



## News from the Campaign Trail

- [RCMP interviews Jody Wilson-Raybould to discuss political interference in SNC criminal prosecution](#)
- [Scheer pressed on abortion debate on campaign trail](#)
- [Opponents pounce on Liberal record after Trudeau's no-show at leaders debate](#)
- [Green Party won't ban members from trying to reopen abortion debate, says May](#)

## The Campaign Is On

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau visited Governor General Julie Payette on Wednesday, September 11, officially kicking off election 2019.

Of course, the campaign has been unofficially going on for some time—at least as far back as the start of this summer, or, even, depending on how you assess these things, since the end of the 2015 election. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the campaign never truly ends.

But the “official” start of the election does change some things.

For the first time in Canadian history, political parties and third parties (unions, Political Action Committees, etc.) were subject to spending limits in the pre-writ

period. From June 30 until the start of the campaign, political parties could only spend \$2 million, and third parties were limited to \$1 million.

Now that the campaign is on, the political parties can spend approximately \$28 million. Third parties can only spend \$528,000, with an expense limit of \$4,386 per electoral district.

There are also further regulations regarding political advertising and so on.

But apart from technicalities, there's a broader cultural change that happens at the start of an election.

Election lawn signs start appearing at people's homes and along roadways. The media

becomes more focused on Canadian politics. They're paying for the privilege to ride on the campaigns' tour buses and planes. They want to get bang for their buck. Election-related news will start the national newscasts every night.

Moreover, Canadians begin to pay more attention to politics. The stakes are raised, and the leaders have to meet their expectations. It starts from day one and continues through to October 21.

Trudeau started his campaign on the front steps of Rideau Hall, quickly jetting to B.C. afterward. He held a campaign rally in the riding of Vancouver-Kingsway. The next day he was in Victoria, B.C., making an affordable housing announcement.

As discussed in past newsletters, B.C. is a key battleground, with all of the major parties hoping to pick up seats. Many ridings will be four-way splits between the Liberals, Conservative, NDP and Greens. The Liberals will likely lose some seats in Alberta and Atlantic Canada. To make-up for those losses they need to make gains in Quebec and B.C. The NDP won Vancouver-Kingsway with 45 percent of the vote in the 2015 election, but this time around the Liberals are running a strong candidate, former TV news anchor Tamara Taggart. The Liberals hope to capitalize on the NDP's struggles and turn it red for the first time in 15 years. (David Emerson won the seat as a Liberal in 2004, before crossing over to the Conservatives.)

Conservative leader Andrew Scheer rightly began in Trois-Rivieres, Quebec, and

Woodbridge, Ontario (just north of Toronto). Although Scheer is trailing in both Ontario and Quebec, the suburbs of Toronto and the greater Quebec City region are Conservatives' best hope of winning enough seats to form government. Scheer spent day two in York Centre, another potential Conservative pick up just outside Toronto. The Liberals were ready for Scheer's visit. Liberal cabinet minister Carolyn Bennett tweeted out a video of York Centre's Conservative candidate Rachel Willson giving an interview at a pro-life rally. We expect the Liberal war room has similar videos queued up for every day of the election. Scheer responded by accusing the Liberals of fear mongering.

NDP leader Jagmeet Singh started in London, Ontario. The next day he was in

Brampton. In this election, the NDP have to focus on ridings where they can win. London and Brampton are two such places. The NDP currently holds the riding of London-Fanshawe, but the long-time incumbent, Irene Mathysen has stepped down. Her daughter Lindsay will be running in her stead. The NDP hope the power of incumbency will keep the seat orange.

Elizabeth May was in Victoria for her inaugural campaign event. The Green's best chance of winning more seats is on Vancouver Island. Current polls have the Greens as either leading or in contention on all the Island's seats. It makes sense for her to start from a position of strength. May spent the rest of Thursday travelling to Toronto and preparing for the *Maclean's*/CityTV debate.

## Trudeau Adopts Front-runner Strategy

At the outset of the 2015 election, Justin Trudeau was something of an underdog. He was in third place when Prime Minister Stephen Harper called the election. Expectations were low. But Trudeau turned out to be an effective campaigner and debater, leaving the other leaders in his dust. During the 2015 campaign, he held many campaign events, criss-crossing the nation, and he appeared in all five debates—eagerly sparring with Harper and then-NDP leader Tom Mulcair. In a long campaign, Trudeau had the time and exposure to show he was ready to lead. It was an effective strategy, one that leveraged Trudeau's natural charisma and communication skills.

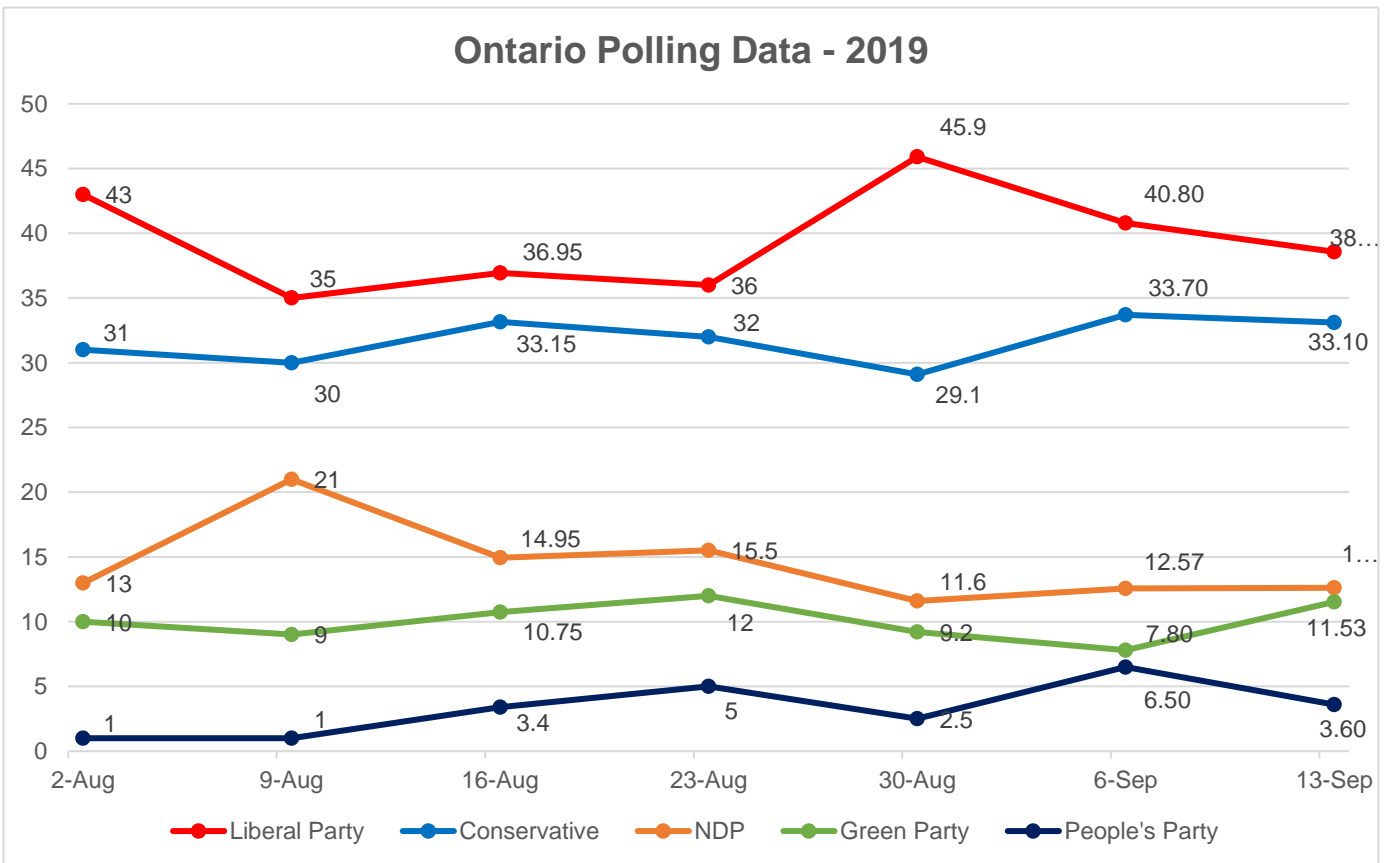
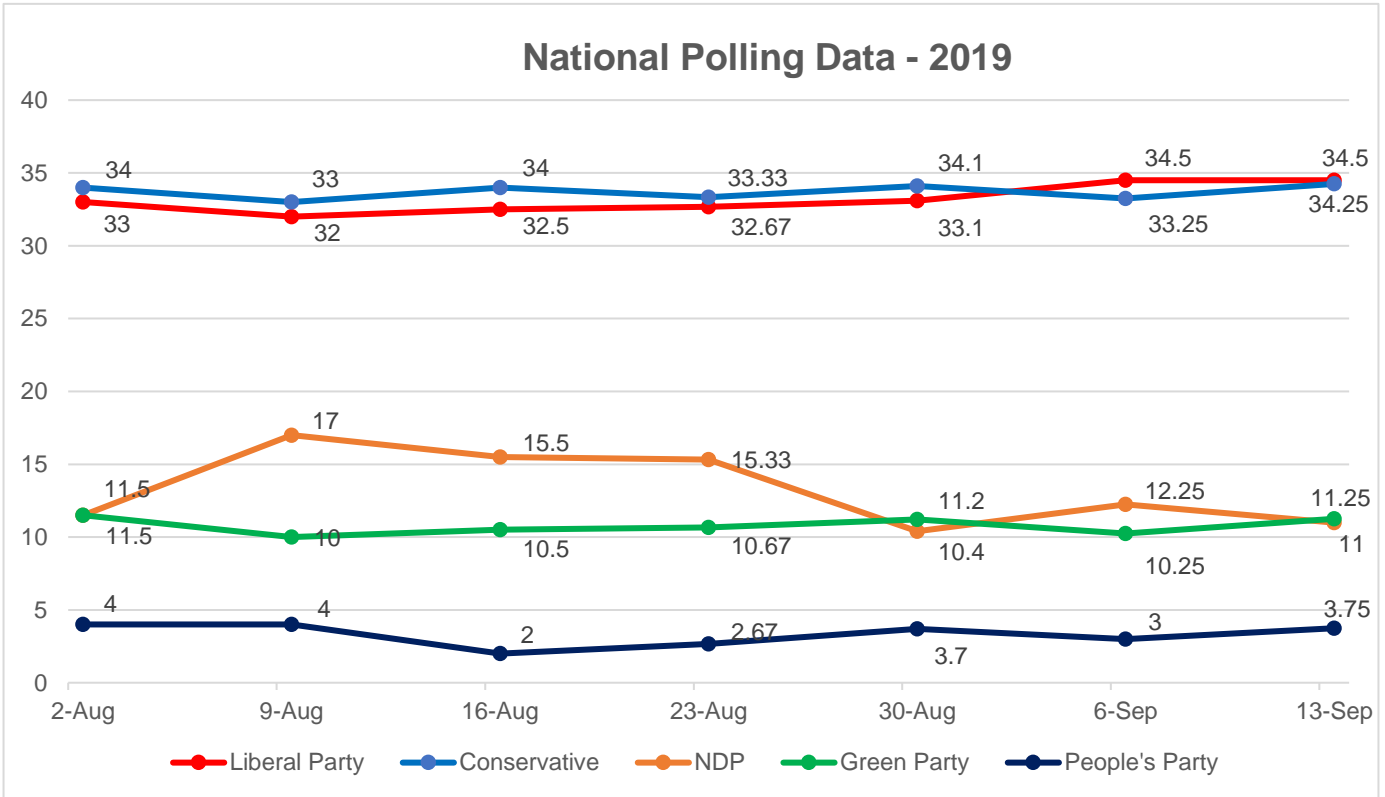
This campaign, Trudeau appears to be adopting more of a front-runner strategy. Rather than participating in all five election debates, he will only participate in three of them (the two organized by Debates Commission and another by the French-language TV network, TVA). The Conservatives have accused Trudeau of being too "chicken" to defend his record.

Trudeau and his supporters have responded by saying that he'll still be readily available to all Canadians. There'll be no "bubble" around the leader. He'll have daily press events, and reporters will be on tour with him. The public will have their chance to question him

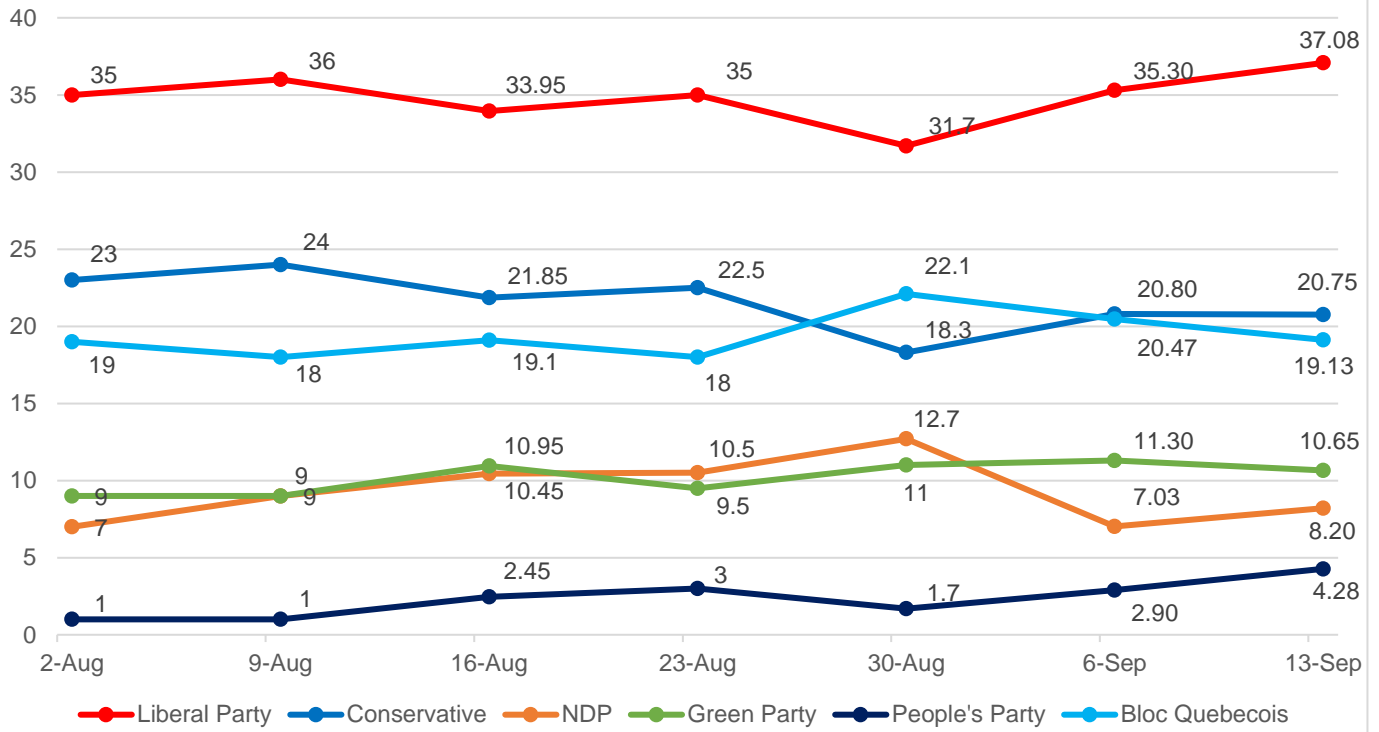
on matters of national importance.

Besides, there was little upside in Trudeau appearing in two extra debates. Although he was attacked for not showing up to the *Maclean's*/CityTV debate, for the most part, the other leaders focused on each other. If he'd been there it would've given the opposition leaders a chance to boost their profile and maybe land a punch. When you're leading in the polls, it's better to play it safe. It makes sense to run front-runner campaign when you're the front-runner. Times change, and your political strategy has to adapt.

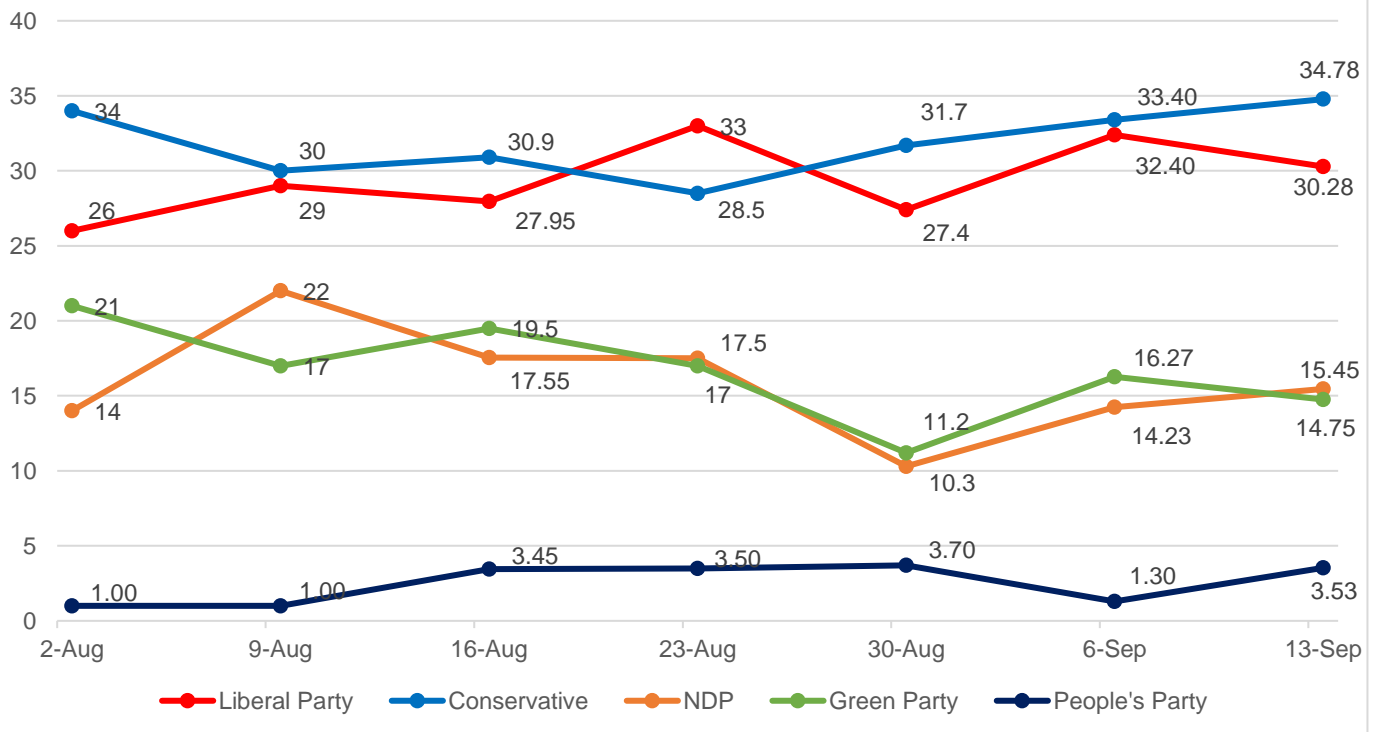
# Polling



### Quebec Polling Data - 2019



### B.C. Polling Data - 2019



# What the Numbers Tell Us

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At the start of the 2019 election, the Liberals and Conservatives are essentially tied.

And yet, most of the poll aggregators say that the likeliest outcome of election 2019 is a Liberal majority. How can that be?

It's because the national numbers are masking great differences between Canada's regions and provinces.

The Conservatives are posting truly incredible numbers in Alberta. Most pollsters put their level of support in the province in the low 60s, roughly 40 points ahead of their closest competitor. Such high numbers boost the Tories' overall national support. But they don't help the party much in terms of winning the election. The Conservatives usually win almost all the seats in the prairies. In our first-past-the-post system, it doesn't matter if you win by two percent or 20 percent. If you get more votes than the other person, you win.

That's why Quebec and Ontario are so central to this election. As the two most populous provinces, they have the largest number of seats up for grabs. The Liberals are leading

in both Quebec and Ontario, and this gives them a big advantage. The Liberal vote is much more efficient.

To truly get a true pulse on who might win the election, you need to look at the more competitive ridings. These are seats where a small percentage change could make a huge difference in terms of who could win and who could lose. At the start of August, in our Ridings to Watch map, many of the key constituencies were blue. But as the Liberals have improved their numbers by a few percentage points, suddenly, many of them have flipped red. That's why the aggregators have the Liberals currently winning a majority.

But it's a volatile state of affairs. Any significant event could flip the polls, and Canada would be looking at a Conservative majority. It's why the Conservatives pounced at the latest *Globe* story about the SNC-Lavalin, JWR affair. You never know what scandal may resonate with Canadians and, as an Opposition party, you have to do your best to keep any negative story alive and in-front of the public. We remain doubtful that there's new life in the

SNC-Lavalin story that will change people's minds, but it's possible.

Indeed, it remains to be seen whether Canadians may have second thoughts about supporting the Green Party after it suffered a number of embarrassing stories in the past week. Elizabeth May, the party's leader, said that she wouldn't have the power to stop a hypothetical Green MP from introducing an anti-abortion bill. Then, Pierre Nantel, a former NDP-turned-Green candidate said Quebec should separate from Canada as fast as possible.

For the longest time, May and the Greens and didn't face much scrutiny. May only had to manage herself. But as the party continues to poll well, the media will take a closer look at the Greens, investigating whether they're ready to be a national party, with mature policies on complex issues. The Green vote will be key to determining the winner of election 2019, so we'll be watching for any movement in their numbers.

## Ridings to Watch



Prospectus has selected 20 ridings that are competitive races between the major political parties. By focusing on these ridings and seeing how well each party is doing over the course of the campaign, we can have a good idea of who will win election 2019.

You can view our interactive Ridings to Watch map, updated with the latest polling numbers, [here](#).