
FEDERAL POLITICS IN BC FALL 1999

- MAJORITY SUPPORTS FEDERAL LIBERALS (53%); REFORM FALLS TO LOWEST LEVEL SINCE 1997 FEDERAL ELECTION (23%) –**
 - BC PUBLIC GIVES PM CHRÉTIEN TOP APPROVAL RATING (63%); MANNING (46%) FALLS BEHIND MCDONOUGH (48%), EVEN WITH PC LEADER JOE CLARK (46%) –**
 - BC PUBLIC SATISFIED WITH LIBERAL GOVERNMENT (64%), LESS HAPPY WITH REFORM PARTY OPPOSITION (55%) -**
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This BC Angus Reid Group poll is based on a provincial telephone survey conducted between Sept 1st and Sept 10th, 1999 among a representative cross-section of 600 British Columbian adults. These data are statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, age and sex composition reflects that of the actual BC according to 1996 Census data.

With a provincial sample of 600, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results are within ± 4.0 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult BC population been polled. The margin of error will be larger for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

FEDERAL POLITICS IN BC

Popular support for the federal Liberal party has taken a big jump this quarter, putting the Liberals at their highest support level in BC since the summer of 1996. Meanwhile, Reform party support is eroding further, dropping to its lowest level in BC in three years. And, continued favourable views of the government and Prime Minister Chrétien hint that the BC population is generally satisfied with Liberal efforts to govern the country.

Meanwhile, British Columbians are much more negative in their views of the Reform party's performance in Ottawa this quarter. In particular, they are much more critical of Preston Manning's leadership than at any time over the past 3 years, leaving the way for other party leaders to shine.

SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL LIBERALS JUMPS 7 POINTS TO 53%, WHILE REFORM SLIPS FURTHER BEHIND (23%)

Currently 53 percent of decided voters in BC say they would vote Liberal in a federal election. This gives the Liberals a commanding 30-point lead over the Reform party, which garners 23 percent support. The NDP (14%), Progressive Conservatives (8%), and Green party (4%) trail further behind.

The federal Liberals' popularity among BC voters has jumped a significant 6 percentage points over the past 3 months (47% to 53%), reaching levels the party hasn't seen since June of 1996 (55%). Reform party support meanwhile continues to slip, this time by 4 points (27% to 23%), which is the lowest number since December of 1996 (22%).

Standings for both the NDP (+2), PC (-1), and Green (no change) parties have changed marginally since last quarter.

Overall, 10 percent of British Columbians are currently uncommitted as to which federal party they would support, very close to the same number as in June of this year.

Regional and socio-demographic variations in federal party support are as follows:

- ♦ The federal Liberals obtain majority support across all regions in the province, with very little variation. This is also true among the various socio-demographic segments in the population.
- ♦ The federal Reform party gains stronger support from people living in areas outside of the southeastern corner of BC (29%), and from men (26% vs. 16% of women), and older British Columbians (28% of 55+ vs. 14% of 18-34 year olds).

**BC PUBLIC GIVES PM CHRÉTIEN TOP APPROVAL RATING (63%);
MANNING (46%) FALLS BEHIND MCDONOUGH (48%), EVEN WITH PC
LEADER JOE CLARK (46%)**

Currently, 63 percent of British Columbians approve of the job Jean Chrétien is doing as Prime Minister, compared to 46 percent who are satisfied with Preston Manning's performance as Official Opposition leader in Ottawa. NDP leader, Alexa McDonough (48%), is now ahead of Manning, while Tory leader, Joe Clark (46%), has closed the gap completely.

Chrétien's approval rating remains unchanged since June of this year. Meanwhile, Preston Manning's approval rating has experienced a significant 7 point drop over the past 3 months (53% to 46%), and is his lowest rating since March of 1997 (42%). Alexa McDonough's rating meanwhile has moved up a very significant 9 points since June of this year when 39 percent of the BC public approved of the job she was doing. Joe Clark has regained some lost ground here in BC, inching up 2 points since June (44% to 46%).

In all, 36 percent of the BC public disapproves of Chrétien's job as PM, up 1 point from our June poll. Manning's disapproval rating has increased significantly to 49 percent, up 8 points over the summer months. Disapproval for Alexa McDonough has also jumped 7 points (to 41%), while dissatisfaction with Joe Clark has inched up 3 points since June (to 38%).

Trends in leader approval ratings are consistent across all regional and socio-demographic groups, with very little variation.

**BC PUBLIC SATISFIED WITH LIBERAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE
(64% APPROVE), LESS HAPPY WITH REFORM PARTY OPPOSITION (55%)**

Currently, 64 percent of British Columbians say they approve of the job the Liberal party is doing governing Canada, up a marginal 1 percentage point since June of this year. To contrast, 34 percent of British Columbians disapprove of the Liberals' performance, down a single point over the past 3 months.

A majority of the BC population remains satisfied with the job the Reform party is doing in Ottawa as the Official Opposition, but the review is slightly more negative this quarter. In all, 55 percent approve of Reform's performance, and 41 percent disapprove. The party's approval rating has decreased 3 points since June, while the number of people in the province who disapprove has gone up 4 points.

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TABLE 1

FEDERAL PARTY PREFERENCE (Decided Voters Only)											
Party	Election 1997	June 1997	Sept 1997	Dec 1997	March 1998	June 1998	Sept 1998	Dec 1998	March 1999	June 1999	Sept 1999
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Liberal	28	34	40	46	48	45	46	43	45	47	53
Reform	41	41	35	28	26	30	26	31	28	27	23
NDP	17	16	17	16	14	14	14	13	13	12	14
PC	6	6	6	6	7	8	10	8	9	9	8
Green	N/A	2	2	4	3	3	2	5	4	4	4
Other	4	1	-	1	2	-	2	-	1	1	1
Undecided*	-	7	9	8	9	10	10	11	12	12	10
<i>Question: Thinking of how you feel right now, if a federal election were held tomorrow, which of the following parties' candidates would you be most likely to support? Would it be (READ PARTY)?</i>											
<i>* Not included in the party support numbers, which explains why total greater than 100%.</i>											

TABLE 2

FEDERAL LEADER PERFORMANCE RATINGS				
Rating (Base=600)	Chrétien	Manning	Clark	McDonough
	%	%	%	%
Approve				
September 1999	63	46	46	48
June 1999	63	53	44	39
March 1999	62	53	48	44
December 1998	57	55	48**	44
September 1998	66	48	-*	43
June 1998	65	54	-*	41
March 1998	72	55	59*	41
Disapprove				
September 1999	36	49	38	41
June 1999	35	41	35	34
March 1999	37	41	37	36
December 1998	42	41	30*	36
September 1998	32	45	-*	29
June 1998	33	40	-*	32
March 1998	27	42	29*	42
<p><i>Question: Thinking of (PARTY LEADER), would you say you generally approve or disapprove of the way he has performed as (POSITION)?</i></p> <p><i>*Jean Charest resigned as leader to head the Quebec Liberal party.</i></p> <p><i>** Joe Clark was chosen new PC leader in November 1998.</i></p>				

TABLE 3

PERFORMANCE RATING OF FEDERAL LIBERAL GOVERNMENT AND REFORM OPPOSITION		
	Liberal Government	Reform Opposition
Approve		
September 1999	64	55
June 1999	63	58
March 1999	64	61
December 1998	59	60
September 1998	64	58
June 1998	65	60
December 1997	66	58
September 1997	63	57
Disapprove		
September 1999	34	41
June 1999	35	37
March 1999	35	34
December 1998	40	32
September 1998	33	36
June 1998	33	33
December 1997	31	33
September 1997	34	34
<i>Question: From what you may have read, seen, or heard since the federal election held on June 2, 1997, do you generally approve or disapprove of the job the (Liberal government is doing governing the country; Reform party is doing as the Official Opposition)?</i>		

