

FEDERAL POLITICAL SCENE IN BC

JUNE 2002

Canadian Alliance Support in BC Jumps 7 points to 31%, Closing Gap on Federal Liberals (35%)

Chrétien's Approval Rating Falls 9 Points to 43%, Well Back of New Alliance Leader Stephen Harper (53%)

BC Public Mixed on Federal Liberal Government Performance (53% Approve), But See Solid Improvements on Economy (58%) and Fiscal Management (53%)



Embargo Until ~~Public Release Date:~~ Public Release June 26, 2002 7:30am PST

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Vancouver, BC – In this summer's BC Reid Express poll on the federal political scene in the province, Ipsos-Reid finds the gap between the federal Liberals (35%) and the Canadian Alliance (31%) closing to just 4 points (from 10 in March). While Liberal support has stayed the same, the Alliance has move up in popularity, taking support away from the Progressive Conservatives who now sit at just 10% in the polls, a drop of 7 points since March. Support for the NDP (15%) and the Green party (8%) has not changed over the past 3 months. "It's clear that, in the post-Stockwell Day era, the Canadian Alliance party has regained some of its lustre with the BC electorate," observes Daniel Savas, Senior Vice-President with Ipsos-Reid in Vancouver. "This is certainly being helped by the troubles the Liberal government is currently having around Jean Chrétien's leadership review and questions raised about the propriety of several government contracts. In these circumstances, the fresh new face Stephen Harper brings to the Alliance makes it easier for British Columbians to move toward the party, something they felt unable to do under Stockwell Day. "

On the leadership approval front, we find Jean Chrétien falling behind all other federal party leaders in BC for the first time since he was elected Prime Minister in 1993. At 43% approval, Chrétien is well back of Joe Clark (56%), new Alliance leader Stephen Harper (53%), and

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outgoing NDP leader Alexa McDonough (52%). “The controversy surrounding Jean Chrétien’s leadership review has made an impact on BC voters’ impressions of the Prime Minister,” comments Daniel Savas. “The evidence suggests British Columbians are not pleased with how Chrétien has been handling the issue. Importantly, however, it has not yet had any tangible effect on the public’s views of the government or the party.”

These are the findings of Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between June 4th and 11th, 2002 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.

Canadian Alliance Support in BC Jumps 7 points to 31%, Closing Gap on Federal Liberals (35%)

Currently, 35% of BC’s decided voters say they would support the federal Liberal party if a federal election were held in BC. This places the Liberals just ahead of the Canadian Alliance party, which obtains 31% of support among the BC population. Meanwhile, 10% of British Columbians are behind the Progressive Conservative Party, 15% support the NDP, and 8% are with the Green Party; 1% are currently supporting Other parties. Eleven percent are uncommitted to any party.

Support for the federal Liberals in BC has stayed basically the same since March (34% to 35%). Meanwhile, Canadian Alliance support has jumped 7 points over the past 3 months (24% to 31%). This effectively closes the gap between the federal Liberals and the Alliance, from 10 points just 3 months ago to the current 4 points differential.

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The Progressive Conservative party attracts 1-in-10 British Columbians, a drop of 7 points since March. NDP support has remained static (16% in March to 15% currently). The same is true for the Green Party (7% to 8%).

Party support among the different regions and populations in British Columbia are:

- Federal Liberal party support is consistent across all regions. However, the Liberals enjoy more solid backing from women (40% vs. 29% men), younger British Columbians (39% vs. 25% among older residents), non-union households (37% vs. 30% union), and upper income households (39% vs. 28% lower income).
- The Canadian Alliance is stronger among suburban Vancouver residents (35%), and weaker in Vancouver/Burnaby (25%). The party enjoys more solid support among men (38% vs. 25% women), older British Columbians (43% vs. 22% younger), and people with less formal education (36% vs. 25% university graduates).
- The federal NDP has higher support in Vancouver/Burnaby, but is much weaker in the outer suburbs (12%). The party is also more popular among younger British Columbians (20%), public sector union households (22% vs. 14% private sector), and lower income households (22% vs. 12% upper income).

Chrétien's Approval Rating Falls 9 Points to 43%, Well Back of New Alliance Leader Stephen Harper (53%)

Jean Chrétien's approval ratings have suffered a setback among the BC electorate. With 43% of the population approving of the job he's doing as Prime Minister, Chrétien now trails all federal party leaders in BC. This is unprecedented for Chrétien in BC since his first election in 1993. Meanwhile, the "new kid on the federal block", Alliance leader Stephen Harper, appears to have hit the ground running in his job as Leader of the Official Opposition in

Ottawa. At 53%, his first Ipsos-Reid approval rating is more than double his predecessor's last rating (25% approved of Stockwell Day in March), and he's clearly doing a good job challenging all other leaders – especially Chrétien – in the minds of British Columbians, While Joe Clark continues to receive the approval of the largest proportion of British Columbians (56%), he's being challenged by Harper and NDP leader Alexa McDonough (52%).

Since March, Chrétien's approval ratings have tumbled 9 percentage points (52% to 43%), and Clark has lost 7 points (63% to 56%). Alexa McDonough's ratings have not changed over the past 3 months.

To contrast, a majority of British Columbians (54%) now disapprove of the job Jean Chrétien is doing as Prime Minister. This is up 8 percentage points since March (46%). Far fewer feel negatively towards Joe Clark (35%), though this is also up 7 points over the past 3 months (28%). Alexa McDonough meanwhile continues to improve her image among the BC public; 29% disapprove of her performance this quarter, down 7 points since March (36%), and a 12 point improvement since December (41%).

For Harper, just 1-in-5 British Columbians (20%) disapprove of the job he's doing as Leader of the Official Opposition, a vast improvement over the 70% who were critical of Stockwell Day in March. Importantly, 27% of the BC public is not yet able to express an opinion on Harper.

BC Public Mixed on Federal Liberal Government Performance (53% Approve), But See Solid Improvements on Economy (58%) and Fiscal Management (53%)

British Columbians continue to give generally positive, though mixed, reviews to the governing Liberals for the job they are doing governing the country. Just over half of those surveyed in June – 53% say they approve of the Liberals, the same proportion as six months ago (54%). To contrast, 46% disapprove of the Liberal's performance, virtually the same as December (45%).

On more specific policy issues, the BC public gives mixed grades to the federal Liberal government for its efforts. In 2 key policy areas (economy and fiscal management) the Liberal's approval ratings have jumped significantly since December 2001. In 3 other areas (healthcare, environment, and land claims) the ratings have stayed pretty much the same over the past six months, and remain negative.

The governing Liberals receive highest praise for:

- Managing Canada's economy: 58% good job (up 10 points since December 2001 – 48%)
- Managing finances & budget: 53% (up 7 points – 46%)
- Protecting Canada's environment: 51% good job (no change)

The Liberals receive less praise for:

- Ensuring quality healthcare available to Canadians: 31% good job (down 2 points – 33%)
- Negotiating land claims settlements with BC's aboriginal peoples: 28% (down 2 points – 30%)



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For more information on this news release, please contact:

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FEDERAL PARTY PREFERENCE IN BC

(Decided Voters Only)*

Federal Party	November 2000 Election	March 2001	June 2001	September 2001	December 2001	March 2002	June 2002
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Liberal	28	33	39	43	36	34	35
Canadian Alliance	49	41	26	20	24	24	31
PC party	7	10	15	17	16	17	10
NDP	11	10	11	11	12	16	15
Green	2	5	9	7	10	7	8
Other	3	1	1	2	2	2	1
Uncommitted/Undecided	-	7	11	10	10	12	11

*Question: Thinking of how you feel right now, which of the following parties' candidate would you be most likely to support if a federal election were held here in BC tomorrow? Would it be (READ PARTY?).

FEDERAL LEADER PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Rating	Chrétien	Harper*	Clark	McDonough
	%	%	%	%
Approve				
June 2002	43	53	56	52
March 2002	52	25	63	52
December 2001	49	25	60	44
September 2001	55	18	68	47
June 2001	53	24	62	43
March 2001	52	42	58	43
Disapprove				
June 2002	54	20	35	29
March 2002	46	70	28	36
December 2001	49	70	30	41
September 2001	44	79	26	39
June 2001	45	71	29	44
March 2001	47	55	37	45

Question: Thinking of (LEADER), would you say you generally approve or disapprove of the way he/she has performed as (POSITION)?

* Stephen Harper replaced Stockwell Day in April 2002. All numbers prior to June 2002 are for Stockwell Day.

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PERFORMANCE RATING OF FEDERAL LIBERAL GOVERNMENT AND REFORM OPPOSITION	
	Liberal Government

Approve

June 2002	53
December 2002	54
September 2001	57
June 2001	59
March 2001	55

Disapprove

June 2002	46
December 2002	45
September 2001	41
June 2001	39
March 2001	47

Question: Generally speaking do you approve or disapprove of the job the (Liberal government is doing governing the country; Canadian Alliance is doing as the Official Opposition)?