

Politics This Morning Election 2015: Leaders head into homestretch before polls open



The Hill Times photographs by Jake Wright
It's crunch time: Conservative Leader Stephen Harper, NDP Leader Tom Mulcair, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau, Green Party Leader Elizabeth May and Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe. The leaders will be busy with one last blitz in the final weekend before Canadians head to the polls on Oct. 19.

By [BEA VONGDOUANGCHANH](#) | Oct. 16, 2015

Good Friday morning! There are only three days left until Canadians head to the polls to vote. Expect a full blitz of ads, volunteers at doors, fundraising letters and leaders making their last ditch appeals to voters as the campaign heads into the final weekend before Oct. 19.

Keith Beardsley, former deputy chief of staff in Prime Minister **Stephen Harper's** office, says he expects some shifts in polling numbers in the lead up to the vote. "Expect Liberal numbers to soften and the NDP to rise slightly. The Conservatives benefit from any increase in NDP numbers as it splits the vote," Mr. Beardsley told *The Hill Times*.

To do this, Mr. Harper needs to go on the offense and "give up on that stupid cash register. ... Playing defence has gotten him nowhere," Mr. Beardsley said. "There should be some Conservative supporters who have been leaning to the Liberals that can be drawn back in or who will have a change of heart and even if they don't want to support Harper, they will support the party and vote for their local CPC candidate."

Meanwhile, Mr. Beardsley said, the NDP should go after Liberal Leader **Justin Trudeau** for asking Canadians to give him a majority government and link it to the "he's not ready" refrain. The NDP could also keep hammering Mr. Trudeau on pipelines and the recent resignation of the party's campaign co-chair **Dan Gagnier resigning** less than a week before election day for "inappropriately" giving advice to Energy East Pipeline lobbyists. "Ask voters who will stop the pipeline if one of Trudeau's senior advisors is linked to the company. This should draw back some anti-pipeline supporters to the NDP," Mr. Beardsley said.

In case you missed it

Regardless of the election outcome, Canada's creditworthiness is unlikely to be affected, says global credit rating provider [Moody's in an analysis](#). The country's "overall credit profile is unlikely to change significantly after the vote because all three major parties are targeting balanced or near-balanced budgets during the upcoming mandate," the analysis says. "At the national level, the parties have been close in the polls among likely voters, although very recently the New Democratic Party (NDP) was trailing. While there are differences among the parties on social issues, taxes and spending policies, we expect the basic Canadian consensus on prudent government finances to continue."

Former British Columbia Conservative MP **Dona Cadman** has endorsed the Liberal candidate in her riding of Surrey Centre, B.C. Ms. Cadman, whose husband was former Reform, Canadian Alliance and Conservative MP **Chuck Cadman**, [told her local newspaper](#) that while she is still a Conservative Party member, Liberal candidate **Randeep Sarai** was the best person to represent the riding. She said that the Conservatives were becoming the party that she got into politics to fight against, that she didn't like negative ads, and that Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau was doing a good job running a positive campaign. She also noted that crime is a top concern in her riding and that she doesn't "feel comfortable with much of what is being done and even less of how it is being done." Change is needed, she said. "We need a government that is willing to look at the root causes of crime; that is willing to support those who are building intervention programs; that is supportive of those fostering rehabilitation and working to stop crime before it happens," she said. "For these reasons, I strongly support Randeep Sarai and the Liberal Party platform on crime and prevention."

Former Canadian diplomat **Ken Taylor**, best known for hiding American embassy staff during the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979 which inspired the movie *Argo*, died yesterday at age 81. Mr. Taylor was diagnosed with colon cancer in the summer, and he died with his wife Pat by his side in a New York hospital. Former Canadian prime minister **Joe Clark**, who was in office at the time of the hostage crisis in Tehran, described Mr. Taylor as a “Canadian hero,” a “valued friend,” and “an example of what we can be at our best.” In addition to ambassador to Iran, Mr. Taylor was appointed Canadian consul-general to New York City. He left the foreign service in 1984 to join Nabisco as senior vice-president, and later founded a consulting firm called Taylor and Ryan.

According to a [new poll by Innovative Research Group](#), the Liberals are leading with 38 per cent of decided voters. The Conservatives hold 30 per cent while the NDP hold 22 per cent. The Green Party has six per cent nationally, and the Bloc Quebecois three per cent. The poll, which is accurate to within 3.16 percentage points, was conducted for poverty reduction advocacy group ONE Oct. 6-11 with 1,143 Canadians by phone. The poll found that voters are split on the government’s reduction of foreign aid spending, but 54 per cent of Liberals and 59 per cent of New Democrats said they would be likely to support a party that commits to reversing the cuts. In total, 41 per cent of respondents said they would more likely support a party that committed to reversing the cuts.

“Canadians are concerned about our place in the world,” ONE’s Canada director, **Stuart Hickox**, said in a press release. “Sadly, Canada seems to be stepping back from its historic leadership at a time when it really needs to be stepping up. With the economic downturn behind us, this poll shows that not only is restoring the foreign aid funding cut these last five years the right thing to do, but the public supports doing so. Eligible voters—especially key NDP/Liberal swing voters—are more likely to support a party that commits to reversing these cuts.”

Innovative Research Group pollster **Greg Lyle** added: “As the Liberals build their lead, anything that can help them unite the centre left is worth looking at. Reversing the current government’s foreign aid cuts could be just what they are looking for.”

Where the leaders are, day 76

Conservative Leader **Stephen Harper** will be campaigning in Quebec and New Brunswick today. His first stop is Quebec City, where he will deliver remarks at 9:35 a.m. He will be joined by Conservative candidates Denis Lebel, running for re-election in Lac Saint Jean and Alupa Clarke, running for election in Beauport-Limoilou. He will then head to Fredericton, N.B., where he will deliver remarks at 6:30 p.m. He will be joined by Conservative candidates Keith Ashfield, running for re-election in Fredericton, and Rob Moore, running for re-election in Fundy Royal.

NDP Leader **Tom Mulcair** will be campaigning in Quebec and Alberta today. He will make a stop in Lac-Megantic, Que., at 9 a.m. where he will hold a media availability at Musi-Café. He will then head to a rally in Edmonton, Alta., at 5:30 p.m.

Liberal Party Leader **Justin Trudeau** will be campaigning in Ontario today. He will meet with seniors in Mississauga at 9 a.m. at the Beechwood Retirement Living Residence. He will then head to Brampton, where he will hold a photo opportunity at Dixie Sweets & Restaurant at 12:45 p.m. Mr. Trudeau will then hold another photo op at Gramma’s Oven European Bakery & Café in Richmond Hill, followed by another photo op in Markham, where he will visit the Sanatan Mandir Cultural Centre at 5:30 p.m.

Green Party Leader **Elizabeth May** will be campaigning in Sidney, B.C., today. She will launch a Green Tour Bus at 4 p.m. She will greet commuters at the intersection of Beacon Avenue and the Pat Bay Highway, and then travel to Campbell River, B.C.