

## COVID-19 PRODUCES PERVASIVE AND STRONG ANXIETY:

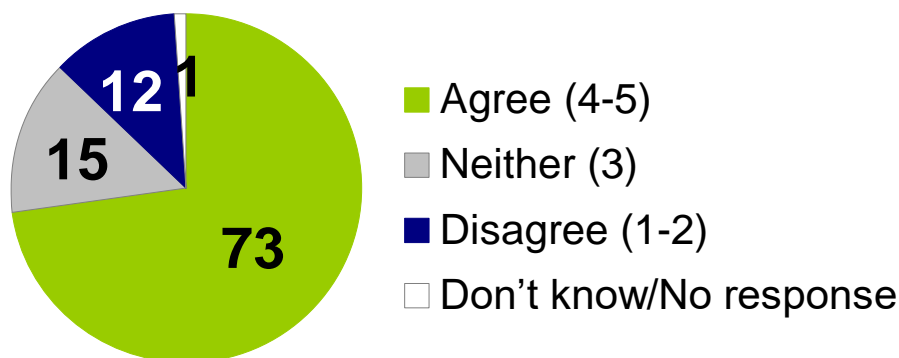
*CITIZENS LOOK TO GOVERNMENTS TO SAVE THEM AND THE ECONOMY*

[Ottawa – March 27, 2020] Canadians are unified in seeing the COVID-19 pandemic as the challenge of a lifetime. Most Canadians say it eclipses the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks in terms of severity and this sense of urgency rose during our field period. Overall, 73 per cent think this is the most serious challenge Canada has faced in 50 years (only 12 per cent disagreed). This sense of historic urgency rose from 70 per cent to 75 per cent over the week of polling.

### Relative seriousness of COVID-19 crisis

**Q.** Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement:

**The COVID-19 pandemic is the most serious challenge Canada has faced in the past 50 years**



**BASE:** Canadians; March 19-26, 2020, n=2,304, MOE +/- 2.0%, 19 times out of 20

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The urgency has translated into the highest confidence in the direction of the country and the federal government that we have ever seen, ever. Confidence in national direction is now 71 per cent but rose remarkably from 66 per cent to 74 per cent over the field period. Confidence in the federal government is at 75 per cent, the highest score EKOS has ever recorded. Majorities in virtually all regions and demographic categories express confidence whereas there would have been single digit confidence in some of those groups a month ago.

This confidence in direction also extends to national and provincial leaders with all premiers and the prime minister scoring very highly on their handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. François Legault scores an astonishing 95 per cent. All leaders are faring well with the notable exception of Donald Trump whose handling of the crisis gets an abysmal 19 per cent (which declined as the week went on).

## Seriousness relative to other challenges

**Q.** Would you say the COVID-19 pandemic is less serious, more serious, or about the same as the SARS outbreak of 2003/the September 11th attacks?

### SARS outbreak of 2003



**BASE:** Canadians (half-sample); March 19-26, 2020, n=1,182, MOE +/- 2.9%, 19 times out of 20

### September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks



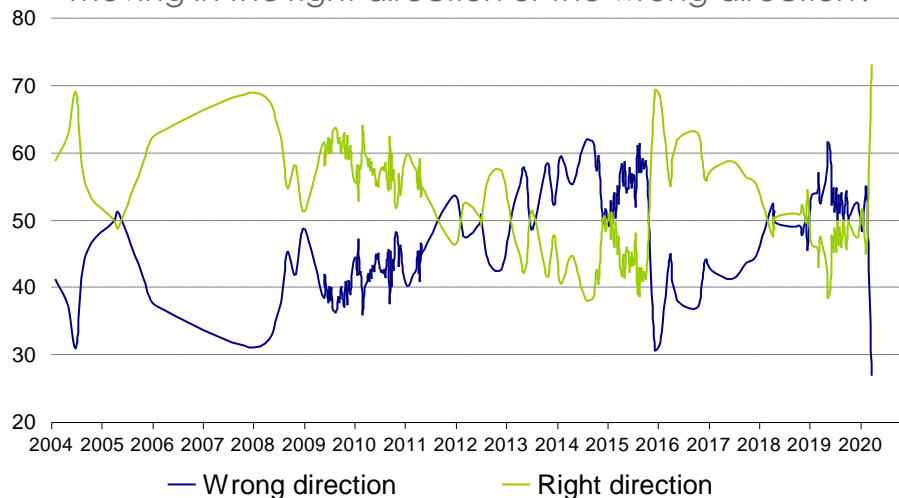
**BASE:** Canadians (half-sample); March 19-26, 2020, n=1,122, MOE +/- 2.9%, 19 times out of 20

- DK/NR
- Less serious
- About the same
- More serious

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## Direction of country (long-term)

**Q.** All things considered, would you say the country is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?



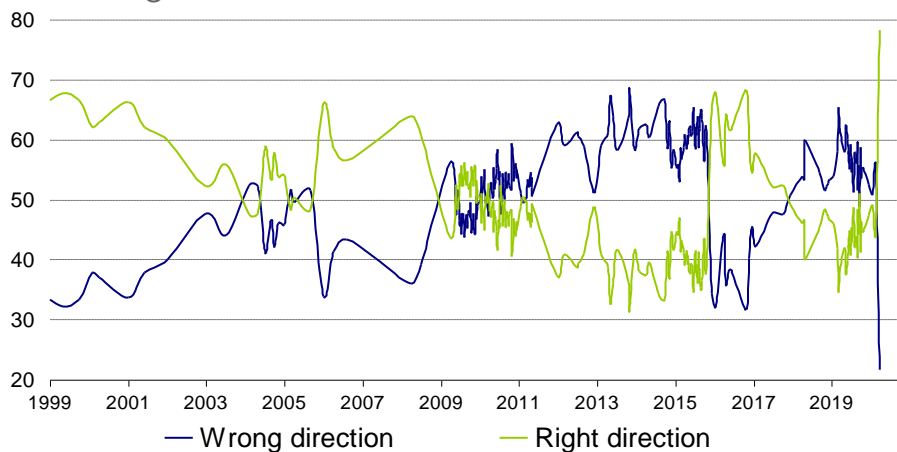
*Note: Figures adjusted to exclude those who skipped the question.*

**BASE:** Canadians (half-sample); March 19-26, 2020, n=1,069, MOE +/- 3.0%, 19 times out of 20

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## Direction of government (long-term)

**Q.** All things considered, would you say the Government of Canada is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?



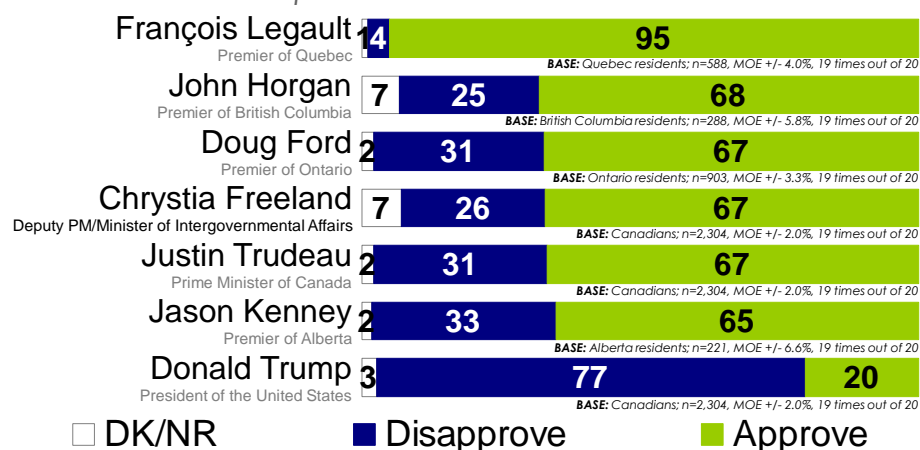
Note: Figures adjusted to exclude those who skipped the question.

BASE: Canadians (half-sample); March 19-26, 2020, n=1,235, MOE +/- 2.8%, 19 times out of 20

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## Approval of leaders' handling of COVID-19 crisis

**Q.** There has been a lot of talk lately about the outbreak of the new coronavirus disease, COVID-19. Do you approve or disapprove of how each of the following leaders has responded to this crisis?



Field Dates: March 19-26, 2020

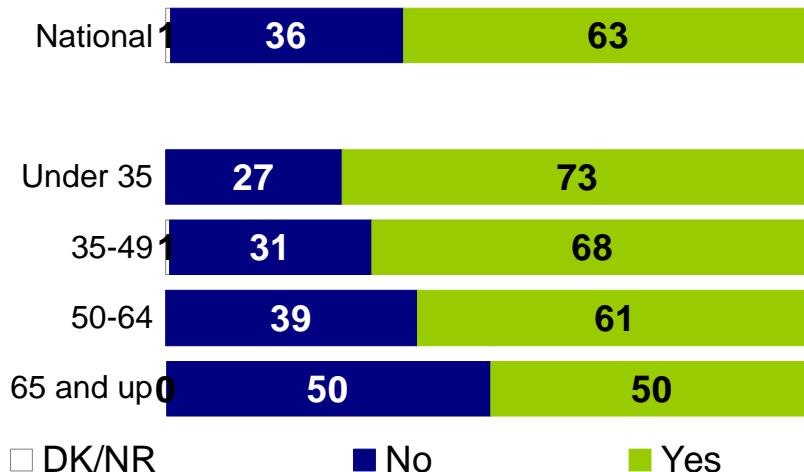
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Perhaps unsurprisingly, the clear majority of Canadians are experiencing serious stress and the proportion of Canadians reporting a serious level of stress rose modestly throughout the field period. It may be that the psychologic damage cause by this pandemic and the ensuing economic

despair that will follow may inflict more damage to the health of Canadians than the pandemic itself. Ironically, it is those who have the highest mortality from COVID-19 – seniors – who seem the least anxious. The comparatively higher stress levels expressed by younger generations may reflect their greater susceptibility to the economic fallout.

## Incidence of severe stress by age

**Q.** Would you say you have experienced a seriously high degree of stress as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

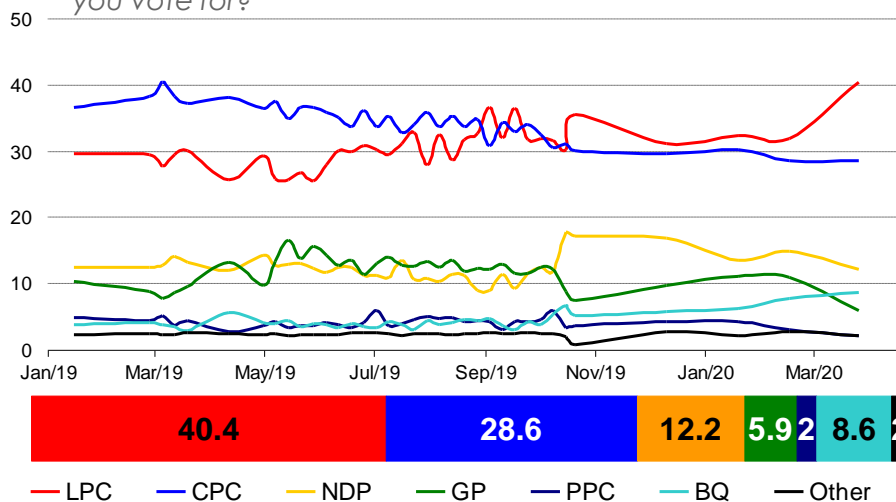


**BASE:** Canadians; March 19-26, 2020, n=2,304, MOE +/- 2.0%, 19 times out of 20

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## Tracking federal vote intention

**Q.** If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?



*Note:* These figures are based on decided and leaning voters only; 15.2% of respondents say they are undecided, are ineligible to vote, or skipped the question.

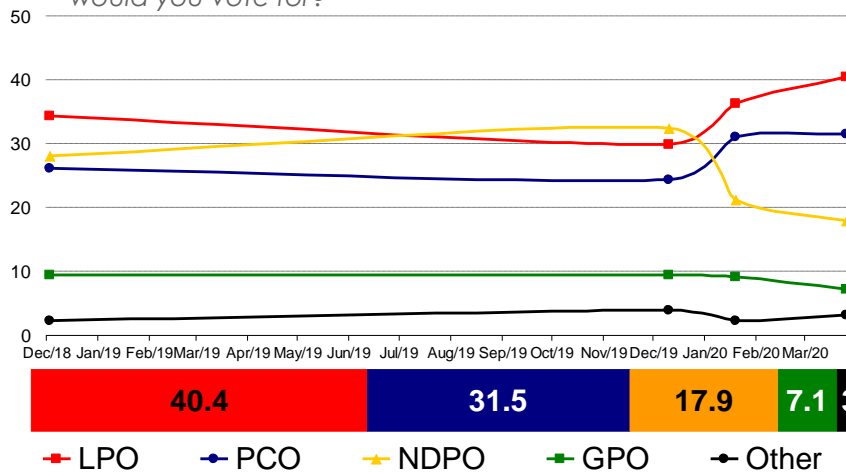
**BASE:** Canadians; March 19-26, 2020, n=2,304, MOE +/- 2.0%, 19 times out of 20

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The last thing on the public's mind is politics and elections, but it is anecdotally noteworthy that the Liberals have moved into a large lead that would produce a clear majority in the highly hypothetical election. Similarly, Legault has vaulted to a massive lead in Quebec and, while Doug Ford has garnered an impressive approval rating on his handling of the COVID-19 crisis, he still trails the Ontario Liberals by nine points.

## Ontario vote intention

Q. If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?



Note: These figures are based on decided and leaning voters only; 14.3% of respondents say they are undecided, are ineligible to vote, or skipped the question.

BASE: Ontario residents; March 19-26, 2020, n=774, MOE +/- 3.5%, 19 times out of 20

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## Quebec vote intention

Q. If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

### EKOS Survey (March 2020)

(Changes since 2018 election below)



BASE: Quebec residents; March 19-26, n=578, MOE +/- 4.1%, 19 times out of 20

### 2018 Quebec Election Results

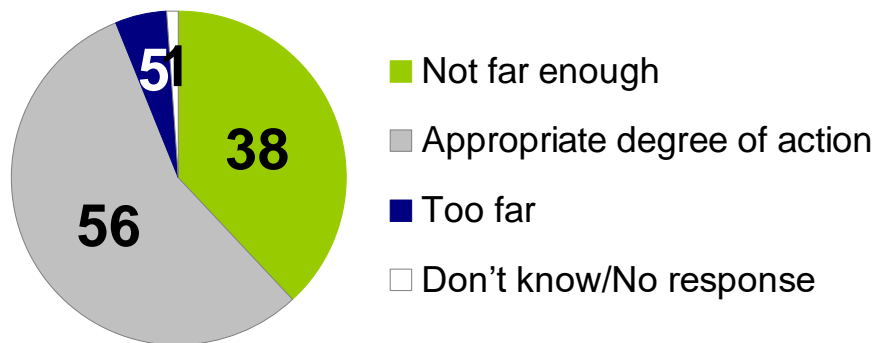


■ CAQ ■ Liberal ■ Parti Québécois ■ Québec solidaire ■ Other

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## Views on extent of government action

**Q.** As you may know, the Government of Canada has taken a number of measures to slow the spread of COVID-19, including restricting travel and closing the border to most non-citizens. Given the circumstances, do you believe the federal government has gone too far, not far enough, or has taken the appropriate degree of action?

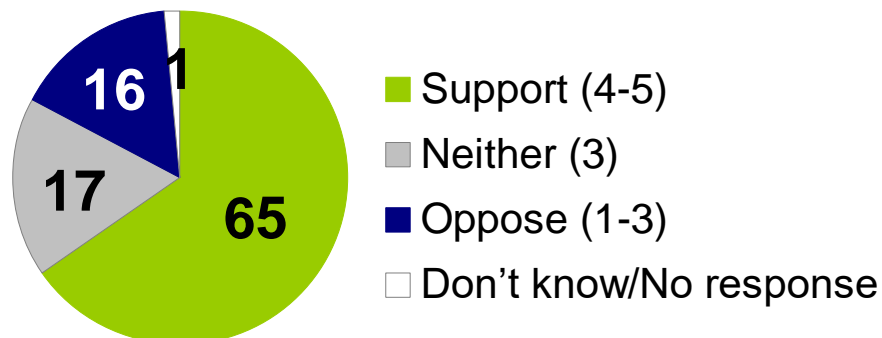


**BASE:** Canadians; March 19-26, 2020, n=2,304, MOE +/- 2.0%, 19 times out of 20

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## Support for enacting Emergencies Act

**Q.** The Emergencies Act gives the Government of Canada additional powers during a time of crisis, such as prohibiting travel, enforcing self-isolation, limiting assemblies, and mobilizing the military to back up the health system. To what extent would you support or oppose the federal government enacting the Emergencies Act to combat the COVID-19 pandemic?



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The public are telling the federal government that they approve of the COVID-19 measures implemented to date. If anything, they want the government to do more – not less – as this

unfolds. Indeed, only five per cent think measures have gone 'too far'. This sentiment is also expressed in strong majority support for implementing the Emergencies Act. Apparently, there are no libertarians in fox holes and the niceties of privacy and some civil rights are being put on the back burner for now.

The bottom line is that we are seeing once-in-a-lifetime alarm levels in a public that is broadly approving of senior governments in Canada. Seemingly irreparable partisan and regional fault lines have largely disappeared as a deeply anxious public ask governments to do whatever it takes to deal with this historic health and economic crisis.

## Methodology:

This survey was conducted using High Definition Interactive Voice Response (HD-IVR™) technology, which allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator. In an effort to reduce the coverage bias of landline only RDD, we created a dual landline/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with a landline and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and landline only households.

The field dates for this survey are March 19-26, 2020. In total, a random sample of 2,304 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/- 2.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted by **age, gender, and region** to ensure the sample's composition reflects that of the actual population of Ontario according to Census data.