

BC ELECTION 2001

ELECTION ISSUES

THREE-QUARTERS (74%) OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS INTERESTED IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN

HEALTH CARE (40%) CONTINUES TO TOP PUBLIC'S AGENDA OF MOST IMPORTANT ELECTION ISSUES; ECONOMY AND TAXES ALSO ON LIST

MAJORITY OF BC PUBLIC (51%) FEELS PARTIES, LEADERS, CANDIDATES DOING A POOR JOB ADDRESSING IMPORTANT ISSUES DURING CAMPAIGN, NOTABLY HEALTH CARE (52% POOR JOB)



Ipsos Reid



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This BC Ipsos-Reid poll is based on a random provincial telephone survey conducted between May 3rd and 7th, 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 – May 8th, 2001) – As the BC election moves into its last week, the second Ipsos-Reid/VTV/CKNW poll shows British Columbians are engaged in the campaign; fully 74% of those surveyed say they're closely following the campaign, the same number as an Ipsos-Reid end-of-campaign poll taken during the 1996 election (74%). Further, the BC public continues to identify health care as the most important issue in this election, though, as with the first poll of the 2001 campaign, a series of other issues are also on the public's agenda (economy, taxes, education, the environment, jobs, and the deficit). Despite their interest in the election campaign, British Columbians express some disappointment with the efforts taken by parties, leaders, and candidates to address the issues; 51% of those surveyed feel they're doing a poor job in this regard. This is particularly true when it comes to health care (52% poor job) and the economy (49% poor job).

"British Columbians are showing more than a passing interest in this election campaign. Despite the likelihood of a lop-sided Liberal victory, the public seems genuinely eager to watch democracy in action, perhaps intrigued by the changing of the guard in Victoria," observes Daniel Savas, Senior Vice-President at Ipsos-Reid. "However, people in the province are somewhat critical of the democratic process when it comes to debating *their* issues. Hence, while the election will crown a victor, British Columbians are not so convinced the parties have done their job in putting the issues before the people."

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THREE-QUARTERS (74%) OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS INTERESTED IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The 2001 BC election has captured the interest of the vast majority of British Columbians. Fully 74% of the BC public surveyed during the last week of the campaign said they were following the events and issues of the campaign very (22%) or somewhat (52%) closely. This level of interest mirrors that of the 1996 election when 74% of those surveyed said they were following that campaign closely (21% very, and 53% somewhat).

Interest in the 2001 campaign is solid across all regional and socio-demographic groups in BC, though there are some British Columbians who express a greater degree of interest in the campaign than others. For example, regionally, a larger proportion of suburban Lower Mainland residents (80%) say they are watching the campaign closely than is the case with individuals living elsewhere in the province (e.g. Vancouver Burnaby – 71%, Rest of BC – 68%, and Vancouver Island – 77%).

Also, many more men (80% vs. 69% of women), older British Columbians (84% vs. 65% of 18-34 year olds), and upper income earners (81% vs. 64% of lower income earners) are following the events and issues of the 2001 campaign.

Further, people who are likely to vote on election day are much more inclined to be paying attention to the campaign than those with a weaker commitment to go to the polls (82% vs. 48%). This suggests the voting public will be making an informed choice on election day.



HEALTH CARE (40%) SEEN AS MOST IMPORTANT ELECTION ISSUE; ECONOMY (14%), TAXES (8%), EDUCATION (4%) AND ENVIRONMENT (4%) ALSO ON PUBLIC'S AGENDA

Most British Columbians continue to identify health care as the single most important issue in the 2001 campaign. More than twice as many people surveyed – 40% - put health care as the top campaign issue. This is up 5 points from the beginning of the campaign when 35% singled out health care as the most important issue of the campaign.

The economy occupies sole possession of second spot when it comes to election issues; 14% consider it to be the most important campaign issue. This is similar to findings at the beginning of the campaign (13%).

Overall, 8% of those surveyed feel that taxes are the top campaign issue, again similar to what was found at the beginning of the campaign (10%). And, 4% of people in the province mention each of education and the environment as important issues.

British Columbians from all regions of the province share similar views of the important campaign issues. However, taxes do surface more readily among people living in suburban Vancouver (12%, compared to 8% among British Columbians as a whole).

From a socio-demographic perspective, women (50%), older BC residents (49%), and people living in lower income households (49%) more readily identify health care as the most important campaign issue.



MAJORITY OF BC PUBLIC (51%) FEELS PARTIES, LEADERS, CANDIDATES DOING A POOR JOB ADDRESSING IMPORTANT CAMPAIGN ISSUES, NOTABLY HEALTH CARE (52%)

While most British Columbians are following the election campaign with some degree of interest, most are disappointed that the issues they consider most important are not being addressed. This is particularly true when it comes to health care and the economy. In all, fully 51% of those surveyed feel the parties, leaders, and candidates are doing a “poor job” dealing with the important issues. Another 41% are satisfied with the efforts being made to address the issues, and 8% don’t know one way or the other.

On particular issues, we learn that 52% of people who consider health care to be the most important campaign issue believe the parties, leaders, and candidates are doing a “poor job” addressing this issue. Meanwhile, 43% think they’re doing a “good job”.

When it comes to the economy, the views are some more mixed among those who single this out as the top campaign issue (45% good job, 49% poor job). On taxation, there is a consensus that the parties, leaders, and candidates have done a “good job” dealing with this issue during the campaign (56% vs. 39% poor job).

The overall sentiment that the important campaign issues have not been addressed is shared across the different regions, though to varying degrees. On the whole, Vancouver Island residents are more critical than those living elsewhere in the province; fully 60% of individuals on the Island give the parties, leaders, and candidates a failing grade when it comes to addressing the important campaign issues, compared to about half in other areas.



There are no statistically significant differences here between the various socio-demographic segments in BC's population.

Politically, a much greater proportion of Green Party supporters feel the various party campaigns are doing a poor job addressing the important issues (74% poor vs. 44% NDP, 44% BC Liberal, and 56% Unity BC).



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- 30 -

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