



General Election Opinion Poll

27th March 2008

Prepared for

THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST

RESEARCH EVALUATION DIRECTION **CLARITY**

Must be Included



RED C interviewed a random sample of 1000 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 20th and 26th March 2008. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results weighted to the profile of all adults.



SUNDAY BUSINESS POST – 30th March 2008 Opinion Poll

Renewed pressure on Taoiseach has a relatively small impact on party support.

The main story from today's Sunday Business Post/RED C poll is that party support has not been significantly impacted by further revelations at the Mahon Tribunal. In fact all the parties see their support remain within the sample error of + or – 3% from last month's poll, and perhaps the early Easter break has meant many have not had politics at the forefront of their thoughts at this time.

Having said this there are some interesting movements in the figures which may suggest problems on the horizon for some parties, in particular Fianna Fail and the Progressive Democrats.

Fianna Fail secure 35% of the first preference vote in today's poll, which is a drop in support of 2% compared to just a month ago. This is of course within sample error and so could be written off as no real movement since last month; however it is at odds with the recent trend in support which had seen the party improve its share of the first preference vote across the last three polls.

This could indicate some concern among the public to the differences seen in the last weeks between the Taoiseach's evidence and that of his secretary at the Mahon tribunal. However, bearing in mind that the last two Sunday Business Post/RED C polls have suggested that Bertie Ahern and the party's fortunes were no longer intertwined, it could just as easily be a reaction to declining consumer confidence, which historically impacts on the party in power.

For the Progressive Democrats a drop of 1% support, to leave the party securing just 1% of the first preference vote, is perhaps more of a problem for them. The party has somewhat lost its voice since the last election with just two TD's. However, since then support has been stable over a number of polls at 2% of the first preference vote.



In recent weeks significant pressure has been put upon Mary Harney, the party's interim leader, and perhaps it is the fact that the PD's only strong connection with the public at present, is that of presiding over what they perceive as a failing Health service, that has now taken its toll on party support. It certainly doesn't appear that the recent moves by both prospective leader Fiona O'Malley and Mary Harney herself, calling for a statement from the Bertie Ahern over the Mahon inconsistencies has yet done them any favours. However, these calls came at the end of polling fieldwork, and perhaps we will only see reaction to these more aggressive moves next month.

For Fine Gael the trend over the past two polls is one of decline, while the decline in each poll is only 1%, this still suggest that support is moving in the wrong direction. It also means that in today's poll the party secures 30% of the vote. While still positive, when taken in context of where the party was at the last general election, it suggests the party needs to work harder to hold on to this support.

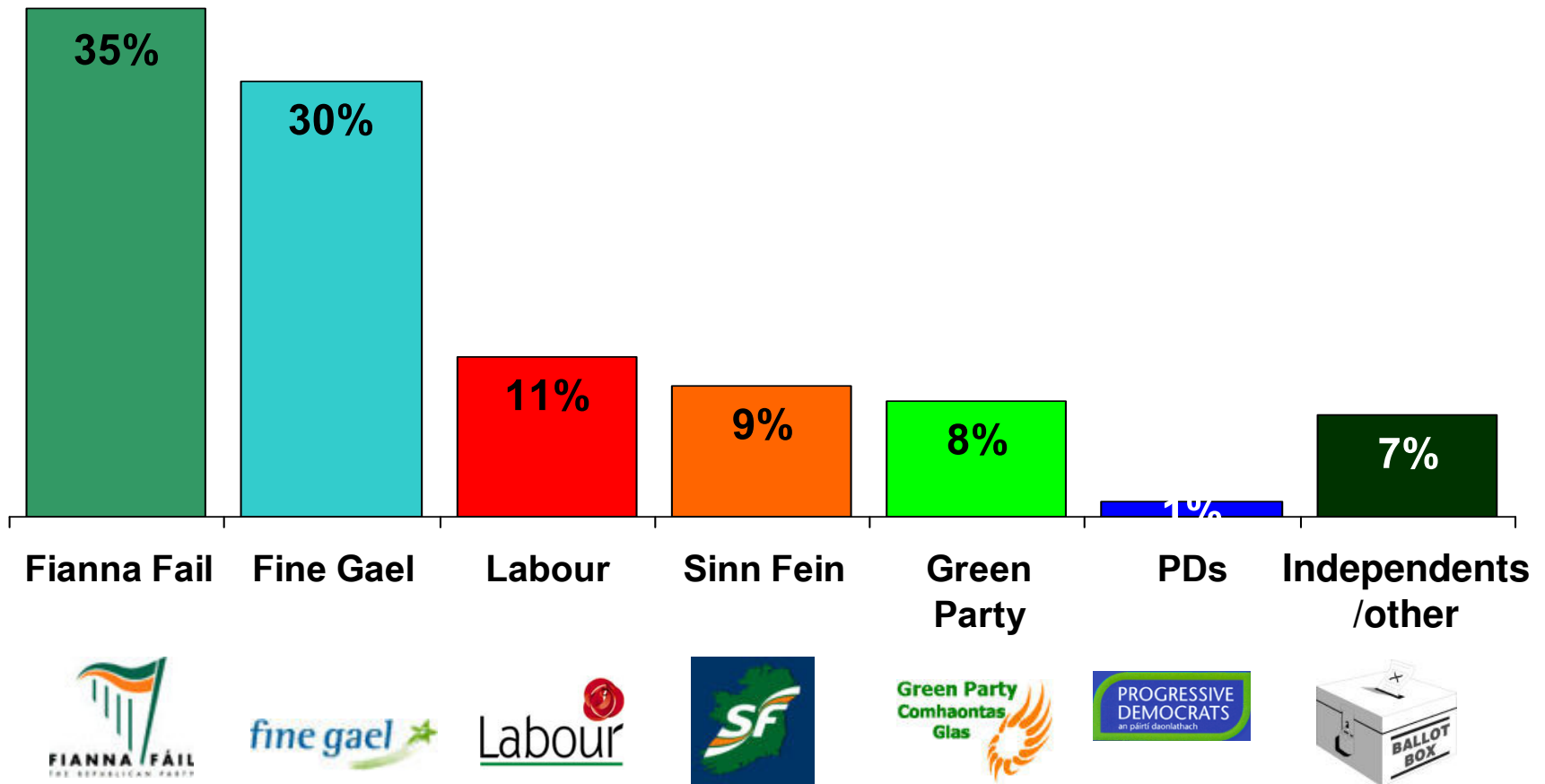
Labour manages to increase its share by 1%, which in itself is again not significant, but does at least take the party past the 10% mark that they have relatively stagnated at since the last election, apart from when Eamonn Gilmore first took the reigns as party leader.

Sinn Fein and the Green Party also both secure a 1% gain in the first preference vote since a month ago, with Sinn Fein taking a 9% first preference share in today's poll and the Green Party managing to secure 8% of the vote. Sinn Fein again do well among younger voters where they secure 16% of the first preference vote of those aged 18-24. As such both parties continue to fluctuate between 7% and 9%, and both have also been seen to do well when there is not as much political news, as perhaps has been the case over Easter.

Independent candidates continue on an upward trend this month, taking their support up to 7% of the first preference vote from 4% just two months ago, and this means they are just slightly ahead of where they were at the last General Election.

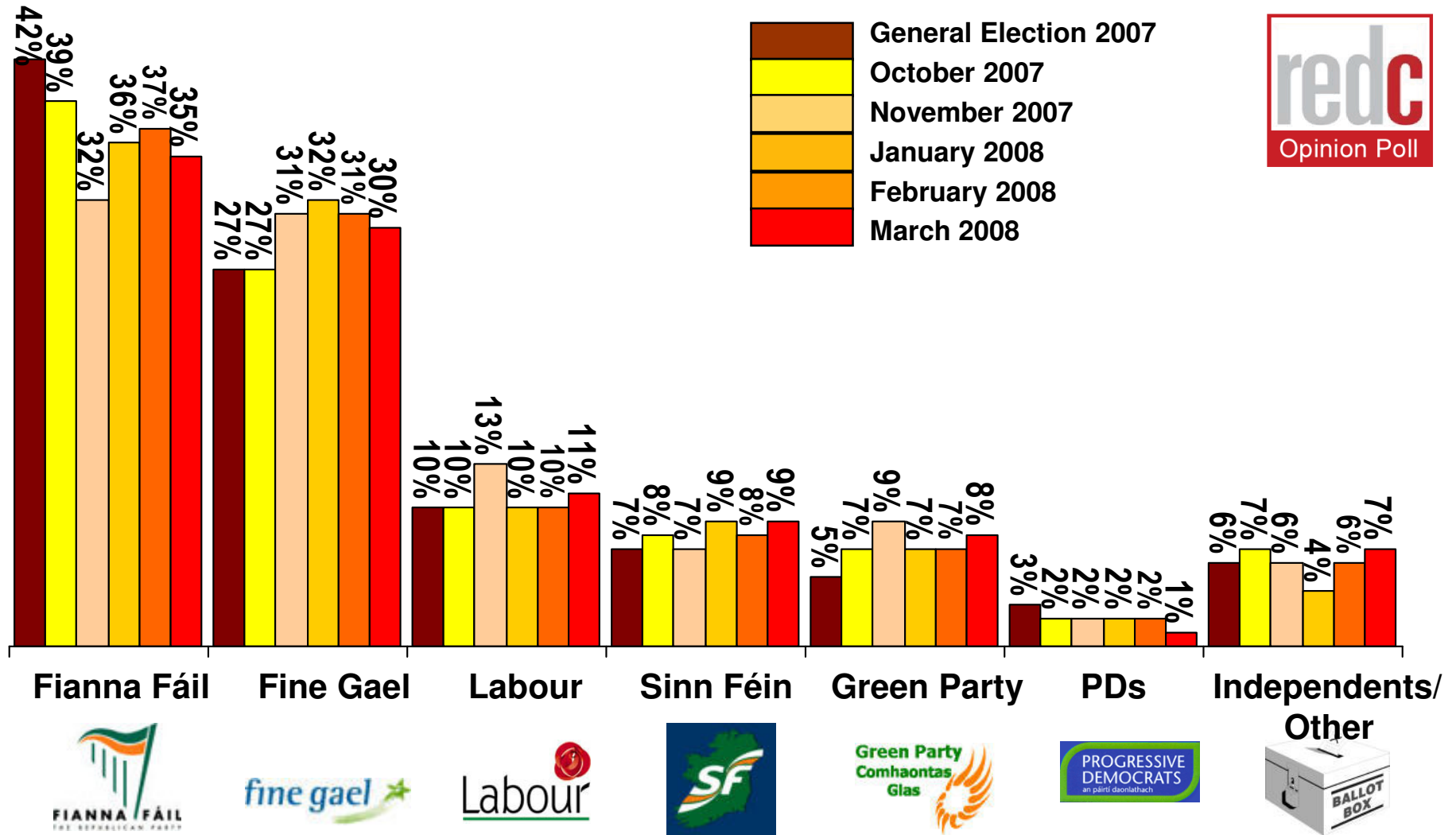
If there were a *General Election* tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults 18+)



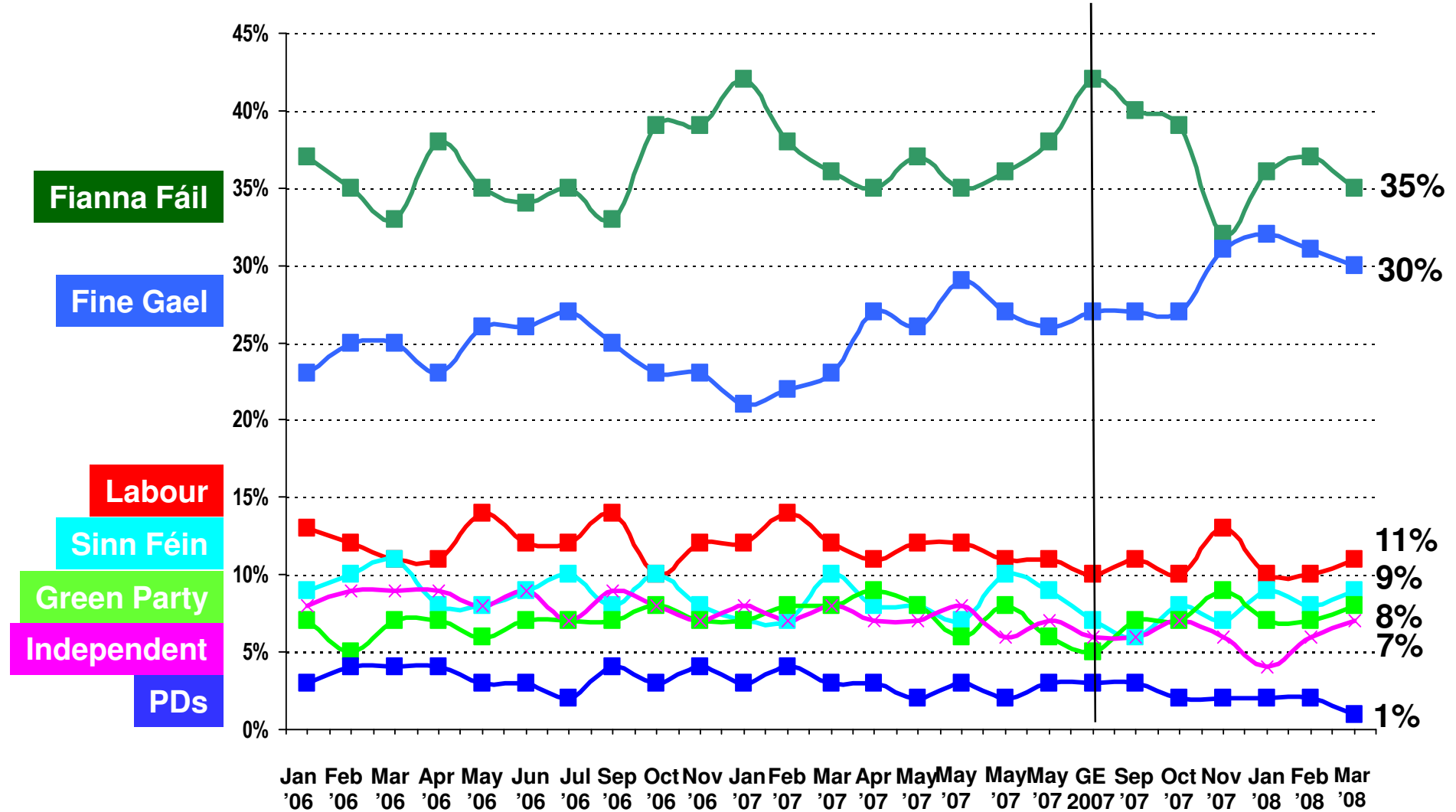
If there were a *General Election* tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)



If there were a *general election* tomorrow, to which party or independent candidate would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults 18+)



CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT			
	Core figures	Excluding undecided	2007 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fianna Fáil	30	35	42
Fine Gael	25	30	27
Labour	9	11	10
Sinn Féin	7	9	7
P.Ds	1	1	3
Green Party	7	8	5
Independents/Others	6	7	6
Undecided	15		

**CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT BY THOSE MOST LIKELY TO VOTE
(those who give a score of 7 or more out of 10, on a scale where 1 = Definitely
will not vote and 10 = Definitely will vote)**

	March 2008	Feb 2008	Jan 2008	Nov 2007	Oct 2007	2007 Election Result
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Fianna Fáil	36	38	36	33	40	42
Fine Gael	30	30	33	31	28	27
Labour	10	10	10	13	10	10
Sinn Féin	8	8	8	7	6	7
P.Ds	1	2	2	2	2	3
Green Party	8	7	7	8	7	5
Independents/ Others	7	6	4	5	7	6