

BC'S PLACE IN CANADA

BC REID EXPRESS POLL

FEBRUARY, 2001

84% OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS FEEL FEDERAL LEADERS DO NOT PAY ENOUGH ATTENTION TO BC; 77% PERCEIVE BC DOES NOT GET ITS FAIR SHARE FROM OTTAWA

86% OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS WOULD REJECT SEPARATION IF A REFERENDUM WERE HELD TODAY; 14% WOULD VOTE TO LEAVE

80% OF BC POPULATION SAY THEY'RE CANADIANS FIRST, AND BRITISH COLUMBIANS SECOND



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This BC Ipsos-Reid poll is based on the BC Reid Express provincial omnibus telephone survey conducted between February 5th and February 12, 2001 among a representative cross-section of 800 British Columbian adults. These data are statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, age and sex composition reflects that of the actual BC population according to 1996 Census data. With a provincial sample of 800, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results are within +3.5 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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FEBRUARY, 2001

(Vancouver, BC) – The most recent Ipsos-Reid BC Reid Express poll on issues facing BC shows sustained discontent among British Columbians with BC's place in Canada. This discontent appears to be driven by a general feeling that BC doesn't get its "fair share" from Ottawa, and that federal political leaders do not pay enough attention to BC's interests. Despite the discontent, however, the vast majority of the BC population expresses a strong attachment to Canada, and rejects the notion of BC separating to go it alone and form its own country.

Overall, 84% of the BC population feels that federal political leaders do not pay enough attention to BC's interests. And, a further 77% believes BC does not get its fair share from Ottawa. Still, 80% say they are Canadians first, and 86% would vote to stay in Canada if a referendum were held in BC. "There is a strong indication in the numbers that the federal government has not been very successful over the past few years in addressing interests specific to BC," observes Daniel Savas, a Senior Vice-President with Ipsos-Reid in Vancouver. "British Columbians seem to be saying they're frustrated with the lack of attention they get from Ottawa, and with the perceived imbalance of federal spending in the province. Despite the high level of discontent, however, there is no real indication that the BC population is looking seriously at alternative political arrangements, preferring instead to remain in Canada and work for change from within the current system."

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VAST MAJORITY OF BC PUBLIC FEELS FEDERAL LEADERS DO NOT PAY ENOUGH ATTENTION TO BC (84%), AND 77% PERCEIVE BC DOES NOT GET ITS FAIR SHARE FROM OTTAWA

Fully 84 percent of British Columbians believe our federal political leaders “do not pay enough attention to BC’s interests.” This is up marginally from 1996 when 82% expressed the same level of dissatisfaction with Ottawa. However, there has been a notable spike in the intensity of negative feelings in BC over the past 5 years. In 1996, 48% of British Columbians strongly agreed with the notion that Ottawa was not paying enough attention to BC’s interests; this has jumped a full 14 points to 62% in 2001. Overall, only 15% disagree with this sentiment.

A further 77% of people surveyed disagree that BC “gets its fair share from Ottawa,” with 56% in strong disagreement. Only 22% agreed with the statement.

While disillusionment with Ottawa and federal political leaders is widespread across BC, it is greatest in the Interior when compared to the Lower Mainland or Vancouver Island. While 81% of people in the Interior disagree that BC gets its fair share from Ottawa, 71% in Vancouver/Burnaby share the same view.



IF A REFERENDUM WERE HELD IN BC, 86% SAY THEY WOULD VOTE FOR BC TO STAY IN CANADA RATHER THAN LEAVE AND FORM ITS OWN COUNTRY

If a referendum were held in BC today, the vast majority of British Columbians (86%) say they would vote for BC to stay in Canada. A much smaller number – 14% - would vote for BC to leave Canada and form its own country.

Those most likely to vote to leave Canada include BC men (19% would vote to leave), and those with a high school education (19%). There are no significant regional differences within BC.

80% OF BC RESIDENTS SAY THEY'RE CANADIANS FIRST AND BRITISH COLUMBIANS SECOND

The strong rejection of BC separation is likely explained by the fact that most people in the province think of themselves as Canadians first and British Columbians second; 80% hold this attachment to Canada (58% strongly agree). About one-in-five people in the province disagreed with this sentiment.

Certain groups in the population are more likely than others to express stronger attachment to Canada. These include: university educated British Columbians (86%, compared to 74% of those with high school or less) and high income earners in the province (85%, compared to 71% of those who earn less than \$30,000 annually).

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