

Over the past few years and through a number of elections, we've learned to be wary of polls and surveys, which have proven to be quite off the mark at predicting election results. As such, survey numbers may be useful only in terms of signalling public sentiment over who they like and possible trends, but not if they will really vote. With those caveats in place, the latest offerings from the major firms suggest the 'bounce' the Conservatives have enjoyed over the past two months stalled and they do not appear to have overtaken the Liberals. There are links to a number of surveys done over the last week, but the first in the *Items of Interest* section below shows very different results between the polling companies, perhaps due to their differing methodologies. In the end, though, it's all about getting people to the ballot box.

There's an old saying that 'the road to Hell is paved with good intentions' and it strengthens the point that our most critical task will be to mobilize the vote; something that was illustrated in the nomination race this past weekend in Surrey Newton. The two candidates, former MP Sukh Dhaliwal and Randeep Sarai, had between them signed up over 20,000 new members. The total for each was substantial. Although about 22,000 Liberal members were eligible to vote in the nomination race, only 6,800 votes were recorded on Saturday, despite a very concerted effort by both candidates to get their supporters to turn out. Now, that's still a lot of people (Surrey-Newton will likely be the largest nomination race in the country for the next election), but in spite of the fact that both candidates had about equal numbers of members signed up, Mr. Dhaliwal got twice as many of his supporters to show up as Mr. Sarai.

Our BC Seniors Commission is now linked to two 'ABC' campaigns. Both *Lead Now* and the *Veterans Canada* group are promoting 'Anybody But Conservatives' in a bid to reduce the number of Tory MP's in the next parliament. Both groups profess to be 'non-partisan' in that they are not at this point endorsing any of the opposition parties. *Lead Now*, which has conducted a number of advocacy campaigns, targets ridings where the incumbent MP received less than 50% of the vote last time. Their target is to get 1,500 people in that riding to pledge to vote strategically for the candidate most likely to defeat the Conservative Party hopeful. If *Lead Now* reaches that target, they will conduct research and identify the party that has the best chance of taking the seat away from the Tories. Work is underway now in Surrey Central and *Lead Now* is also looking at Fleetwood-Port Kells. They may now include Vancouver East with Libby Davies announcing that she will not run in 2015.

The big issue in the public domain continues to be Veterans Affairs. In spite of PM Harper's comments that reductions in the public service were focused on 'back room' staff and would not impact services to the public, Veterans Affairs announced that, after undertaking significant cutbacks, it was going to hire 400 case workers

to address the Auditor General's criticism of the quality of services being provided by the ministry.

Our messages to the public:

Stephen Harper's Conservatives fail Canadian veterans and soldiers

[Reports](#) reveal that Stephen Harper's Conservatives knew two years ago about the government's inability to forecast future needs of our veterans, contributing to the \$1.13 billion in unspent funding.

This is the Prime Minister who closed veterans' service centres to save \$4 million, while at the same time dropping \$2 billion on an unfair tax break for the wealthiest Canadians.

Over the last decade, 161 Canadian Armed Forces members have died by suicide, and many more struggle with mental health issues. In spite of this, [one veteran in five](#) is forced to wait up to eight months for help from this government.

As recently [reported](#), Mr. Harper has underfunded our military cemeteries in an effort to pad his books, cutting 80 percent of staff responsible for the maintenance. Thousands of grave markers needed repair and were not fixed last year.

The Prime Minister and his Minister are not taking seriously the sacred obligation to our veterans. Liberals have been clear that Mr. Fantino has no credibility left and must be fired from Cabinet.

Our priority is ensuring that our Canadian Armed Forces and veterans have nothing less than the best of care and support from a grateful nation.

Items of interest from the news and the party:

-This table (referenced above) shows results and trends from the major polling organizations. All show that the recent rise in Conservative support has stalled and that Liberals are still leading or tied with tor
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_42nd_Canadian_federal_election

-This analysis looks into the differences in survey results between two of the leading polling companies:
<http://www.threehundredeight.com/>

-Surveys by the Nanos organization are often quoted in the media, and their 'Party Power Index' provides geographic and demographic results:
<http://www.nanosresearch.com/library/polls/Nanos%20Political%20Index%202014-12-05E.pdf>

-The 'ground war' -- identifying and getting out the vote -- will be critical across the country, especially in the vote-rich Greater Toronto Area:

<http://www.hilltimes.com/news/news/2014/12/15/gta-ridings-critical-to-next-federal-elections-outcome-say-observers/40525?mcl=959&muid=31244>

-The Globe & Mail featured an op/ed by former NDP national director Gerald Caplan, who played off of PM Harper's incident with Russia's Vladimir Putin - what he would say if he could shake Mr. Harper's hand:

http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/if-i-could-shake-harpers-hand-this-is-what-id-tell-him/article22061950/?click=sf_globefb

-Just as we do on our Facebook page, a blog called 'Harper Watch' keeps a record of damages the Conservatives have done to Canada's democracy:

<https://harperwatch.wordpress.com/>

-The Tyee looks at Canada's 'tarnished image' in the world:

http://thetyee.ca/Opinion/2014/12/15/Our_Tarnished_Maple_Leaf/?utm_source=daily&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=151214

-Justin Trudeau delivered some year-end remarks at a very big 'campaign college' event last weekend in Ottawa

http://youtu.be/SK-Sv6mm1J0?list=UUaQoN-NrzI_7rS_3s33PUVA

These are just some of the items in the news...much more can be found on our Seniors Commission Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bclibs/> If you do not have access, please e-mail me for an invitation to this group.

Looking ahead:

Justin Trudeau will join Joyce Murray as headliners at a big fundraising event tonight at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver. If there are any tickets left, you can find them at: <http://events.liberal.ca/Event/an-evening-with-joyce-murray-and-justin-trudeau-in-vancouver.aspx?Lang=en>