

CHARTING A DIRECTION FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA'S GOVERNMENT

Eight in Ten (78%) British Columbians Agree They Haven't Achieved Right Balance Between Strong Social Programs and Creating Climate for Strong Economy

Seven in Ten (68%) Agree Significant Tax Cuts Possible Without Hurting Healthcare and Education

76% Support Major Government Spending on Public Facilities 'Important To Economy'



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Vancouver, British Columbia – Ipsos-Reid (formerly, the Angus Reid Group) was recently commissioned to survey British Columbians on their current views of business and economic issues. The results indicate that eight in ten (78%) British Columbians agree that they haven't achieved the right balance between strong social programs and creating a climate for a strong economy. Seven in ten (68%) also agree that significant tax cuts are possible without hurting important services like healthcare and education. Seventy-six percent supported major government spending on public facilities 'important to the economy'.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between September 26, 2000 and October 1, 2000. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 800 adult British Columbians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult British Columbian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual British Columbian population according to the 1996 Census data.

Eight in Ten (78%) British Columbians Agree They Haven't Achieved Right Balance Between Strong Social Programs and Creating Climate for Strong Economy

Almost one half (43%) of British Columbians polled 'strongly' agree that BC has not achieved the right balance between strong social programs and creating a climate for a strong economy. When combined with another 34 percent who 'somewhat' agree, eight in ten (78%) agree with this view; only 7 percent 'strongly' disagreed.

- Neither regionally nor demographically were any differences significant on overall agreement. If polarization exists, older British Columbians, those with a higher level of education, and those with the higher incomes were more likely to 'strongly' agree with the statement and less likely to 'somewhat' agree.



Seven in Ten (68%) Agree Significant Tax Cuts Possible Without Hurting Healthcare and Education

Equal numbers of British Columbians ‘strongly’ (36%) or ‘somewhat’ (32%) agree that significant tax cuts are possible in BC without hurting important services like healthcare and education. Equal numbers also ‘strongly’ (15%) or ‘somewhat’ (16%) disagree with this view but they are outnumbered by those in agreement two to one.

- The older or more highly educated British Columbians are, the less likely they are to hold this view.

76% Support Major Government Spending on Public Facilities ‘Important To Economy’

Despite general support for cutting spending, British Columbians are supportive of major government spending on public facilities ‘important to the economy’. Three in four (76%) would support a provincial government bringing in this policy (34% ‘strongly’ and 42% ‘somewhat’) while 23 percent would not be supportive (8% ‘strongly’ and 15% ‘somewhat’ oppose).

- Support is highest in the interior of BC where 84 percent would support a government that brought in this policy; support averages 74% elsewhere in BC.

A Solid Majority (70%) Agree That The Only Way They Will Be Able To Compete Economically is Through Big Tax Cuts

Equal numbers of British Columbians also 'strongly' (36%) or 'somewhat' (34%) agree that the only way to compete economically is if the government brings in big tax cuts. Twenty-nine percent disagree with this statement; 10 percent 'strongly' disagree while 19 percent 'somewhat' disagree.

- Residents of the Lower Mainland (excluding Vancouver/Burnaby) were most likely to agree (77%) with this statement; 64 percent of Vancouver/Burnaby residents, 67 percent of Vancouver Island residents, and 71 percent of the rest of BC also agreed.
- Demographically, the younger or less highly educated were more likely to agree with this view. An average of 76 percent of 18 to 44 year olds and an average of only 64 percent those 45 and older either 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed. Eight in ten (78%) British Columbians with high school education or less agreed with this statement compared to only 65 percent of those with university degrees and more.

61% Support Cutting Taxes Even if That Means Reducing Government Spending

British Columbians are supportive of cutting taxes even if that means spending for government services will also have to be reduced. Sixty-one percent would support a provincial government bringing in this policy (23% 'strongly' and 38% 'somewhat') while 37 percent would not be supportive (17% 'strongly' and 20% 'somewhat' oppose).



- Regionally, the Lower Mainland (excluding Vancouver/Burnaby) is most likely to support this policy (67%); support is less than 60 percent in each of the other areas of BC.
- An average of 68 percent of 18 to 44 year olds would support this compared to an average of only 53 percent of those 45 and older.

60% Support Selling/Privatizing Provincial Crown Corporations

Similar numbers of British Columbians are supportive of privatizing or selling some provincial crown corporations. Sixty percent would support a provincial government bringing in this policy (29% 'strongly' and 31% 'somewhat') while 36 percent would not be supportive (17% 'strongly' and 18% 'somewhat' oppose).

- Support is lowest in the interior of BC where 54 percent would support a government that brought in this policy; support is more than 60 percent on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland.
- An average of 64 percent with more than high school education indicate support for this policy against only 47 percent with high school or less education. An average of 72 percent with income above \$60,000 indicate support and compares to an average of 55 percent with income under \$60,000.

Looking Forward, British Columbians (76%) Believe That BC Has What it Takes to be Competitive

When asked whether BC has what it takes to be economically competitive over the next five years a solid majority (76%) agreed; 38 percent both ‘strongly’ agreed and ‘somewhat’ agreed while 22 percent disagreed (either ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’).

- While on agreement overall the differences regionally are not significant, Vancouver Island and the interior of BC were most likely to ‘strongly’ agree (44% and 43% respectively) while Vancouver/Burnaby and the rest of the Lower Mainland were less so (34% ‘strongly’ agree).
- As with region, overall agreement does not vary significantly demographically. However, older British Columbians (both 45 to 54 and 55 and older) were more likely to ‘strongly’ agree (44% and 47%, respectively) than their younger counterparts (18 to 34 – 31% and 35 to 44 – 32%).

British Columbians Split on Whether BC’s Education System Prepares Young People (48% Agree it Does A Good Job While 50% Disagree)

Forty-eight percent of British Columbians either ‘strongly’ (12%) or ‘somewhat’ (36%) agree that BC’s education system does a good job preparing young people for the economy of the next five years. Almost split down the middle, a further 50% disagree with this view (25% ‘strongly’ and 24% ‘somewhat’ disagree).



- Demographically, the most consistent relationship is with education. The higher is one's education the more likely one is to agree that the education system does a good job preparing young people; 41 percent of those with less than or high school education, 48 percent with a technical education and/or some university, and 53 percent with at least a university degree agree with this view.

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