

BC ELECTION 2001

VOTER RETENTION AND MOTIVATION

NDP CORE MOVING TO BC LIBERALS; 43% OF 1996 NDP VOTERS NOW IN LIBERAL CAMP VS. 37% WHO ARE STAYING WITH THE NDP

BC LIBERAL SUPPORT DRIVEN BY CRITICISM OF NDP RECORD

A FAILURE TO SHOW HONESTY AND INTEGRITY MAIN FACTOR THAT WOULD MOVE BC LIBERAL VOTERS TO ANOTHER PARTY



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This BC Ipsos-Reid poll is based on a random provincial telephone survey conducted between April 19th and 23rd, 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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(Vancouver, BC April 26, 2001) – As the BC election campaign gets under way, the first Ipsos-Reid/Globe & Mail/CKNW/VTV poll shows Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals attracting significant support from past NDP and BC Reform voters. In fact, 1996 NDP voters are now more likely to be voting for the BC Liberals than for their former party; 43% are voting BC Liberal and 37% are staying with the NDP. Among 1996 BC Reform voters, 85% intend to vote for the BC Liberals and only 11% support the newly minted Unity BC. “The findings reflect quite clearly the difficulty the NDP is having in building any momentum in this election campaign. The NDP has alienated more than half of its previous supporters who’ve decided to look elsewhere, which suggests quite strongly that there really is no such thing as a safe NDP seat in the province.” comments Daniel Savas, Senior Vice-President at Ipsos-Reid. “This can only mean good news for the Liberals. The poll hints quit strongly at the BC Liberals’ success in building a coalition that cut across traditional party lines. “

Much of the motivation for supporting the BC Liberals is driven by a desire to vote against the NDP. A majority (57%) of all BC Liberal voters cites reasons such as the NDP’s record in government, a time for a change, and a general dislike of the NDP as the main factor in voting BC Liberal in this election. Far fewer BC Liberal voters say their support is based on the party’s platform (20%), leader (6%) or candidates (4%). Mr. Savas warns, however, that this finding should not be interpreted as a lack of public support for the BC Liberal platform. “On other poll questions we see substantial support for BC Liberal policies, especially those

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related to taxes and the economy. What we have here is a disgruntled electorate are prepared to bring an end to a decade of NDP rule.”

47% OF 1996 NDP VOTERS NOW IN LIBERAL CAMP VS. 37% WHO ARE STAYING WITH THE NDP; 85% OF 1996 BC REFORM VOTERS NOW WITH LIBERALS

Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals have climbed to 70% support among decided voters by retaining virtually all their 1996 voters and by attracting significant support from 1996 BC Reform and NDP voters. Voter retention rates are as follows.

- Ninety-four percent of 1996 BC Liberal voters intend to vote BC Liberal again in this election.
- The BC Liberals have also attracted the vast majority of 1996 BC Reform voters. Eighty-five percent now say they will vote for the BC Liberals. Only 11% say they will vote for the newly formed Unity BC.
- And most surprisingly, 1996 NDP voters are now more likely to vote BC Liberal than NDP. Forty-three percent of 1996 NDP voters say they will vote BC Liberal versus 37% who say they will continue to vote for the NDP. Eighteen percent of past NDP voters say they intend to vote for the Green Party on May 16th.

The BC Liberals also capture the support of two-thirds of decided voters who did not vote in 1996 or were not eligible to vote in 1996. Sixty-eight percent of these new voters say they will vote BC Liberal. The remaining new voters go 16% to the NDP, 12% to the Green Party and 3% to Unity BC.

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BC LIBERAL SUPPORT DRIVEN BY ANTI-NDP SENTIMENT; NDP SUPPORTERS LIKE NDP POLICIES; GREENS ARE ANTI-EVERYONE AND PRO-ENVIRONMENT

When we asked BC Liberal voters to express, in their own words, the main reason they are supporting or leaning toward the BC Liberal party in this election, a majority say they are voting against the NDP rather than for the BC Liberals. Fifty-seven percent cite an anti-NDP reason for their BC Liberal support, including specific reasons like the NDP's poor record in office (18%), a feeling that the NDP has been in power too long and it is time for a change (16%), and a general dislike of the NDP (16%). One-in-five (20%) BC Liberals say they are supporting the party primarily because of the BC Liberal platform, especially elements related to the economy (7%) and to taxes (4%). Other reasons for supporting the BC Liberals include Gordon Campbell as the leader (6%), a history of supporting the BC Liberals (4%) and the quality of local candidates (4%).

In contrast to BC Liberal voters, NDP voters are more likely to say their support is driven by positive elements of the party's platform than by a dislike for other parties. One-in-three (34%) NDP voters say the NDP's platform is their main reason for supporting the party compared to 1-in-5 (20%) NDP voters who say they simply dislike the BC Liberals. The most frequently mentioned components of that platform are health care (8%), general social programs (5%), economic policies (3%) and native issues (3%). Other reasons for voting NDP include a history of voting NDP (13%) and having Ujjal Dosanjh as the leader (10%).

Much of the support for Adriane Carr's Green Party is also motivated by a dislike of other parties. Twenty-eight percent of Green Party voters say they are voting against the NDP for

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reasons such as a general dislike of the party (13%), a belief that it is time for a change (8%) and disapproval of the NDP's record in government (5%). Many other Green Party voters say their support is based mostly on a dislike of the BC Liberals (9%) or a dislike of all other parties (8%). On a more positive note, 23% of Green Party voters say they support the party because of their environmental stance.

MOVEMENT OF 1996 NDP VOTERS TO BC LIBERALS MORE A REJECTION OF THE NDP THAN AN EMBRACE OF THE BC LIBERALS

We asked 1996 NDP voters who now intend to vote BC Liberal to state the main reason for their change in support. Most reasons for the switch relate to negative perceptions of the NDP rather than to positive perceptions of the BC Liberals. The main reasons for the switch in support include:

- General disappointment in the performance of the NDP / Lack of confidence in party (31%)
- Poor fiscal management of the province by the NDP (18%)
- Lies and broken promises by the NDP (16%)
- It's time for a change / NDP have governed long enough (11%)

Far fewer 1996 NDP voters say they are now voting BC Liberal for positive reasons such as the BC Liberals economic platform (10%) or their health care platform (3%).



LACK OF HONESTY/INTEGRITY BY BC LIBERALS COULD MOVE SOME SUPPORTERS TO OTHER PARTIES

In an earlier release from this Ipsos-Reid/Globe & Mail/CKNW/VTV BC election survey we noted that only 23% of BC Liberal voters are “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to change their mind and wind up voting for another party on election day. A lack of honesty or integrity is the main theme that emerged when we asked these potential vote switchers to state, in their own words, what might make them change their mind and end up voting for another party. The main reasons for moving away from the BC Liberals include dishonesty/lies (17%), changing their position on health care (7%), scandals/corruption (6%), negative campaigning (5%) or changing their position on education (5%). Twenty-three percent could not think of a specific reason why they would end up voting for another party.

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For more information on this news release, please contact:

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

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