

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Survey of Electors following the June 18, 2018, Federal By-election in Chicoutimi–Le Fjord

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*Prepared for:*  
Elections Canada

Submitted by:



Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

## Executive Summary

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Elections Canada commissioned Phoenix Strategic Perspectives (Phoenix SPI) to conduct research to help evaluate the June 18, 2018, federal by-election.

## Background and Objectives

Elections Canada (EC) is an independent, non-partisan agency that reports directly to Parliament. The agency is mandated to conduct federal general elections, by-elections and referendums, administer the political financing provisions of the *Canada Elections Act* (CEA) and monitor compliance with electoral legislation.

As part of its evaluation program, the agency wanted to conduct a survey of eligible electors in the electoral district of Chicoutimi–Le Fjord (Quebec), where a federal by-election was held on June 18, 2018. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate electors' opinions, experience, attitudes and knowledge of the agency's services and various aspects of the electoral process.

More specifically, surveyed electors were consulted on the following issues:

- Awareness of the by-election and of the different methods of voting;
- Sources of information about the election;
- Experiences with registration, including the voter information card;
- Experiences with communications from EC;
- Experiences with voting in the federal by-election; and
- Attitudes towards EC and election results.

The results will be used to assist in evaluating and refining EC's programs and services to the electorate and in developing the Chief Electoral Officer's reports to Parliament.

## Methodology

An 11-minute random digit dial telephone survey was conducted with 400 eligible electors. Eligible electors were Canadian citizens, at least 18 years of age on polling day (June 18, 2018), and residents of the electoral district (i.e., had an address of ordinary residence in the electoral district) from the first day of the federal by-election period until election day.

An overlapping dual-frame (landline and cell phone) sample was used to minimize coverage error, with 81% of dialling done on cell phone numbers. Those who declined to participate in the survey when contacted by telephone were offered the possibility of completing the survey through an online self-administered questionnaire instead of a phone interview. No one elected to participate using the online questionnaire.

The survey data was weighted to accurately reflect the age and gender distribution of eligible electors. The data collection was conducted June 22 to July 10, 2018. Based on a sample of this size, the results can be considered accurate to within  $\pm 4.9\%$ , 19 times out of 20. *For a more complete description of the methodology, please refer to Annex 1.*

## Key Findings

### I. Awareness of by-election and voter information

- Ninety-three percent of respondents were aware of the June 18, 2018, federal by-election that took place in their riding of Chicoutimi–Le Fjord (Quebec).
- Among those who were aware of the election, 61% recalled seeing, hearing or reading advertisements or receiving communications from EC about how, when and where to vote.
- Those who recalled seeing advertisements or receiving communications about the federal by-election were most likely to have noticed it through the EC householder (31%), radio (26%) or newspapers (21%).
- Eighty-seven percent of respondents felt informed about how, when and where to vote for the June 18, 2018, federal by-election, with 73% saying they felt very informed.
- Few (6%) respondents visited the EC website during the campaign and even fewer (2%) contacted EC during the campaign. The majority of those who contacted EC were satisfied with the information they received.

## **II. Voter information card (VIC) and registration**

- Eighty-three percent of electors received their VIC and 73% brought it to the polling station.
- Almost all electors who received a VIC reported it had the correct name (94%) and address (96%).
- Nine in 10 (92%) electors knew that voters need to be registered to vote in the federal by-election.
- A little under half (48%) of electors surveyed were aware that electors can register at the polling place and then vote immediately after.
- A split sample experiment was used to test the impact of question formulation on measures of awareness of online registration. Half of respondents were asked the question as it was formulated in previous surveys, and the other half was asked a simplified version of the question. The simplified formulation resulted in a higher proportion of respondents who said they are aware of online registration (83%) compared to the original formulation (63%).

## **III. Voting and voter participation**

- Half of those who were aware of the federal by-election reported voting in the June 18, 2018, federal by-election.
- Among respondents who did not vote in the election, 45% said they did not vote due to everyday life and health reasons.
- Three-quarters (74%) of respondents reported they voted at a polling station on election day.
- Among the voting methods available for voters, almost all (96%) surveyed electors were aware they can vote at an advance polling station. Awareness was lower for other voting methods: 57% were aware they could vote at a local EC office, and only 21% were aware they could vote by mail.

## **IV. Voter identification**

- Similar to findings from previous post-electoral surveys, a question about voter identification found that virtually all respondents (99%) were aware that voters had to provide proof of identity; however, a smaller proportion (85%) were aware that voters had to provide proof of address.

- In a split sample experiment, a second approach was tested and found lower numbers of respondents who were fully aware of identification requirements: 62% of respondents correctly answered that electors must provide proof of both identity and address to vote at a federal election; 38% answered incorrectly.
- Virtually all (99%) found it easy to meet the identification requirements, with 86% saying it was *very easy*.

## V. Voter experience

- Almost everyone (99%) who voted reported it was easy to do so during the June 18, 2018, federal by-election, with 87% saying it was *very easy*.
- All voters were satisfied with EC staff when they voted, with 88% saying they were *very satisfied*.
- Ninety-nine percent of electors were satisfied with their overall voting experience, with four in five saying they were *very satisfied*.

## VI. Fairness and Trust

- Four in five (82%) electors felt that EC ran the June 18, 2018, federal by-election fairly, with nearly half (49%) saying they ran the elections *very fairly*.
- Nine in 10 electors (90%) trust the accuracy of the election results, with exactly half saying they have a *very high* level of trust.

## Note to Readers

- For editorial purposes, the terms 'electors' and 'respondents' are used interchangeably to denote survey participants. The term 'voters' denotes survey participants who reported having voted.
- All results in the report are expressed as percentages, unless otherwise noted. Percentages may not always add to 100% due to rounding or multiple mentions.

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The contract value was \$31,659.89 (including HST).

I hereby certify as a Senior Officer of Phoenix SPI that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the *Communications Policy* of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not contain any reference to electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leader.



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