, the Liberals lead at one third of the vote (33%) to one quarter for the NDP (24%) and one fifth for the Conservatives (20%). Fewer than one fifth would vote Bloc (16%). In vote rich Ontario, where this year's election will be won or lost, Liberals (38%) and Conservatives (37%) are tied, with a fifth of the vote going to the New Democrats (19%). In Alberta, the Conservatives take more than half the vote (51%), but the Liberals are not shut out (29%). In Atlantic Canada, the Liberals are absolutely dominant (63%). In BC, the Liberals and NDP are tied for second place (29% each) behind the Conservatives (35%).

#### **Very tight Liberal minority seen**

If these results are projected up to a 338 seat House of Commons, the Liberals would capture a minority of 138 seats (32 fewer than required for a majority) to 130 for the Conservatives, a very high 65 for the NDP, 4 for the Bloc Quebecois and 1 Green Party seat. This stands in contrast to last month when the Liberals were projected to take a majority of 194 seats to 112 for the Conservatives. The NDP were projected to take just 30 seats last month.

#### **Two thirds oppose niqab in citizenship ceremonies**

Two thirds of Canadian voters oppose allowing women to wear the face-covering niqab during citizenship ceremonies (67%), while fewer than a quarter favour the idea (22%). Just one tenth are undecided (10%). Opposition is common to GenX (45 to 54 - 76%), Boomers (55 to 64 - 75%) and seniors (65+ - 77%) but not the youngest (51%), the wealthier (\$80K to \$100K - 78%), in Quebec especially (87%), among Conservative voters (83%), among virtually every Bloc voter (96% - caution: small base size), Francophones (88%), Catholics (80%) and Evangelicals (80%).

## **TORONTO**

**March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- More than a third (36%) will vote Liberal if a federal election were held today, while just one third would vote Conservative (32%).
- If these results are projected up to a 338 seat House of Commons, the Liberals would capture a minority of 138 seats (32 fewer than required for a majority) to 130 for the Conservatives.
- Two thirds of Canadian voters oppose allowing women to wear the face-covering niqab during citizenship ceremonies (67%), while fewer than a quarter favour the idea (22%).

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## **Most find niqab inoffensive to Canadians and to themselves**

Close to half of Canadian voters say the niqab is not offensive to Canadians in general (45%) and the majority do not find it offensive to themselves (57%). Four-in-ten say the niqab offends their countrymen (41%), but just a third say it offends them (36%). In each case, about one tenth have no opinion (14% and 8%, respectively).

## **Majority agree niqab oppresses women**

The majority of Canadian voters agree the niqab is oppressive to women (57%), while just one quarter do not (24%). One fifth have no opinion (19%). Agreement women are oppressed by the niqab is common to Gen X (45 to 54 - 67%), mid income groups (\$60K to \$80K - 64%), in Quebec (73%), among Conservatives (70%), Bloc voters (78%) and Francophones (73%). Belief the niqab is not oppressive is characteristic of the youngest (32%), in Atlantic Canada (39%), among Liberals (31%), past New Democrats (32%), and those who are religious but not Christian (39%).

"We can't say that the niqab controversy has damaged the Liberals, but it has clearly not helped the Conservatives. While Canadians agree the niqab has no place in citizenship ceremonies, they do not find it offensive, either to themselves or to the others. It is likely that this issue, as it directly affects such a vanishingly small number of women, will be little more than a sideshow in the general election," said Forum Research President, Dr. Lorne Bozinoff.

Lorne Bozinoff, Ph.D. is the president and founder of Forum Research. He can be reached at [lbozinoff@forumresearch.com](mailto:lbozinoff@forumresearch.com) or at (416) 960-9603.

## **TORONTO**

**March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Close to half of Canadian voters say the niqab is not offensive to Canadians in general (45%) and the majority do not find it offensive to themselves (57%).
- The majority of Canadian voters agree the niqab is oppressive to women (57%), while just one quarter do not (24%).
- "We can't say they the niqab controversy has damaged the Liberals, but it has clearly not helped the Conservatives. While Canadians agree the niqab has no place in citizenship ceremonies, they do not find it offensive, either to themselves or to the others. It is likely that this issue, as it directly affects such a vanishingly small number of women, will be little more than a sideshow in the general election," said Forum Research President, Dr. Lorne Bozinoff.

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## **Methodology**

The Forum Poll™ was conducted by Forum Research with the results based on an interactive voice response telephone survey of 1370 randomly selected Canadians 18 years of age or older. The poll was conducted on March 13-14<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Results based on the total sample are considered accurate +/- 3%, 19 times out of 20. Subsample results will be less accurate. Margins of error for subsample (such as age, gender) results are available at [www.forumresearch.com/samplestim.asp](http://www.forumresearch.com/samplestim.asp)

Where appropriate, the data has been statistically weighted by age, region, and other variables to ensure that the sample reflects the actual population according to the latest Census data.

This research is not necessarily predictive of future outcomes, but rather, captures opinion at one point in time. Forum Research conducted this poll as a public service and to demonstrate our survey research capabilities. Forum houses its poll results in the Data Library of the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto.

With offices across Canada and around the world, 100% Canadian-owned Forum Research is one of the country's leading survey research firms. This Forum Poll™ and other polls may be found at Forum's poll archive at [www.forumresearch.com/polls.asp](http://www.forumresearch.com/polls.asp)

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**Federal Party Preference Trending**

[Decided/Leaning]

**TORONTO**

**March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

%	Sample	Cons	Lib	NDP	Green	Bloc	Other
March 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	1370	32	36	21	6	4	1
February 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	1018	32	39	17	5	4	1
January 27-28 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	1309	35	34	20	6	5	1
January 5-6 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	1650	33	37	20	5	4	1
Dec. 10-11 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	1560	33	41	17	5	3	1
Nov. 19-20 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	1442	33	36	18	8	4	1
Oct. 5-8 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	1504	34	38	19	4	4	1
Sept. 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	1267	34	40	18	3	4	1
August 18-19 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	1798	32	41	17	5	5	1
July 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	1624	28	44	18	3	5	1
June 16-17 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	1683	31	39	19	5	4	1
May 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2014	1694	30	36	23	5	6	1
Apr 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	1572	30	39	20	4	6	1
Mar 25-28 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	1764	29	39	22	3	5	1
Feb. 18-19 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	1824	29	39	21	4	6	1
Jan. 23-24 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	1228	28	38	24	4	5	1
Jan. 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	1779	28	37	25	4	5	1
Dec. 12-13 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	1634	32	38	21	3	5	1
Nov. 12-13 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	1834	29	38	22	4	6	1
Oct. 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2013	1007	28	40	20	5	6	1
Oct. 21-22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2013	1859	30	39	19	5	7	1
Sept 16-17 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	1527	31	36	21	4	7	1
August 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	1145	29	38	22	4	6	1
July 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2013	1501	31	35	22	4	7	1
June 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	1420	30	38	20	4	6	0
May 21 <sup>st</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2013	1709	27	44	20	3	4	1
April 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	1764	30	43	19	2	5	1
April 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2013	1269	29	33	25	6	5	1
March 6 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	1663	31	30	27	5	6	1
Feb 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	1051	32	30	26	4	6	1
Jan 16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	1555	36	25	28	4	7	1
Dec 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	1296	31	27	28	6	6	1
Nov 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	1776	33	28	28	4	6	1
Oct 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	1680	31	27	32	4	6	1
Sep 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	1692	35	25	30	3	6	1
Aug 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2012	1640	34	22	34	4	6	1
Jul 25 <sup>th</sup> -26 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	1545	31	22	35	5	6	1
Jun 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	1114	35	19	35	3	6	1
Jun 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	1482	30	22	37	5	6	1

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**TORONTO**  
**March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Seat Distribution Projection Trending**

%	Cons	Lib	NDP	Green	Bloc	Other
March 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	130	138	65	1	4	0
February 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	112	194	30	1	1	0
January 27-28 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	145	125	61	1	5	1
January 5-6 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	137	126	70	1	0	1

**Switch from 308 to 338 seat distribution**

Dec. 10-11 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	109	164	34	1	0	0
Nov. 19-20 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	125	124	52	1	6	0
Oct. 5-8 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	132	130	44	1	1	0
Sept. 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	113	162	30	1	2	0
August 18-19 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	110	142	51	1	4	0
July 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	84	192	30	1	1	0
June 16-17 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	109	142	53	1	3	0
May 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2014	111	110	75	1	11	0
Apr 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	100	158	39	1	10	0
Mar 25-28 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	99	159	40	1	9	0
Feb. 18-19 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	100	134	51	1	22	0
Jan. 23-24 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	104	132	65	1	6	0
Jan. 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	111	130	61	1	5	0
Dec. 12-13 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	110	147	48	1	2	0
Nov. 12-13 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	108	134	53	1	12	0
Oct. 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2013	104	146	47	1	10	0
Oct. 21-22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2013	106	147	33	1	21	0
Sept 16-17 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	121	102	45	1	39	0
August 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	107	127	63	1	10	0
July 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2013	129	120	44	1	14	0
June 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	113	150	39	1	5	0
May 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2013	77	192	37	1	1	0
April 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	99	170	35	1	3	0
April 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2013	119	117	65	1	6	0
March 6 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	125	88	76	1	18	0
Feb 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	129	86	81	1	11	0
Jan 16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	144	68	73	1	22	0
Dec 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	129	77	77	1	24	0
Nov 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	138	83	76	1	10	0
Oct 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	122	76	101	1	8	0
Sep 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	142	66	87	1	12	0
Aug 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2012	140	46	114	1	7	0
July 25 <sup>th</sup> -26 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	114	58	128	1	7	0
June 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	144	32	127	1	4	0
June 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	114	53	136	1	4	0
May 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2012	123	42	138	1	4	0
Apr 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	118	54	133	1	2	0

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**March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Federal Vote Preference**

*'If a federal election were held today, which party are you most likely to vote for?'+ 'Even though you may not have made up your mind, which party are you leaning towards at this time?'*

[Decided/Leaning]

**Age / Gender**

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1275	255	182	244	279	315	726	549
Conservative	32	29	34	32	27	37	36	28
Liberal	36	32	35	37	42	36	34	39
New Democratic	21	24	20	22	21	19	20	22
Green	6	11	6	4	4	4	5	7
Bloc Quebecois	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	4
Other	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

**Region**

%	Total	Atl	Que	ON	Man/Sask	AB	BC	English	French
Sample	1275	88	328	444	109	133	173	971	304
Conservative	32	18	20	37	33	51	35	35	22
Liberal	36	63	33	38	33	29	29	39	28
New Democratic	21	17	24	19	22	13	29	20	25
Green	6	1	6	5	10	7	6	5	7
Bloc Quebecois	4	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	17
Other	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1

**Past Federal Vote**

%	Total	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green	Bloc	Other Parties
Sample	1275	407	261	259	65	70	68
Conservative	32	78	6	5	17	14	22
Liberal	36	14	80	32	24	7	24
New Democratic	21	4	12	57	11	22	33
Green	6	3	2	2	43	8	14
Bloc Quebecois	4	1	0	3	4	48	0
Other	1	0	0	1	1	1	7

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**March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

***Niqab During Citizenship Ceremonies***

*‘Do you favour or oppose allowing women to wear the niqab, which covers the face, during citizenship ceremonies?’*

[All Respondents]

**Age / Gender**

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1370	277	197	263	295	338	777	593
Favour	22	36	22	14	17	15	21	24
Oppose	67	51	67	76	75	77	69	66
Don't know	10	13	10	10	9	9	10	11

**Region**

%	Total	Atl	Que	ON	Man/Sask	AB	BC	English	French
Sample	1370	96	349	484	117	140	184	1046	324
Favour	22	36	8	26	25	19	32	26	8
Oppose	67	54	87	63	58	65	57	61	88
Don't know	10	10	5	11	17	16	11	12	4

**Religion**

%	Total	Protestant Christian	Catholic	Evangelical Christian	Other Christian	Other religion	No religion
Sample	1370	301	443	53	102	96	375
Favour	22	22	15	12	25	22	31
Oppose	67	67	80	80	59	56	57
Don't know	10	11	5	8	16	22	12

**Federal Vote Preference**

%	Total	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green	Bloc	Other Parties
Sample	1370	399	421	261	98	52	44
Favour	22	11	31	30	34	1	18
Oppose	67	83	60	56	56	96	71
Don't know	10	7	9	15	10	3	11

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**March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

***Niqab is Offensive to Canadians***

*'Do you agree or disagree the niqab is offensive to Canadians?'*

*[All Respondents]*

**Age / Gender**

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1370	277	197	263	295	338	777	593
Agree	41	28	40	51	44	50	42	40
Disagree	45	62	42	39	42	32	47	44
Don't know	14	10	18	10	13	18	12	15

**Region**

%	Total	Atl	Que	ON	Man/Sask	AB	BC	English	French
Sample	1370	96	349	484	117	140	184	1046	324
Agree	41	30	64	35	24	39	33	34	66
Disagree	45	57	26	50	58	45	53	51	25
Don't know	14	14	9	15	18	16	14	15	9

**Religion**

%	Total	Protestant Christian	Catholic	Evangelical Christian	Other Christian	Other religion	No religion
Sample	1370	301	443	53	102	96	375
Agree	41	41	55	50	32	36	29
Disagree	45	46	35	36	51	41	56
Don't know	14	13	10	15	17	24	14

**Federal Vote Preference**

%	Total	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green	Bloc	Other Parties
Sample	1370	399	421	261	98	52	44
Agree	41	56	34	32	31	73	39
Disagree	45	32	52	57	56	16	44
Don't know	14	12	14	11	13	11	17

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***Niqab Offensive to Respondent***

*'Is the niqab offensive to you or not?'*

*[All Respondents]*

**Age / Gender**

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1370	277	197	263	295	338	777	593
Offensive to you	36	24	34	43	39	46	35	37
Not offensive to you	57	71	56	50	52	46	59	54
Don't know	8	6	9	8	9	8	6	9

**Region**

%	Total	Atl	Que	ON	Man/Sask	AB	BC	English	French
Sample	1370	96	349	484	117	140	184	1046	324
Offensive to you	36	28	48	34	19	37	30	32	50
Not offensive to you	57	67	45	57	70	58	64	61	43
Don't know	8	5	6	9	11	6	6	8	7

**Religion**

%	Total	Protestant Christian	Catholic	Evangelical Christian	Other Christian	Other religion	No religion
Sample	1370	301	443	53	102	96	375
Offensive to you	36	39	42	43	28	37	27
Not offensive to you	57	57	51	44	61	55	64
Don't know	8	4	7	13	11	8	9

**Federal Vote Preference**

%	Total	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green	Bloc	Other Parties
Sample	1370	399	421	261	98	52	44
Offensive to you	36	49	30	28	28	58	35
Not offensive to you	57	46	62	65	68	36	46
Don't know	8	6	8	6	5	6	19

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**March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

***Niqab Oppresses Women***

*'Do you agree or disagree the niqab oppresses women?'*

*[All Respondents]*

**Age / Gender**

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	1370	277	197	263	295	338	777	593
Agree	57	49	56	67	59	59	57	57
Disagree	24	32	27	16	25	18	25	23
Don't know	19	19	17	17	16	23	18	20

**Region**

%	Total	Atl	Que	ON	Man/Sask	AB	BC	English	French
Sample	1370	96	349	484	117	140	184	1046	324
Agree	57	46	73	55	40	54	52	52	73
Disagree	24	39	14	25	32	28	26	27	13
Don't know	19	15	13	20	28	18	22	20	13

**Religion**

%	Total	Protestant Christian	Catholic	Evangelical Christian	Other Christian	Other religion	No religion
Sample	1370	301	443	53	102	96	375
Agree	57	57	66	61	44	43	54
Disagree	24	25	17	18	29	39	27
Don't know	19	17	16	21	27	18	19

**Federal Vote Preference**

%	Total	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green	Bloc	Other Parties
Sample	1370	399	421	261	98	52	44
Agree	57	70	52	51	50	78	36
Disagree	24	15	31	29	27	13	26
Don't know	19	15	17	21	23	10	38

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