

Press Release St Kitts and Nevis Political Opinion Survey

The 5th anniversary of the date of the previous election falls on the 16th of February 2020 and while the 5th anniversary of the 1st sitting of the new government does not occur until May 16th there is already considerable speculation about the outcome of the 2020 election. Against this background, CADRES has conducted a second national survey in October of 2019, with the first being conducted during July of 2018. On this occasion CADRES interviewed approximately one-thousand persons in all 11 Federal constituencies using a methodology that is consistent with that which was used with all previous national surveys in the Federation of St Kitts and Nevis.

At a more general level, the Right Track/Wrong Track question reflected the fact that a majority of Kittitians and Nevisians (53%), believed that the country was on the Right Track or Heading in the Right Direction, while 24% believed that the country was on the Wrong/Track. In addition, the survey was particularly useful in helping to tell the story of an evolving political outlook in the Federation as comparisons with 2018 data were possible. As such CADRES also asked persons about the issue of greatest concern to them and on this occasion, it was the Cost of Living (17%). It might be recalled that in 2018 the issue of greatest concern was Crime and this was the main focus of 61% of the population; hence the dramatic shift in terms of the country's main focus speaks volumes about the ability of the government to succeed in this regard.

The more significant political findings relate to leadership, with the leadership of Team Unity preferred over the alternative. 53% of people preferred the leadership of Team Unity, compared to 39% preferring the leadership of Labour/NRP. The movement regarding leadership within parties is also interesting as in 2018 the non-Douglas options in the Labour/NRP totalled 5%, while non-Harris options in Team Unity totalled 27%. On this occasion there has been considerable consolidation within Team Unity, with non-Harris options totalling 13%, while the situation within the Labour/NRP group remained the same. The other noteworthy observation relating to leadership is the fact that Harris leads at this time among Uncommitted voters as 29% of these persons said they would prefer to be led by him (Harris), while 22% opted for the leadership of Douglas. Therefore, Opposition Leader Douglas continues to trail PM Harris both in terms of committed and uncommitted support.

The important party support questions were again included in this 2019, along with the matter of which party people in the Federation believed had the best chance of winning a majority of seats. In this regard, Team Unity continued to be the coalition that most persons believed would emerge victorious. On this occasion some 48% of Kittitians and Nevisians believed Team Unity would win, while 26% thought the Labour/NRP Coalition would win and 24% were unsure. In this regard it is significant that while 86% of Team Unity supporters believed that Team Unity would win, 70% of Labour/NRP supporters thought that Labour/NRP would win and the Uncommitted votes were more inclined to envisage a Team Unity victory (26%) than a Labour/NRP victory 8%.

The actual expression of voter preference on this occasion was 43% Team Unity; 32% Labour NRP and 24% Uncommitted, with 1% opting for another party/independent candidate. This would of course present a scenario where the Uncommitted vote was large enough to alter the course of the election; however, CADRES has consistently applied this vote along historic lines with considerable success regionally in terms of its projections. In this regard, CADRES is projecting a level of support for Team Unity of 54% which computes to a swing of 4% in Team Unity's favour which we believe is sufficient for it to successfully defend all the seats it currently has and threaten one additional seat in St Kitts. This swing projection is statistically similar to that of 2018 suggesting that the political environment continues to be more favourable to Team Unity as this time.

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