

100 Sparks St., Suite 1090  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
K1P 5B7

Toll free: 1-888-757-1119

[abacusdata.ca](http://abacusdata.ca)



**From:** David Coletto, CEO  
**To:** VOCM News  
**Date:** August 8, 2014  
**Re:** PC Leadership and Party Leaders

---

According to a new VOCM-Abacus Data random telephone survey of 600 eligible voters in Newfoundland and Labrador conducted from July 28 to August 1, PC leadership candidate former Health Minister Paul Davis has the most positive personal rating of the three candidates running to become the next leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Davis also leads in a three-way hypothetical match-up among all respondents and among those who voted PC in the 2011 provincial election. Davis leads former Municipal Affairs Minister Steve Kent by seven-points among all respondents and by 14-points among those respondents who said they voted PC in 2011. Former MHA and cabinet minister John Ottenheimer places third with both groups, trailing Davis by 13-points among all respondents and 16-points among those who voted PC in 2011.

When presented with provincial ballots with each of the leadership candidates named as PC leader, the Liberal Party and its leader Dwight Ball lead on all three, although a PC Party with Davis as leader performs slightly better than when voting preference is tested with Kent or Ottenheimer as PC Leader.

**Overall Impressions:** Davis +35, Kent +21, Ottenheimer +20 vs. Dwight Ball +41, Lorraine Michael +3

Respondents were asked how they feel about the three candidates running for PC Leader as well as the two other political party leaders in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Overall, respondents were more likely to have a positive impression of former Health Minister Paul Davis than either of his two rivals, although all three candidates had net positive ratings. Forty-six percent of respondents had a positive impression of Davis compared with 11% who had a negative impression. His net rating was +35, 14-points higher than Steve Kent and 15-points higher than John Ottenheimer.

However, none of the three leadership candidates had more favourable impressions than Liberal Leader Dwight Ball whose net positive rating was +41. Overall, 53% of survey respondents had a positive impression of Dwight Ball while 12% had a negative impression of

him. NDP Leader Lorraine Michael's ratings were more mixed with 33% saying they have a favourable impression of her compared with 30% who have a negative impression.

How do you feel about the following individuals? Do you have a very positive, mostly positive, neutral, mostly negative, or very negative impression of them? [rotate individuals]  
All Respondents

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unsure	Net Rating
Former Health Minister Paul Davis	46%	34%	11%	8%	+35
Former Municipal Affairs Minister Steve Kent	39%	34%	18%	9%	+21
Former MHA and minister John Ottenheimer	34%	42%	14%	10%	+20
Liberal Leader Dwight Ball	53%	28%	12%	6%	+41
NDP Leader Lorraine Michael	33%	32%	30%	5%	+3

When we drill down and focus only on those respondents who said they voted PC in the 2011 provincial election, Paul Davis' advantage over his leadership rivals increases. Davis' personal rating among PC voters is +48 with 58% having a positive impression compared with 10% who have a negative impression. Both Steve Kent (+31) and John Ottenheimer (+22) are in positive territory, but trail Davis by wide margins.

The NL Liberal Party's lead on the ballot ([which we released yesterday](#)) is likely driven by the fact that a plurality of former PC voters have a positive impression of Liberal Leader Dwight Ball. Among PC voters in 2011, 44% said they have a positive impression of the Liberal Leader compared with 19% who have a negative impression giving Ball a net rating of +25, higher than PC leadership candidate John Ottenheimer (+21).

NDP Leader Lorraine Michael's net rating among PC voters is -19 with 24% saying they have a positive impression of her compared with 43% who view her negatively.

How do you feel about the following individuals? Do you have a very positive, mostly positive, neutral, mostly negative, or very negative impression of them? [rotate individuals]  
2011 PC Voters

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unsure	Net Rating
Former Health Minister Paul Davis	58%	28%	10%	4%	+48
Former Municipal Affairs Minister Steve Kent	47%	29%	16%	8%	+31
Former MHA and minister John Ottenheimer	37%	39%	15%	9%	+22

Liberal Leader Dwight Ball	44%	32%	19%	6%	+25
NDP Leader Lorraine Michael	24%	31%	43%	2%	-19

**The PC Leadership Race**

Respondents were then asked to select which of the three PC leadership candidates would be their first choice if they were personally voting to select the next leader. Among all respondents, Paul Davis had a seven-point lead over Steve Kent and a 13-point lead over John Ottenheimer. Davis was the choice of one in three respondents (34%) followed by Kent at 27% and Ottenheimer at 21%. Eighteen percent of respondents were undecided.

Among those who voted PC in 2011, Davis' lead increases to 14-points over Kent with 40% selecting the former Health Minister as their first choice. Kent was selected by 26% of former PC voters followed closely by John Ottenheimer at 24%. Ten percent of PC voters were undecided.

And finally, among those voters who said they always vote PC in provincial elections, Davis was selected by 41% compared with 32% who selected Steve Kent. John Ottenheimer was well back in third with 21% among core PC Party supporters.

As you may know, there are three candidates running to be the next leader of the PC Party of Newfoundland and Labrador. If the leadership election was being held today and you personally were voting, who would be your FIRST CHOICE for PC Party leader?  
[ROTATE] Would you vote for...

	All Respondents (n=600)	2011 PC voters (n=312)	Core PC Voters (n=108)
Paul Davis	34%	40%	41%
Steve Kent	27%	26%	32%
John Ottenheimer	21%	24%	21%
Undecided	18%	10%	7%

**Hypothetical Provincial Ballots with Three PC Leadership Candidates**

Finally, voters were presented with three hypothetical provincial ballots in which the names of the three PC leadership candidate were rotated and the names of the other party leaders were mentioned. Respondents were asked which party they would support if a provincial election was held at the time of the survey.

None of the three PC leadership candidates were able to overtake the Liberal lead among committed voters but Paul Davis performed best in the hypothetical match-ups.

With Davis as leader, the Liberals lead the Tories by 8-points, with the Liberals at 46%, the PCs at 38% and the NDP at 16% among committed voters. With Kent as leader, the Liberal lead grows to 13-points, with the Liberals at 48%, the PCs at 35%, and the NDP at 16%. If John Ottenheimer is named as PC leader, 49% of committed voters said they would vote Liberal compared with 34% for the PCs and 17% for the NDP.

If a provincial election was held today, and [PC Leadership Candidate, Rotated] was PC Leader, Dwight Ball was Liberal Leader and Lorraine Michael was NDP Leader, which political party would you vote for in your local electoral district? Would you vote... [rotate]

Committed Voters Only

	With Paul Davis as Leader	With Steve Kent as Leader	With John Ottenheimer as Leader
Liberal	46%	48%	49%
PC	38%	35%	34%
NDP	16%	16%	17%
Other	-	1%	-

Analysis from Abacus CEO, David Coletto

As PC Party members across Newfoundland and Labrador meet to elect delegates to the Leadership Convention to be held September 12 and 13, former Health Minister Paul Davis is the preferred choice among all eligible voters and among those who voted PC in 2011. Davis' personal rating is highest and rivals that of popular Liberal Leader Dwight Ball. While none of the three leadership candidates push the PC Party ahead of the Liberals in hypothetical ballots, Davis does perform best, albeit only slightly better than Steve Kent or John Ottenheimer.

Whoever the Tories elect on September 13 as their next leader and Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, the road to re-election in 2015 will be a tough one. They face a very popular Liberal Leader and the effects of three terms in government.

Based on our polling, Paul Davis seems to be the favourite and best hope for the party at this point. But the goodwill the public has for him personally needs to be translated into support for the party.

Methodology

The random live-interview telephone survey commissioned by VOCM was conducted with 600 eligible voters living in Newfoundland and Labrador. The survey was completed from July 28 to August 1, 2014.

The margin of error for a probability-based random sample of 500 respondents using a probability sample is +/- 4.1%, 19 times out of 20.

The data was statistically weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched population of Newfoundland and Labrador. The tables within this report detail the weighted and unweighted counts for the sample.

Note the small sample sizes when reviewing results in subgroups.

For more information about the poll's methodology or the results, please contact David Coletto, CEO at david@abacusdata.ca or at 613-232-2806.

ABOUT ABACUS DATA:

Abacus Data is an innovative, fast growing public opinion and marketing research consultancy. We use the latest technology, sound science, and deep experience to generate top-flight research based advice to our clients. We offer global research capacity with a strong focus on customer service, attention to detail and exceptional value.

Our team combines the experience of our Chairman Bruce Anderson, one of Canada's leading research executives for two decades, with the energy, creativity and research expertise of CEO David Coletto, PhD. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.abacusdata.ca/>

How do you feel about the following individuals?  
Do you have a very positive, mostly positive, neutral, mostly negative, or very negative impression of them? [rotate individuals]

Former Health Minister Paul Davis

All respondents

Sample size: 600

MoE: ± 4.1, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: July 28 to Aug 1, 2014

		Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unsure	Raw	Weighted
	NL	46%	34%	11%	8%	600	656
Region	Avalon Peninsula/St. John's	49%	35%	10%	6%	270	334
	Eastern/Central	42%	35%	13%	10%	185	187
	Western/Labrador	46%	30%	12%	13%	145	135
Gender	Female	47%	34%	9%	10%	300	327
	Male	45%	34%	14%	6%	300	329
Age	<40	45%	39%	8%	9%	186	206
	40 to 59	47%	37%	11%	5%	256	279
	60+	47%	23%	16%	14%	158	170
Education	HS or less	52%	27%	11%	10%	200	221
	College	46%	35%	12%	7%	195	244
	University	40%	40%	11%	8%	205	190
2011 Provincial vote	PC	58%	28%	10%	4%	283	312
	Liberal	37%	38%	13%	12%	148	161
	NDP	38%	37%	19%	6%	89	97
	Other responses/DNV	27%	45%	7%	21%	80	85

How do you feel about the following individuals?  
 Do you have a very positive, mostly positive, neutral, mostly negative, or very negative impression of them? [rotate individuals]

Former Municipal Affairs Minister Steve Kent

All respondents

Sample size: 600

MoE: ± 4.1, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: July 28 to Aug 1, 2014

		Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unsure	Raw	Weighted
NL		39%	34%	18%	9%	600	656
Region	Avalon Peninsula/St. John's	40%	33%	20%	7%	270	334
	Eastern/Central	40%	32%	16%	11%	185	187
	Western/Labrador	34%	38%	16%	12%	145	135
Gender	Female	38%	38%	14%	10%	300	327
	Male	40%	29%	22%	9%	300	329
Age	<40	40%	36%	17%	7%	186	206
	40 to 59	39%	38%	16%	8%	256	279
	60+	37%	24%	24%	15%	158	170
Education	HS or less	38%	30%	18%	13%	200	221
	College	41%	34%	17%	8%	195	244
	University	37%	37%	20%	6%	205	190
2011 Provincial vote	PC	47%	29%	16%	8%	283	312
	Liberal	33%	38%	21%	7%	148	161
	NDP	37%	31%	28%	4%	89	97
	Other responses/DNV	22%	45%	10%	23%	80	85

How do you feel about the following individuals?  
Do you have a very positive, mostly positive, neutral, mostly negative, or very negative impression of them? [rotate individuals]

Former MHA and Minister John Ottenheimer

All respondents

Sample size: 600

MoE: ± 4.1, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: July 28 to Aug 1, 2014

		Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unsure	Raw	Weighted
	NL	34%	42%	14%	10%	600	656
Region	Avalon Peninsula/St. John's	37%	43%	13%	7%	270	334
	Eastern/Central	36%	37%	15%	13%	185	187
	Western/Labrador	21%	47%	16%	17%	145	135
Gender	Female	30%	46%	12%	13%	300	327
	Male	37%	38%	17%	8%	300	329
Age	<40	33%	46%	12%	9%	186	206
	40 to 59	33%	47%	11%	9%	256	279
	60+	35%	28%	22%	15%	158	170
Education	HS or less	33%	34%	19%	14%	200	221
	College	34%	47%	13%	7%	195	244
	University	34%	45%	11%	10%	205	190
2011 Provincial vote	PC	37%	39%	15%	9%	283	312
	Liberal	31%	41%	17%	11%	148	161
	NDP	34%	44%	15%	7%	89	97
	Other responses/DNV	24%	51%	6%	19%	80	85



How do you feel about the following individuals?  
Do you have a very positive, mostly positive, neutral, mostly negative, or very negative impression of them? [rotate individuals]

Liberal Leader Dwight Ball

All respondents

Sample size: 600

MoE: ± 4.1, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: July 28 to Aug 1, 2014

		Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unsure	Raw	Weighted
	NL	53%	28%	12%	6%	600	656
Region	Avalon Peninsula/St. John's	54%	31%	10%	5%	270	334
	Eastern/Central	49%	28%	16%	6%	185	187
	Western/Labrador	58%	22%	11%	9%	145	135
Gender	Female	47%	33%	12%	8%	300	327
	Male	60%	23%	12%	5%	300	329
Age	<40	51%	31%	12%	6%	186	206
	40 to 59	51%	28%	15%	5%	256	279
	60+	60%	24%	7%	8%	158	170
Education	HS or less	55%	23%	12%	9%	200	221
	College	56%	27%	13%	4%	195	244
	University	49%	35%	11%	6%	205	190
2011 Provincial vote	PC	44%	32%	19%	6%	283	312
	Liberal	77%	16%	3%	5%	148	161
	NDP	58%	25%	13%	4%	89	97
	Other responses/DNV	39%	42%	5%	14%	80	85

How do you feel about the following individuals?  
 Do you have a very positive, mostly positive, neutral, mostly negative, or very negative impression of them? [rotate individuals]

NDP Leader Lorraine Michael

All respondents

Sample size: 600

MoE: ± 4.1, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: July 28 to Aug 1, 2014

		Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unsure	Raw	Weighted
	NL	33%	32%	30%	5%	600	656
Region	Avalon Peninsula/St. John's	36%	32%	28%	4%	270	334
	Eastern/Central	24%	34%	37%	4%	185	187
	Western/Labrador	37%	31%	26%	7%	145	135
Gender	Female	36%	38%	21%	5%	300	327
	Male	30%	27%	39%	4%	300	329
Age	<40	30%	39%	28%	4%	186	206
	40 to 59	37%	30%	31%	2%	256	279
	60+	30%	28%	32%	10%	158	170
Education	HS or less	32%	29%	32%	8%	200	221
	College	29%	32%	35%	4%	195	244
	University	38%	37%	23%	2%	205	190
2011 Provincial vote	PC	24%	31%	43%	2%	283	312
	Liberal	36%	39%	20%	5%	148	161
	NDP	60%	24%	14%	1%	89	97
	Other responses/DNV	27%	33%	22%	18%	80	85

As you may know, there are three candidates running to be the next leader of the PC Party of Newfoundland and Labrador. If the leadership election was being held today and you personally were voting, who would be your **FIRST CHOICE** for PC Party leader? [ROTATE] Would you vote for...

**All respondents**

Sample size: 600

MoE: ± 4.1, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: July 28 to Aug 1, 2014

		Paul Davis	Steve Kent	John Ottenheimer	Undecided	Raw	Weighted
	NL	34%	27%	21%	18%	600	656
Region	Avalon Peninsula/St. John's	33%	28%	24%	14%	270	334
	Eastern/Central	34%	26%	21%	19%	185	187
	Western/Labrador	36%	24%	14%	26%	145	135
Gender	Female	34%	27%	18%	21%	300	327
	Male	33%	26%	25%	15%	300	329
Age	<40	34%	28%	18%	19%	186	206
	40 to 59	35%	29%	21%	15%	256	279
	60+	32%	22%	26%	20%	158	170
Education	HS or less	36%	26%	22%	16%	200	221
	College	34%	29%	20%	17%	195	244
	University	32%	24%	23%	21%	205	190
2011 Provincial vote	PC	40%	26%	24%	10%	283	312
	Liberal	33%	31%	18%	18%	148	161
	NDP	31%	27%	18%	24%	89	97
	Other responses/DNV	16%	20%	25%	39%	80	85

If a provincial election was held today, and Paul Davis was PC Leader, Dwight Ball was Liberal Leader and Lorraine Michael was NDP Leader, which political party would you vote for in your local electoral district? Would you vote... [rotate]

**Committed Only**

Sample size: 529

MoE: ± 4.3, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: July 28 to Aug 1, 2014

		PC	Liberal	NDP	Raw	Weighted
NL		38%	46%	16%	529	581
Region	Avalon Peninsula/St. John's	39%	42%	19%	239	297
	Eastern/Central	40%	49%	10%	164	166
	Western/Labrador	31%	54%	14%	126	118
Gender	Female	41%	40%	19%	263	288
	Male	35%	52%	13%	266	293
Age	<40	38%	45%	17%	165	184
	40 to 59	39%	44%	16%	226	249
	60+	36%	51%	14%	138	148
Education	HS or less	40%	50%	10%	180	198
	College	39%	45%	16%	177	223
	University	33%	43%	23%	172	160
2011 Provincial vote	PC	62%	30%	8%	260	287
	Liberal	9%	85%	6%	139	152
	NDP	17%	28%	56%	81	89
	Other responses/DNV	25%	56%	19%	49	53

If a provincial election was held today, and Steve Kent was PC Leader, Dwight Ball was Liberal Leader and Lorraine Michael was NDP Leader, which political party would you vote for in your local electoral district? Would you vote... [rotate]

**Committed Only**

Sample size: 532

MoE: ± 4.3, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: July 28 to Aug 1, 2014

		PC	Liberal	NDP	Raw	Weighted
	NL	35%	48%	16%	532	586
Region	Avalon Peninsula/St. John's	33%	48%	19%	244	303
	Eastern/Central	44%	46%	10%	159	162
	Western/Labrador	30%	52%	16%	129	121
Gender	Female	36%	43%	20%	265	292
	Male	34%	54%	12%	267	294
Age	<40	33%	47%	19%	166	186
	40 to 59	38%	46%	16%	226	249
	60+	33%	53%	13%	140	152
Education	HS or less	39%	48%	13%	178	197
	College	34%	47%	18%	180	227
	University	32%	50%	17%	174	162
2011 Provincial vote	PC	57%	33%	10%	262	290
	Liberal	10%	83%	6%	141	154
	NDP	10%	34%	56%	81	89
	Other responses/DNV	32%	55%	11%	48	52

If a provincial election was held today, and John Ottenheimer was PC Leader, Dwight Ball was Liberal Leader and Lorraine Michael was NDP Leader, which political party would you vote for in your local electoral district? Would you vote... [rotate]

**Committed Only**

Sample size: 528

MoE: ± 4.3, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: July 28 to Aug 1, 2014

		PC	Liberal	NDP	Raw	Weighted
	NL	34%	49%	17%	528	580
Region	Avalon Peninsula/St. John's	34%	47%	19%	240	298
	Eastern/Central	41%	48%	11%	160	162
	Western/Labrador	27%	53%	19%	128	120
Gender	Female	36%	42%	22%	259	284
	Male	33%	55%	12%	269	296
Age	<40	36%	44%	20%	163	182
	40 to 59	36%	47%	17%	226	248
	60+	29%	56%	14%	139	150
Education	HS or less	34%	52%	14%	179	197
	College	37%	46%	16%	177	223
	University	30%	48%	22%	172	160
2011 Provincial vote	PC	56%	34%	10%	255	281
	Liberal	12%	82%	6%	141	154
	NDP	9%	30%	61%	81	89
	Other responses/DNV	28%	58%	12%	51	55