

# **ALBERTANS GIVE TOUGH LOVE ON PROVINCIAL BUDGET**

***Overall Majority (55%) of Albertans Oppose Klein Government's March 19<sup>th</sup> Budget***

***But Majority Supports Increases in Healthcare Premiums (54%), Increases in Liquor Mark-Ups, Vehicle Fees, Traffic Fines and Other Fees (58%) as Well as Increases in Tobacco Tax (70%)***

***Opposition Comes from Cuts to Municipal Grants for Roads and Transportation (83% oppose) and Public Service Cuts (50% oppose)***



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*Established in 1979, Ipsos-Reid is Canada's leading market research and public opinion company. It is best known for the Angus Reid Express poll, the most widely quoted source of public opinion in the country. Founded by Dr. Angus Reid, Ipsos-Reid has conducted extensive market and social research in 80 countries and in 40 languages, and serves clients around the world through more than 300-professionals and 1,000 data collection staff in 11 offices. The company is a member of the Paris-based Ipsos Group, ranked among the top ten research companies in the world, with specialties in advertising, media, customer satisfaction, public opinion and market research. Visit [www.ipsos-reid.com](http://www.ipsos-reid.com)*

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**Edmonton, AB** – The results of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted for CTV, Globe and Mail and QR77 show that Albertans are giving the Klein government some tough love over the March 19<sup>th</sup> provincial budget. Despite a majority (55%) saying it opposes the budget as a whole, there is majority support for most of the major policies, including more controversial moves such as: increases in healthcare premiums (54%), increases in liquor mark-ups, vehicle fees, traffic fines and other fees (58%) as well as increases in the tobacco tax (70%). Where the government sees opposition is in its decision to cut municipal transportation grants (83% oppose) and its cuts to the public service (50% oppose)

“Albertans seem to be judging this budget largely on what the government has done to municipal transportation grants,” says Tim Olafson Senior Vice-President of Ipsos-Reid in Calgary. “Albertans clearly like most of the individual parts of the budget but there is such overwhelming opposition to the cuts in transportation grants that they give the thumbs down to the package as a whole. This data suggests that Klein has made the right move by meeting with the Mayors of Edmonton and Calgary to discuss restoring some of this funding.”

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between March 21<sup>st</sup> and March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2002. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 800 adult Albertans. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.5$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire population in Alberta 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 provincial population according to the 1996 Census data.*

### ***Overall Majority (55%) of Albertans Oppose Klein Government's March 19<sup>th</sup> Budget***

A majority (55%) of Albertans says they oppose the budget delivered by the Klein government on March 16<sup>th</sup>. This compares with 41% who say they support the budget. However, intensity of opinion is far greater among opponents than supporters. Almost three in ten (28%) Albertans say they “strongly oppose” the budget - 20 points higher than the percentage who say they “strongly support” (8%) the budget. Meanwhile, 27% say they “somewhat oppose” and one third (33%) “somewhat support” the budget.

- Men (46%) are more likely than women (36%) to support the budget.
- Albertans under the age of 35 (45%) are more likely to support the government's budget than those aged 35 and older (38%).

### ***But Majority Supports Increases in Healthcare Premiums (54%), Increases in Liquor Mark-Ups, Vehicle Fees, Traffic Fines and Other Fees (58%) as Well as Increases in Tobacco Tax (70%)***

While Albertans seem to oppose the budget as a whole, they support most of the government's individual initiatives contained in the budget.

- A majority (54%, 23% “strongly”) supports the increases in monthly healthcare insurance

premiums (45% oppose).

- Almost six in ten (58%, 21% “strongly”) support increases in liquor mark-ups, motor vehicle fees, highway traffic fines and various other fees totaling \$112 million (42% oppose).
- Seven in ten (70%, 56% “strongly”) support the increase in tobacco tax equivalent to \$2.25 per pack (29% oppose).

Perhaps not surprisingly, large majorities support the major spending increases contained in the budget. Eighty-six percent support the 4.2 percent increase in spending for children’s services, 85% support the 7.3 percent increase in spending on health and wellness, and 80% support the 4.7 percent increase in spending for education and learning.

- Support for these initiatives is consistent across the province and all major demographic variables.

### ***Opposition Comes from Cuts to Municipal Grants for Roads and Transportation (83% oppose) and Public Service Cuts (50% oppose)***

The data suggests that opposition to the budget as a whole seems to be coming from the government’s decision to “cut municipal grants for road and transportation construction by 70 percent over the next three years”. In all, 83% of Albertans oppose this initiative including 55% who “strongly oppose” (another 27% “somewhat oppose”). Only one in five support this initiative (4% “strongly support”, 13% “somewhat support”).

The other initiative that receives less than majority support is the decision to cut almost 300 public service positions. Albertans are more divided on this initiative with 50% who oppose (26% “strongly”, 24% “somewhat”) and 46% who support it (18% “strongly”, 28% “somewhat”).



- Opposition to the cuts in transportation grants consistent across the province and all major demographic variables.
- Edmonton residents (56%) are more likely to oppose public service cuts than residents in the rest of the province (47%)

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