

BC POLITICAL SCENE

DECEMBER 2000

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***DOSANJH'S APPROVAL RATING (53%) DROPS 5 POINTS;
OPPOSITION LEADER GORDON CAMPBELL CLOSES GAP (51%)***

***CAMPBELL'S DISAPPROVAL RATING (40%) AT 4-YEAR LOW, SAME
AS DOSANJH***



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DOSANJH***

(Vancouver, BC) – The most recent Ipsos-Reid poll on BC politics shows the provincial Liberals maintaining a commanding lead over all rivals as the province heads into the final months of the NDP's second term in office. With an election expected by mid-2001 at the latest, the polls show a majority of decided voters (51%) would vote for the BC Liberal party in a provincial election. Meanwhile, very little has changed for the NDP over the past year; at 17 percent in the polls, it continues to struggle to move the numbers above 20 percent. "The party has failed to generate any sustained momentum or enthusiasm among British Columbians over the past nine months despite having changed leaders, revamped its policy basket, and cleaned up the province's finances. This will have to change soon if the NDP hopes to go into an election with any optimism at all," comments Daniel Savas, Senior Vice President in Ipsos-Reid's Vancouver office.



On the leadership front, the NDP can still claim to have the most popular leader in Premier Ujjal Dosanjh. However, with his approval rating falling for a second straight quarter, the shine on Dosanjh's veneer seems to be fading somewhat. This has had the effect of raising the profile of Opposition Gordon Campbell, a leader the BC public is becoming more comfortable with. "It seems clear the NDP can no longer rest solely on the laurels of their popular leader," observes Mr. Savas. "While Dosanjh may have stalled the party's descent a few months ago through his personal popularity, it seems his efforts cannot wipe out the compounded effect of two consecutive NDP mandates, and the record of his immediate predecessor. This is making Gordon Campbell look that much better in the eyes of most British Columbians."

Liberals (51%) Continue To Lead All Parties; NDP (17%), BC Reform (18%) Trail Well Back

Currently, 51 percent of BC's decided voters say they would vote Liberal in a provincial election. The Liberals continue to outdistance both the NDP (17%) and the BC Reform party (18%). Support for the BC Green (9%) and other (4%) parties account for just over 1-in-10 decided BC voters. Overall, 11 percent of people in BC currently express no preference for any of the provincial parties, including 9 percent who are undecided.

Support for the provincial Liberals and NDP over the past three months has not changed in any statistically significant fashion. The Liberals have moved up 3 points since September (48% to 51%). Meanwhile, NDP support has inched 2 points downwards during the same period (from 19% to 17%). BC Reform's standing in public opinion has, however, dropped back a statistically significant 4 points since September (22% to 18%). The number of people in the province who are supporting the BC Green party is at 9 percent (+1). The number of

British Columbians who are uncommitted in their voting preference has dropped 6 points since September (17% to 11%).

Over the last quarter, we notice a significant drop in the number of former NDP voters prepared to vote again for the party. Currently, 38 percent of those who voted NDP in 1996 say they would vote for the party in a provincial election; this is down 9 points since September when 47 percent said they were prepared to vote NDP.

Meanwhile, 25 percent of 1996 New Democrats would now vote for the provincial Liberal party, similar to our September poll (23%); 13 percent are with the BC Green party (up 7 points), 4 percent are with the BC Reform party (-6), and 18 percent remain uncommitted (+5).

Party preference results for regional and socio-demographic groupings are as follows:

- The BC Liberals obtain strong support across all major regions in the province, but are particularly strong in the Lower Mainland (57%). The party is weakest in the Interior (41%), but still holds a strong lead over the BC Reform party there (29%).
- BC Liberal support is also more solid among men (56% vs. 47% women), older British Columbians (55% for 55+ vs. 45% for 18-34), upper income households (59% vs. 39% low income), and non-union households (55% vs. 43% union).
- To contrast, NDP support is much lower in all regions relative to the Liberals. The party enjoys stronger support in Vancouver/Burnaby (23%) and on Vancouver Island (21%). NDP support is fairly consistent across all population groups, with no statistically significant variations based on age, gender, or income.
- For BC Reform, strongest support surfaces among people living in the Interior (29%) compared to about 1-in-10 people in the Lower Mainland.



Dosanjh's Approval Rating Drops To 53%; Campbell (51%) Closes Gap On NDP Leader; Campbell's Disapproval Rating (40%) At Four Year Low, Same As Dosanjh

NDP Premier, Ujjal Dosanjh, and Opposition Leader, Gordon Campbell, are pretty much tied in their respective public approval ratings. With 53 percent of British Columbians approving of his performance as Premier, Dosanjh is only slightly ahead of BC Liberal leader, Gordon Campbell, who receives positive reviews from 51 percent of the public. BC Reform leader, Bill Vander Zalm (30%) is well back of both Dosanjh and Campbell.

Dosanjh's approval rating has dropped a statistically significant 6 points since our September Ipsos-Reid poll (59% to 53%). This is the second consecutive quarter his approval numbers have experienced a downward trend. Meanwhile, the number of British Columbians who disapprove of the job he is doing as Premier is up marginally in the past three months (37% to 40%), but they've essentially doubled since he became Premier in the Spring of 2000 (21% in March to 40% currently).

Gordon Campbell's approval rating remains virtually unchanged from last quarter (50% to 51%). Meanwhile, 40 percent of people currently disapprove of his performance, which is a statistically significant 5-point drop over the past three months. This is the lowest disapproval rating for Campbell in four years.

The BC public's evaluation of BC Reform leader, Bill Vander Zalm has worsened slightly since last quarter (30% from 33% in September). Meanwhile, 55 percent disapprove of the job he is doing, up 1 point from September.



This BC Ipsos-Reid poll is based on a provincial telephone survey conducted between December 6th and 10th, 2000 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.

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For more information on this news release, please contact:

***Daniel Savas
Senior Vice President
Ipsos-Reid
(604) 893-1610***

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TABLE 1

PROVINCIAL PARTY PREFERENCE (Decided and Leaning Voters Only)*																					
Party	May 1996	June 1996	Sept 1996	Dec 1996	Mar 1997	June 1997	Sept 1997	Dec 1997	Mar 1998	June 1998	Sept 1998	Dec 1998	Mar 1999	June 1999	Aug 1999	Sept 1999	Dec 1999	Mar 2000	June 2000	Sept 2000	Dec 2000
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
NDP	39	42	37	29	24	27	30	24	20	23	18	18	18	16	16	15	17	24	16	19	17
Liberal	42	39	44	52	44	34	33	43	47	42	46	46	52	58	56	57	55	50	57	48	51
BC Reform	9	9	12	11	18	28	24	18	17	20	20	18	18	14	17	16	18	16	15	22	18
PDA	6	6	4	3	9	6	9	8	9	8	10	10	4	3	2	2	2	3	5	-	-
Green	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	5	5	6	5	5	6	6	8	7	8	6	6	8	9
Other	2	3	3	4	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	-	1	1	1	4
Undec'd**	-	13	19	23	19	16	15	15	17	17	18	15	19	18	23	21	18	12	13	17	11

**Question: Thinking of how you feel right now, which of the following parties' candidate would you be most likely to support if a provincial election were held here in BC tomorrow? Would it be (READ PARTY? Now we know that some people have not made up their minds yet about which party they would support. Is there a party you are leaning towards? Percentages include people who were undecided in their first response, but said they were leaning towards a particular party.*

** *Not included in the party support numbers, which explains why the total is greater than 100%*

TABLE 2

PROVINCIAL LEADER PERFORMANCE RATINGS			
Rating (Base=600)	Dosanjh	Campbell	Vander Zalm
	%	%	%
Approve			
December 2000	53	51	30
September 2000	59	50	33
June 2000	64	53	31
March 2000	59****	53	35
December 1999	40	50	31
September 1999	36***	49	32
June 1999	19	50	27
March 1999	21	49	31
December 1998	27	46	34
September 1998	31	49	31*
June 1998	34	43	-
March 1998	32	44	18*
December 1997	35	47	18*
September 1997	42	36	_*
June 1997	39	44	_*
March 1997	30	48	_*
December 1996	32	53	_*
September 1996	41	51	_*
Disapprove			
December 2000	40	40	55
September 2000	37	45	56
June 2000	32	41	55
March 2000	21	43	55
December 1999	42	43	55
September 1999	33	45	55
June 1999	79	44	52
March 1999	77	44	49
December 1998	70	47	46
September 1998	66	42	48
June 1998	63	46	-
March 1998	66	47	38*
December 1997	62	45	26*
September 1997	55	54	_*
June 1997	56	44	_*
March 1997	66	44	_*
December 1996	66	40	_*
September 1996	53	41	_*
<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>* Wilf Hanni was leader of BC Reform in August of 1997. ** Bill Vander Zalm took over as Reform leader in May of 1998.</i></p> <p><i>*** Dan Miller took over as Premier at the end of August 1999. **** Ujjal Dosanjh took over as Premier at the end of February 2000.</i></p>			