



Voting Intention Opinion Poll

April 2009

Prepared for

THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST

RESEARCH EVALUATION DIRECTION **CLARITY**

Must be Included

RED C interviewed a random sample of 1007 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 20th – 22nd April 2009. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results weighted to the profile of all adults.



SUNDAY BUSINESS POST – 26th April 2009 Opinion Poll

Labour has most to gain at Local and European Elections

Today's poll provides the first national picture of how current political sentiment may impact on the main parties and their candidates in the forthcoming Local and European elections. The key finding is that Labour appears to have most to gain, if they can ensure the candidates on the ground can take advantage of growing support for the party nationally. At the last local elections Labour secured 11% of the first preference vote which on the day was converted into 101 seats, but today's poll suggests they could potentially build significantly on this seat count, with the party securing 20% of the first preference votes nationwide.

Similarly, in the European Elections in 2004 Labour secured 11% of the vote which transferred into one seat, but in today's poll they secure 17% of the first preference vote, again suggesting more seats are possible with the right candidates. When the results are analysed by constituency, while this is on a reduced base and therefore not as reliable as the national picture, it does suggest that Labour could secure up to 21% of the vote in the East constituency and 19% of the vote in the South constituency, making even three seats a very real possibility at this early stage of the campaign.

It is perhaps of no real surprise that Fianna Fail has most to lose as we approach the elections, even though they already performed quite poorly in these elections five years ago. In the local elections this poll suggests that the party could secure just 23% of the first preference vote, down 9% on 2004. While in the European elections the party does slightly better, securing 25% of the first preference vote in today's poll, down 7% on 2004. The biggest declines for the party are evident in the South constituency where indications suggest their support could fall by as much as 17%.



Fine Gael, perhaps surprisingly doesn't look as if they will make significant gains in the upcoming Local and European elections, partly because they already performed so well in 2004. Today's poll sees the party secure 29% of the first preference vote nationally for the local elections, this is just 1% higher than 2004, and is at odds with the national picture of support for a General Election where they take a better 33% of the first preference vote. The party therefore needs to work hard over the next few weeks to persuade those suggesting they will vote for Fine Gael at a general election, that they should also support the candidates at a local level. In the European Elections the party does slightly better by securing 32% of the first preference vote in the poll, which is an increase of 4% since 2004. However based on available seats this is unlikely to see them secure more than the five seats they achieved at the last European Elections, particularly as they see a slight decline in support in the East constituency where they secured two seats last time.

Sinn Fein will also do well to hold on to the seat they won in Dublin in 2004, particularly as the number of seats available in this constituency has been reduced by one to just three seats. Party support in the European Elections falls back in this poll to just 8%, 3% less than achieved five years ago. At the same time the party takes 9% of the first preference for the Local elections in this poll, up 1% on 2004.

Libertas were also included in today's poll for the European Elections, and given that they have had little coverage as yet, they do relatively well to take 2% of the first preference vote, with most support evident in the East and South constituencies. They will however need to gain a lot more support to come anywhere close to taking a seat.

The Green Party also do well in this first measure of national opinion in the Local and European campaign. They secure 7% of the first preference vote for both the Local and European elections, up 3% in both cases since 2004. However, in the run up to those elections they also secured this level of support, but in many areas they simply didn't have the candidates to turn this into actual votes at the polling booth. The one location they are closest to taking a seat is in the Dublin constituency, and it would appear they should put much of their focus behind Senator Deirdre de Burca in this constituency.



At the present stage in the campaign, Independent candidates appear to be suffering from a lack of exposure in both the Local and European elections. Support for the candidates is down 5% nationally for the local elections leaving them with 12% support; while in the European election support is even lower falling to leave the Independent candidates securing just 10% nationally. This will be of particular concern to both Kathy Sinnott, who took a seat in the South constituency in 2004 and Marian Harkin, who took a seat in the North West constituency in 2004, as on the evidence of today's poll both may struggle to do so again in 2009.

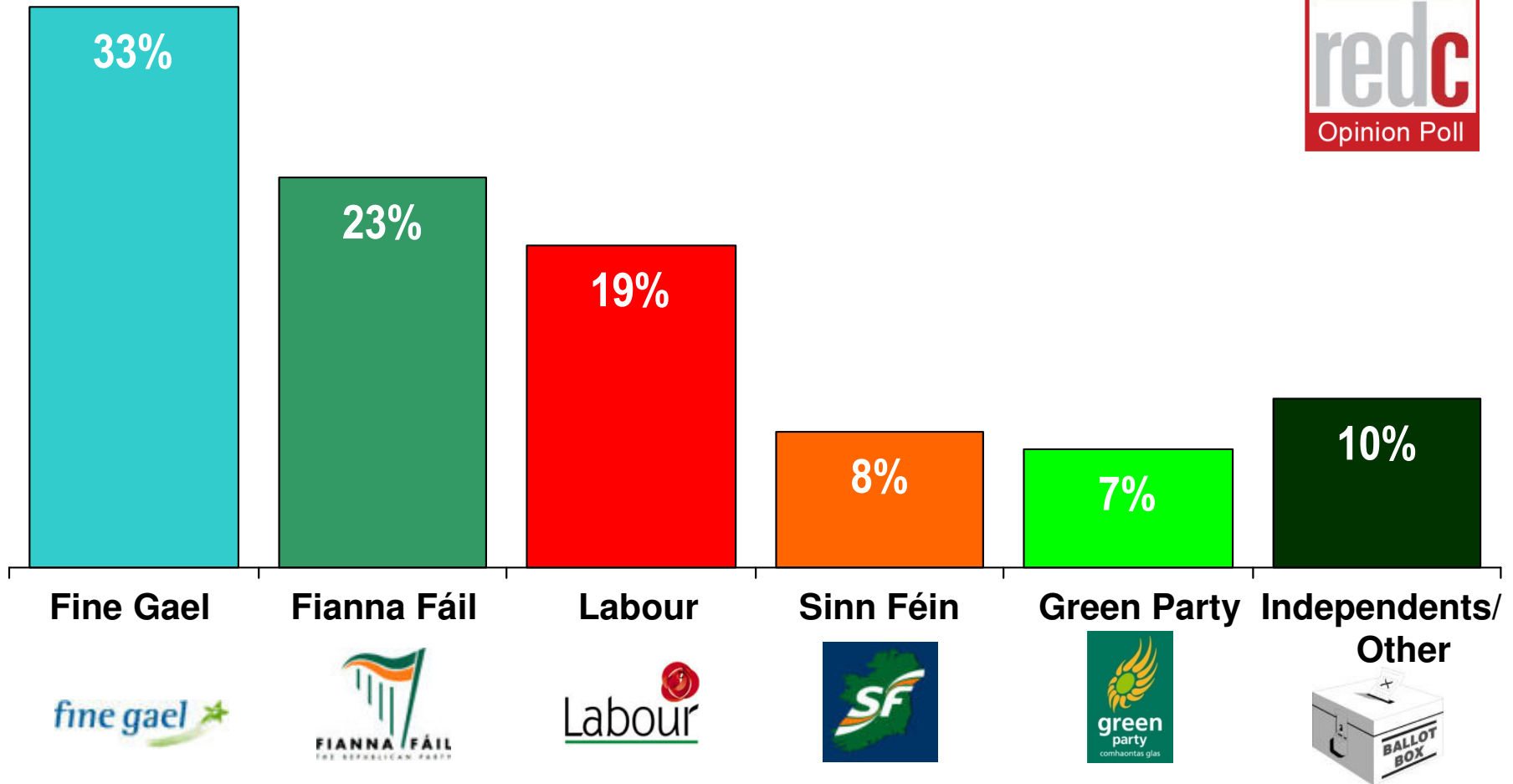
In terms of our general election tracking, just when party strategists at Fianna Fail may have felt they had turned a corner, with support growing last month, apparently on the back of Brian Cowen's time spent with President Obama; the return to focus on issues at home and the emergency budget sends support for the party straight back down again. Today's poll once again sees support for Fianna Fail fall back down to the lowest levels recorded in RED C tracking polls, with the party securing just 23% of the first preference share.

Fine Gael on the other hand appear to have turned a corner, with support rising for the second month in a row, leaving the party securing a third of all first preference votes 33%. At the same time Labour also regain some of the ground lost last month and end up with 19% of the first preference vote, up 2% since last month. Sinn Fein gains one percent to secure 8% overall, while the Green Party is consistent in holding on to 7% in today's poll, as are independent candidates who secure 10% for the second month in a row.

Overall the results of this first poll measuring support directly for the Local and European elections this year, suggest that they may change the political landscape quite dramatically both locally and in Europe. Labour has most to gain, while Fianna Fail perhaps has most to lose, although Independent European candidates must also be concerned for their seats. Perversely however Fine Gael, while riding high in the polls nationally for a potential General election, need to have a strong campaign to make significant gains locally or in Europe on 2004 results.

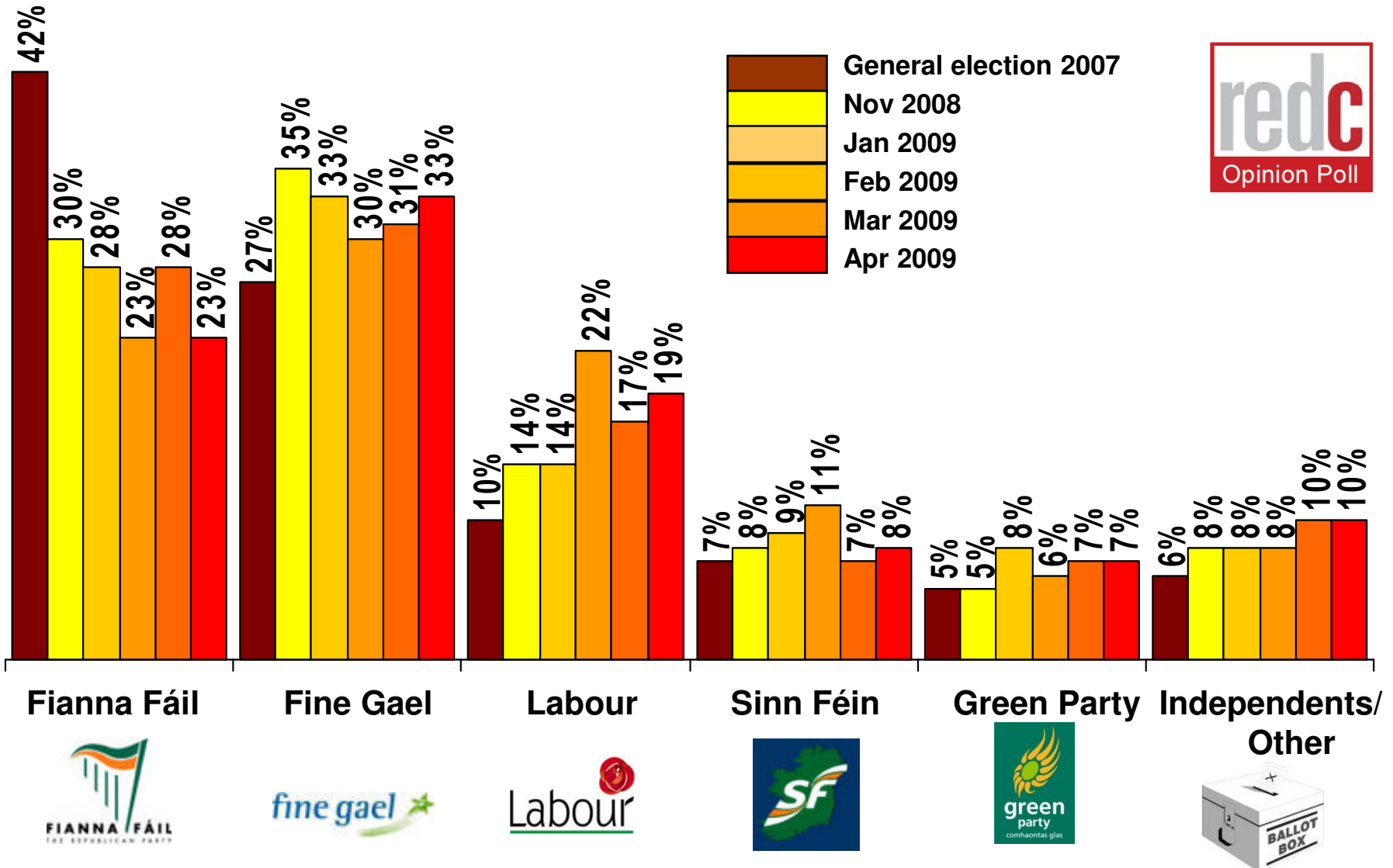
If there were a *General Election* tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)



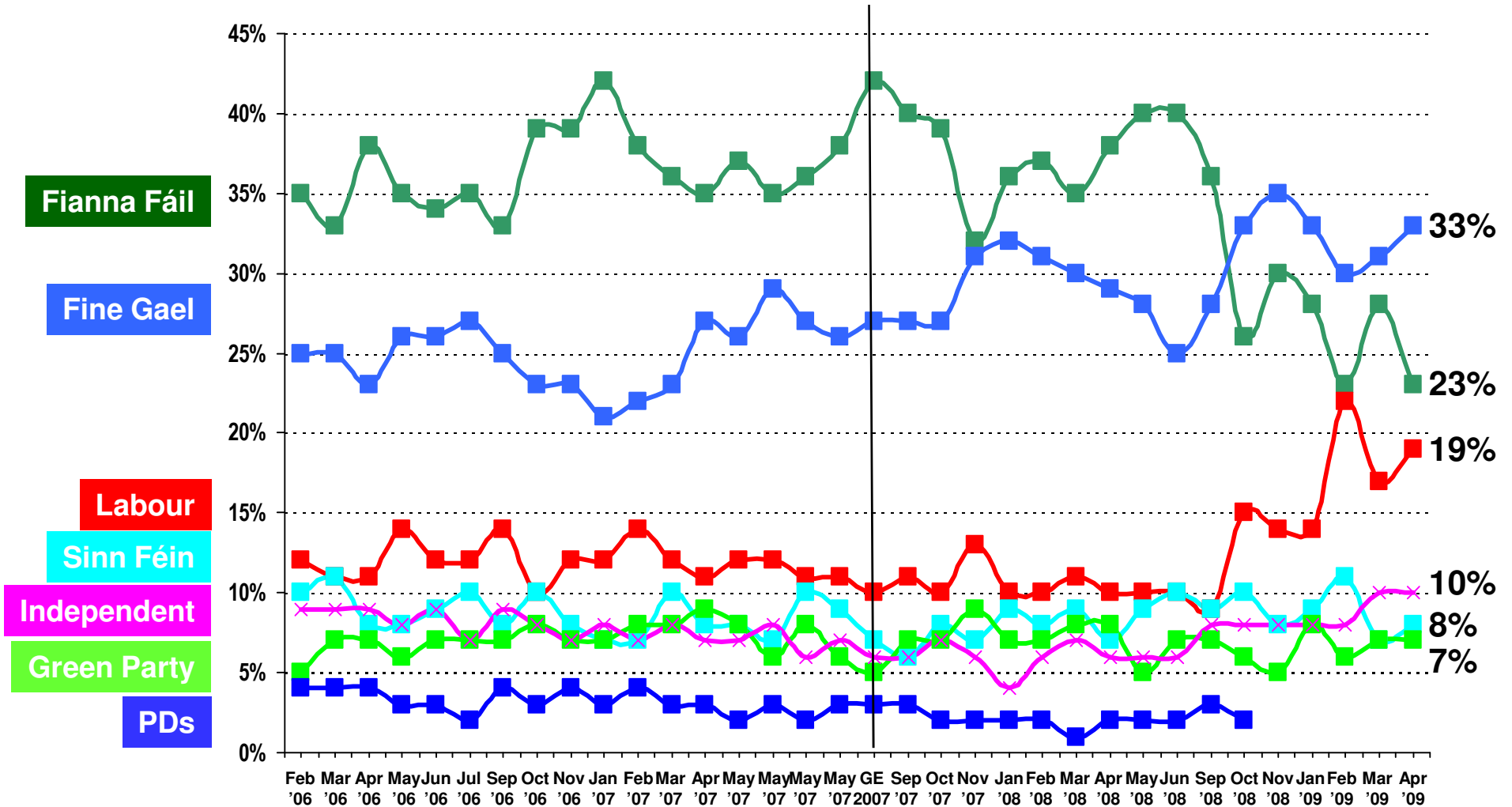
If there were a *General Election* tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote?

(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

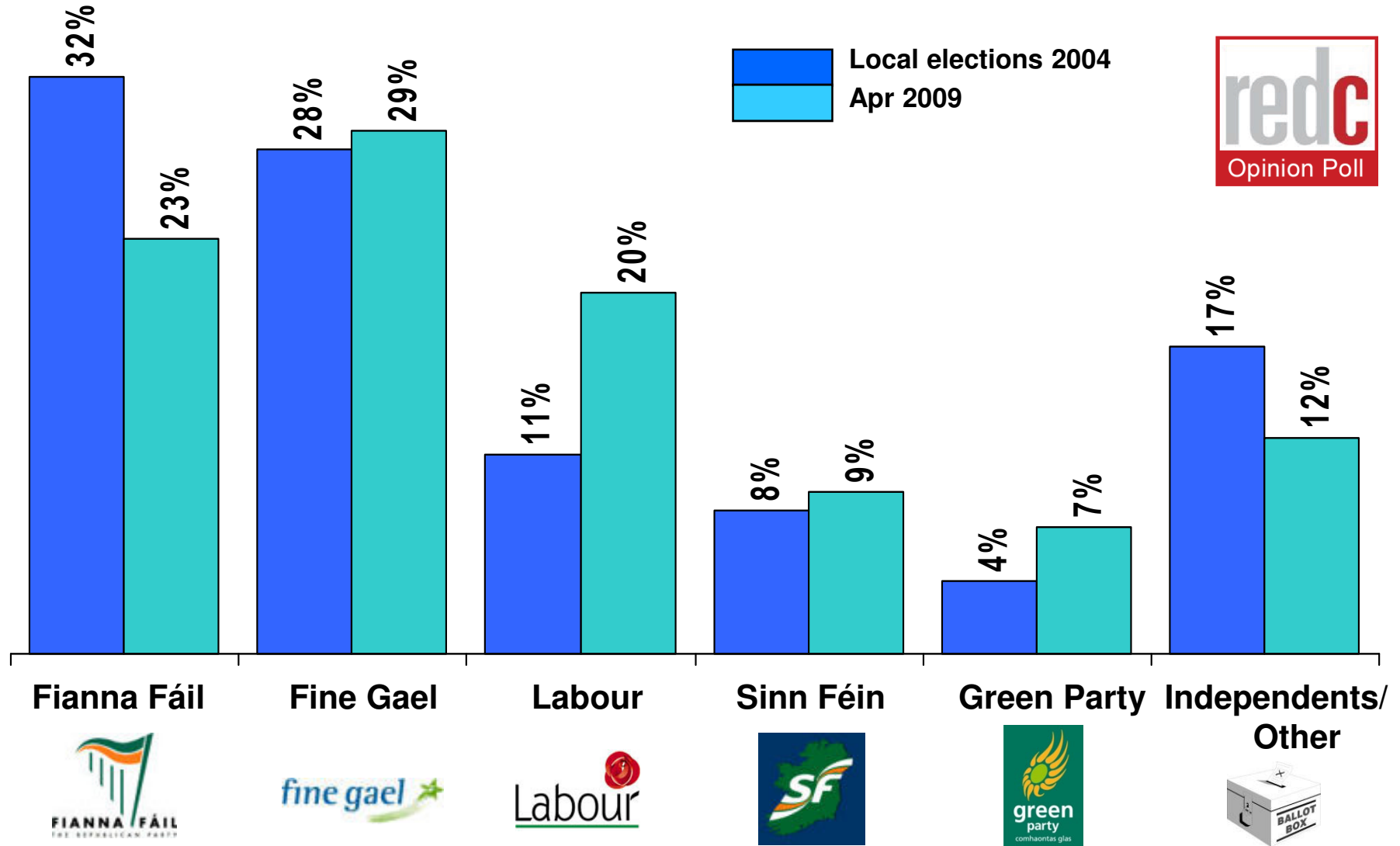
	Core figures Apr 08	Excluding undecided	2007 Election Results
	%	%	%
Fianna Fáil	20	23	42
Fine Gael	28	33	27
Labour	16	19	10
Sinn Féin	7	8	7
Green Party	6	7	5
Independents/Ot hers	7	10	6
Undecided	16		

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)

	Mar 2009	Feb 2009	Jan 2009	Nov 2008	Oct 2008	Sept 2008	June 2008	May 2008	April 2008	Mar 2008	Feb 2008	Nov 2007	Oct 2007	2007 Election Result
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Fianna Fáil	27	24	28	29	26	36	40	39	37	36	38	33	40	42
Fine Gael	32	30	33	36	34	28	25	28	29	30	30	31	28	27
Labour	17	23	15	14	15	9	10	10	11	10	10	13	10	10
Sinn Féin	7	10	9	7	9	9	10	9	7	8	8	7	6	7
Green Party	7	6	8	5	5	7	6	5	7	8	7	8	7	5
Independents/ Others	10	7	7	9	9	8	2	6	7	7	6	5	7	6

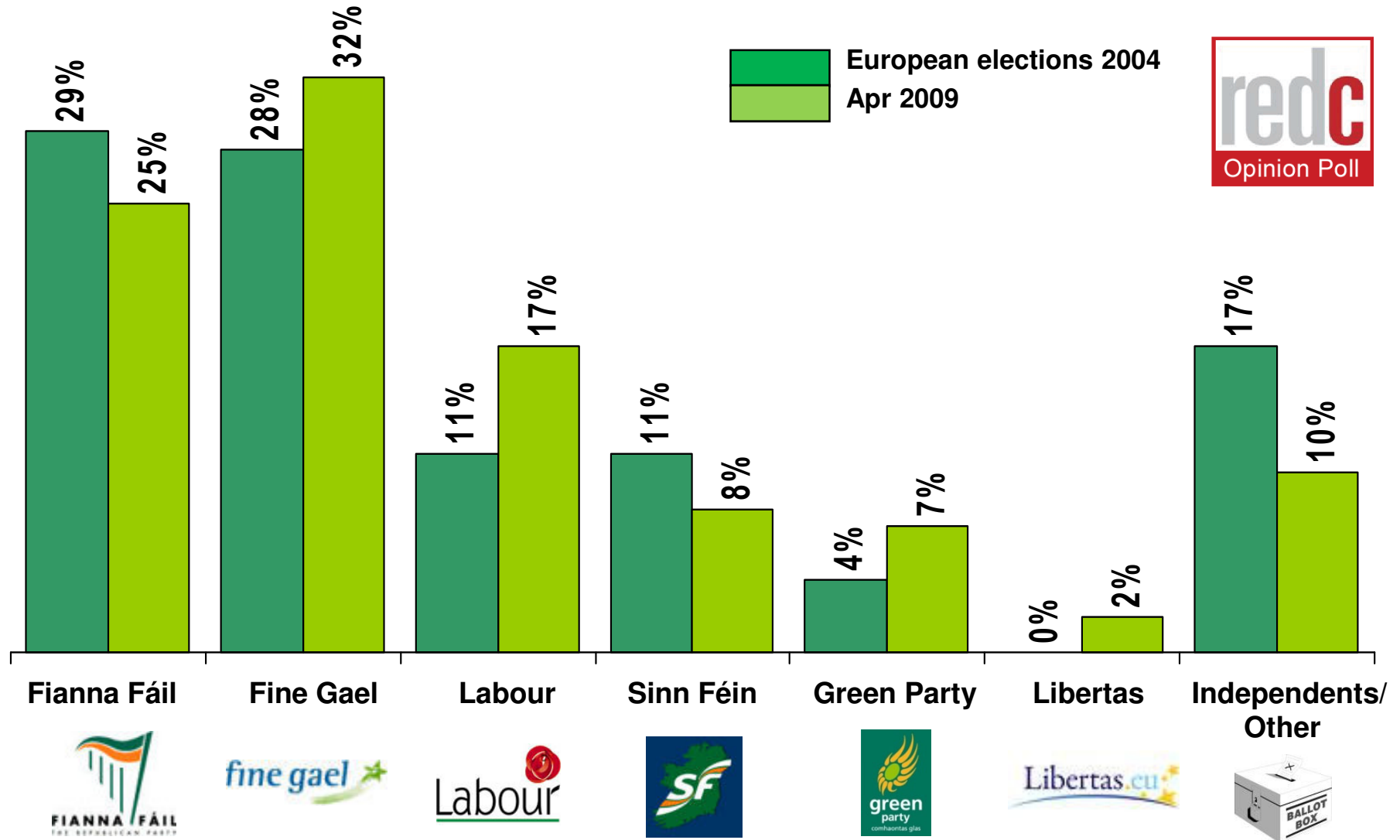
If there were a *Local Election* tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)



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

(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)



How you will vote in the Lisbon Treaty referendum to be held again this year?

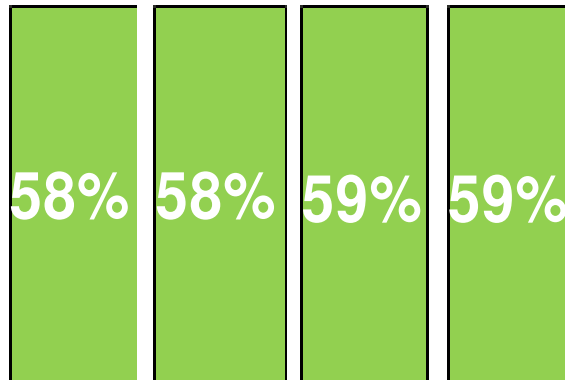


(Base: All IRISH CITIZENS 18+ likely to vote)

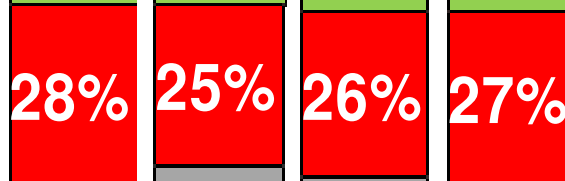
TOTAL

Jan 09 Feb 09 Mar 09 Apr 09

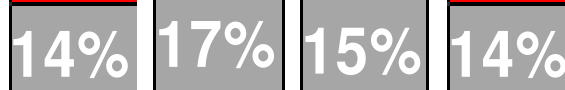
Yes – in favour



No - against



Don't know



Excl. Don't Knows

Jan 09 Feb 09 Mar 09 Apr 09

