
KLEIN TOPS PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY PREFERENCE

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Tory/Reform vote --*

-- Klein draws more support than Manning to a "united right" --

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This Globe and Mail/Angus Reid Poll was conducted by telephone between March 19th and March 26th 1998 among a representative cross-section of 1,516 Canadian adults.

These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data.

With a Canada-wide sample of 1,516, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within +/-2.5 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

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Ralph Klein top choice for Tory leadership

Amidst intense speculation about Jean Charest’s decision to leave the helm of the Progressive Conservative Party to lead the Quebec Liberal Party, the Angus Reid Group asked Canadians who, among a list of eight potential candidates, they believe would be the best person to replace Mr. Charest.

Ralph Klein, current Premier of Alberta (26%), Joe Clark, former Conservative Party leader and Prime Minister (16%) and Mike Harris, current Premier of Ontario (13%) top Canadians lists on who would be the best choice.

Among Tory supporters, Ralph Klein draws the greatest support (34%). He is followed by Joe Clark, (14%) and Mike Harris (12%). Current Reformers also favour Ralph Klein (47%) ahead of other potential PC leadership candidates.

Hypothetical ballot where Ralph Klein is Leader of the Federal Progressive Conservative Party renders little impact on voter’s party choice

This most recent sounding of public voting intentions indicates that the Federal Liberal Party remains on top with the support of 51% of decided voters. The Liberals are followed by the Reform Party (16%), The Conservative Party (13%), the NDP (11%), and the BQ (9%). These results are consistent with recent Angus Reid polls.

The Angus Reid Group asked Canadians to consider how they would vote tomorrow in the event that Ralph Klein was elected leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. This ballot question rendered little impact on Canadian’s voting intentions. This scenario yields the following Party

standings, the Liberal Party remains on top (48%), the Progressive Conservative Party (15%) squeeze the Reform Party (13%) out of second place while the NDP (12%) and the Bloc (10%) hold at fourth and fifth places respectively.

It is interesting that while the Conservative Party increases its support in Western Canada under the leadership of Klein, it loses ground in Quebec and Atlantic Canada where its current support is based. In addition, in seat-rich Ontario where the Liberals dominate, the Tories fail to make a much-needed break-through under the leadership of Ralph Klein.

In spite of a modest gain of 3 percentage points by the Progressive Conservative Party suffer the most attrition from their current base (64% of Progressive Conservatives would still vote for the Party under Klein's leadership). The Progressive Conservative Party's greatest gains come from the Reform Party. Specifically, one in five (19%) Reform Party supporters would switch to the Progressive Conservative Party if Ralph Klein were elected leader (the PCs would only lose 4% of their support to the Reform Party. The Liberals win the biggest share of wayward Tory support, as 16% would cast a ballot for Jean Chretien if Ralph Klein were leader.

Klein draws more support than Manning to a "united right"

Canadians surveyed were told that there has been some talk recently about a merger between the two parties to the right of the Liberal Party – the Reform Party and the Progressive Conservative Party. Under the assumption that this was to happen, Canadians were asked how likely they would be to support the new party under the leadership of Ralph Klein and Preston Manning.

The results suggest that the party would face a more promising future if Klein were its leader than if Manning assumed the lead. Specifically, 22% of Canadians indicate that they would be more likely to support a united party under the leadership of Klein while only 14% would be more likely to throw their support behind a new party led by Manning. In addition, while 41% would be less likely to support the party if it were led by Manning, only 19% would be less likely to support the new party if were led by Klein.

What is most interesting about these data, is that while current Conservative supporters are far more inclined to support a "united right" party led by Ralph Klein (37% indicate that they would be more

likely) than one led by Preston Manning (9%), Reform supporters are just as likely to support the new party whether it is led by Preston Manning (45%) or Ralph Klein (43%). In addition, while Liberals would not be very likely to support either candidate as leader of a “united right”, they are far more amenable to the idea of Ralph Klein as leader (20% would be more likely to support a united party under his leadership) compared to Preston Manning (8%).

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