

BC POLITICAL SCENE

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Federal Liberals (35%) Still Party to Beat in BC; Alliance (25%) and NDP (22%) Battling for Second Place

Joe Clark (51%) Tops Other Federal Leaders in Job Approval



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Vancouver, BC – A new Ipsos-Reid poll finds BC Liberal support holding firm after a five percentage point decline in the previous quarter. The BC Liberals currently have the support of 44 percent (up 1 point from September) of decided voters, compared to 31 percent for the NDP (up 3 points) and 17 percent for the Green Party (down 2 points). This marks the first time the NDP have broken through the 30 percent level in more than five years (30% in Sep 97).

Joy MacPhail leads Gordon Campbell in performance approval for the fourth consecutive quarter. MacPhail has the approval of five-in-ten (49%, up 2 points from September) British Columbians, compared to four-in-ten (37%, down 2 points from September) who approve of Campbell's performance as Premier.

On the federal scene, the Liberals (35%) remain well out in front of the Alliance (25%) and NDP (22%), with the Progressive Conservatives (9%) and Green Party (8%) trailing the field. Despite the poor performance of his party, Joe Clark (51%) continues to be the frontrunner in job approval. Alexa McDonough (48%) is next best, followed by Jean Chrétien (44%) and Stephen Harper (42%).

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These are the findings of a BC Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between December 2nd and 9th, 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 2001 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 population sub-groups

BC Liberal (44%) Support Stable as NDP (31%) Reaches Five Year High; Green Party (17%) and BC Unity (5%) Trail

BC Liberal support among decided and leaning voters is stable this quarter. They currently sit at 44 percent, virtually unchanged from 43 percent last quarter. Meanwhile, the NDP can celebrate a breakthrough through this quarter. They have 31 percent support, up three points from September and six points from June. This marks the first time the NDP have broken through the 30 percent level in more than five years (Sept 97). Support for the provincial Green Party (17%) is down a statistically insignificant two points, while BC Unity's (5%) support is unchanged. The level of undecided voters continues to creep upwards. Currently two-in-ten (20%) BC voters are undecided or uncommitted to any party.

The regional results this quarter show a huge divide between the Lower Mainland and the rest of the province. The BC Liberals have a 20 point lead over the NDP in the Lower Mainland (49% to 29%), but are in a statistical dead heat with the NDP in the rest of the province (Interior/North 35% each, Island 38% LIB vs. 34% NDP).

- The BC Liberals do best with upper income households (58% vs. 24% lower) and non-union households (48% vs. 35% union).
- The NDP do best with lower income households (44% vs. 23% upper) and with union households (40% vs. 27% non-union).
- The Greens do best with younger residents (24% vs. 9% older), lower income households (24% vs. 12% upper) and with men (21% vs. 14% women).



MacPhail (49%) Continues to Lead Campbell (37%) in Job Approval

The Premier's approval rating continues to slip this quarter. Nearly four-in-ten (37%) BC residents say they approve of the job Gordon Campbell is doing as Premier of BC. This is down two points from September, four points from June and eight points from March. Conversely, six-in-ten (56%) British Columbians disapprove of the job Campbell is doing as Premier.

Joy MacPhail has 49 percent approval this quarter, on par with where she has been the previous three quarters. Three-in-ten (29%, down 6 points) British Columbians disapprove of the performance of MacPhail as NDP leader.

- MacPhail's approval is higher with older British Columbians (54% vs. 44% younger) and union households (56% vs. 46% non-union).
- Campbell's approval is higher with Lower Mainland residents (40% vs. 29% Interior/North), non-union households (42% vs. 27% union) and upper income households (46% vs. 29% lower).

Federal Liberals (35%) Still Party to Beat in BC; Alliance (25%) and NDP (22%) Battling for Second Place

This quarter's federal vote support numbers show the NDP continuing to make the greatest gains. The NDP sit at 22 percent of decided voters, up three points from September and seven points from June. The federal Liberals continue to lead in British Columbia with the support of 35 percent of decided voters (up 2 points). The Liberals enjoy a ten point cushion over their nearest rivals, the Canadian Alliance, who sit at 25 percent support this quarter (down 2 points). The PC's have the support of 9 percent of decided voters (down 2 points), just ahead of the Greens at 8 percent (down 1 point).

- Liberal support is highest with university graduates (42% vs. 29% high school) and non-union households (39% vs. 26% union). It is also higher in the Vancouver-Burnaby region (44% vs. 31% rest of BC).



- Canadian Alliance support is higher in the Interior/North (33%) and the suburban Lower Mainland (29%). It is also higher with older residents (31% vs. 21% younger) and men (30% vs. 20% women).
- NDP support is higher on Vancouver Island (28% vs. 20% rest of BC), with residents under 55 years of age (24% vs. 14% older) and with lower income households (30% vs. 17% upper).
- PC support is generally consistent across all regions and demographic groups.

Joe Clark (51%) Tops Other Federal Leaders in Job Approval

British Columbians appear to be more negative toward all federal leaders this quarter with approval ratings falling across the board. The largest drop is for Joe Clark (51%, down 6 points), followed by Stephen Harper (42%, down 5 points) and Alexa McDonough (48%, down 4 points). Jean Chrétien's approval has fallen a statistically insignificant two points to 44 percent this quarter.

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