



PRESS RELEASE

Alberta Election Remains a Close Contest

UCP (48%) and NDP (45%) in a statistical tie among decided voters

Only half (48%) of Albertans agree they feel good about the choices available

May 17, 2023 – A new Global/Ipsos poll shows the UCP and NDP in a statistical tie as the campaign reaches its midpoint. The race to the 44 seats required to win a majority still goes through Calgary where the two main parties are in a statistical dead heat. The NDP are dominant in Edmonton and the UCP is dominant outside the two big cities.

So far the NDP campaign is viewed more favourably than the UCP campaign, but neither campaign has substantial positive momentum. Similarly, Rachel Notley is viewed as more of an asset to her party than Danielle Smith, but the two remain in a statistical tie as perceived best premier of Alberta.

The Horserace

Not much has changed in terms of voter support since the start of the campaign. The United Conservative Party (UCP) has a statistically insignificant 3-point lead over the New Democrats. Currently, 48% of decided and leaning voters say they would be most likely to support or lean towards the UCP (unchanged), compared to 45% for the NDP (up 1 point). Three percent say they would be most likely to vote for the Alberta Party (down 1 point) and 4% for other parties (unchanged). These results exclude the 17% of Albertans who are undecided or express no preference (down 1 point).

Regions: The race remains very close in Calgary, with the leading parties in a statistical tie (48% UCP vs. 44% NDP). The NDP is up by a massive 28-points in Edmonton (61% NDP vs. 33% UCP), while the UCP is up by an even more massive 34-point lead in the rest of Alberta (64% UCP vs. 30% NDP).

Age Gap: The UCP leads by a 16-point margin among older voters (55% UCP vs. 39% NDP among 55+ years), while the NDP leads by 17-points among younger voters (53% NDP vs. 36% UCP among 18-34 years). The two parties are effectively tied for the support of those 35-54 years (49% UCP vs. 45% NDP).

Gender Gap: There is a substantial gender gap, with the UCP leading by 13-points among men (52% UCP vs. 39% NDP) and the NDP leading by 7-points among women (51% NDP vs. 44% UCP).

Paying Attention to Campaign

Two-thirds (64%) of Albertans agree "I am paying closely attention to this election campaign" (29% disagree, 7% don't know). NDP voters are slightly more likely than UCP voters to be paying close attention (75% of NDP voters vs. 68% of UCP voters). Fewer than four-in-ten (38%) undecided voters are paying close attention.



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Views of Choices Available

Only about half (48%) of Albertans agree “I feel good about the choices available in this election campaign” (39% disagree, 12% don’t know). Only slight majorities of NDP voters (57%) and UCP voters (56%) agree they feel good about the choices available. Among undecided voters, only 18% feel good about the choices available.

One-in-three (33%) Albertans agree “I am going to have to hold my nose as I vote” (45% disagree, 22% don’t know). Expected nose-holding is similar among NDP (29%) and UCP (32%) supporters, but higher among undecided voters (38%) and supporters of other parties (53%).

Campaign Impressions

Consistent with the stable vote numbers, neither of the two main parties have substantial positive campaign momentum, although the results are better for Rachel Notley and the NDP. Since the start of the campaign, impressions of Rachel Notley and the NDP are slightly more likely to have improved (30%) than worsened (26%). The results are more negative for Danielle Smith and the UCP (24% improved vs. 38% worsened), but this has not yet impacted their voter support.

Leader Impact

Rachel Notley is more of an asset to the NDP than Danielle Smith is to the UCP. A slight plurality of Albertans say that Rachel Notley makes them more likely to vote NDP (37%) compared to less likely to vote NDP (32%). The results are more negative for Danielle Smith with a plurality of Albertans saying she makes them less likely to vote UCP (42%) compared to more likely to vote UCP (30%).

Among NDP supporters, 77% say that having Rachel Notley as leader makes them more likely to vote NDP. The results are less positive for Danielle Smith, with 60% of UCP supporters saying that Smith makes them more likely to vote UCP.

Best Premier

Alberta’s choice as best premier is as close as the party horserace. Currently, 39% (up 4 points) of Albertans choose Danielle Smith and 36% (up 1 point) choose Rachel Notley. Barry Morishita (Alberta Party) is a distant third choice (4%, unchanged). Two-in-ten (22%, down 4 points) Albertans are undecided as to which party leader would make the best premier.

Importance of Televised Debate

Roughly four-in-ten (43%) Albertans agree “the televised leaders debate (Thursday May 18th) will be an important factor in my vote decision” (40% disagree, 16% don’t know). Debate importance is the same for both NDP and UCP voters (45% of both parties supporters agree). Only about one-third (36%) of undecideds say the debate will be an important factor in their decision.



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Expected Outcome

There is no public consensus as to who is going to win this election, although UCP voters are more confident in their own party. Four-in-ten (41%) Albertans expect a UCP win, including 83% of UCP supporters. Three-in-ten (31%) Albertans expect an NDP win, including 63% of NDP voters. Nearly three-in-ten (27%) have no opinion on who will win, including 75% of undecided voters.

Time for Change

About half (47%, down 3 points) of Albertans continue to believe it's time for another political party to take over and run the province. Nearly four-in-ten (38%, up 4 points) believe the Smith UCP government has done a good job and deserves re-election, while 15% (down 1 point) are undecided.

Best to Deal with Issues

We asked survey respondents about which leader/party would do the best on 6 issues.

Danielle Smith and the UCP lead on economy/jobs (9 point advantage), taxes (7 point advantage) and crime and public safety (6 point advantage). Rachel Notley and the NDP lead on healthcare (13 point advantage) and integrity/ethics (6 point advantage). The two campaigns are effectively tied on the important issue of cost of living (1 point UCP advantage).

The biggest shift since the start of the campaign is on the issue of healthcare, where Notley and the NDP have extended their lead by 5-points (13 point lead now vs. 8 point lead at start).

Which of the leaders/parties do you think would do the best job on each of the following issues?	Smith /UCP	Notley /NDP	Morishita /AB Party	Don't know	Lead	Lead Apr 26-30 Poll
Economy/Jobs	<u>43%</u>	34%	3%	20%	UCP +9	UCP +6
Taxes	<u>40%</u>	33%	5%	22%	UCP +7	UCP +10
Crime and public safety	<u>39%</u>	33%	5%	23%	UCP +6	UCP +5
Cost of living/affordability/inflation	<u>39%</u>	38%	4%	19%	UCP +1	UCP +4
Integrity/ethics of the party's leader/candidates	32%	<u>38%</u>	5%	25%	NDP +6	NDP +4
Healthcare	33%	<u>46%</u>	3%	19%	NDP +13	NDP +8

Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Government Performance on Wildfires

The provincial government gets a thumbs-up for its handling of the Alberta wildfires. A slight majority of Albertans (57%) agree that "I approve of the job the provincial government is doing so far in responding to Alberta's wildfires", compared to three-in-ten (30%) who disagree and 13% undecided. Provincial government approval is strong among UCP supporters (74% agree they approve), but evenly split among NDP supporters (45% agree they approve vs. 44% disagree).





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About the Study

These are the findings of a Global/Ipsos poll conducted between May 10 and 13, 2023. For this survey, a sample of 800 Alberta eligible voters was interviewed online. These data have been weighted by age, gender, region and education to reflect the Alberta population according to Census figures. The precision of Ipsos polls conducted online is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the results are accurate to within ± 3.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all eligible voters been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error. Ipsos abides by the disclosure standards established by the CRIC, found here: <https://canadianresearchinsightscouncil.ca/standards/>

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