

# **NDP CLOSING THE GAP IN BRITISH COLUMBIA**

***NDP (37%, up 6 points) Steal Support from BC Liberals (41%, down 4 points) and Green Party (14%, down 3 points)***

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***Gordon Campbell Matches His Lowest Approval Rating as Premier (37%, down 2 points)***



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**Vancouver, BC** – A new Ipsos-Reid poll gives the BC NDP good reason to celebrate this holiday season. The NDP, under new leader Carole James, have moved up six percentage points from September and currently stand at 37 percent support among decided voters in the province. This moves the NDP within four points of the governing BC Liberals who have 41 percent support, down four points from September. The NDP have also taken support from the Green Party who now stand at 14 percent, down three points from September.

NDP gains have occurred even though two-thirds (64%) of British Columbians have no impression of new leader Carole James. Nevertheless, there are more than twice as many residents with a positive impression (23%) of James, than a negative impression (10%).

Meanwhile, Premier Gordon Campbell's approval rating (37%, down 2 points) is at its lowest point ever, matching his rating from this time last year (37% in Dec 2002). Six-in-ten (60%, up 1 point) residents currently disapprove of the way Gordon Campbell has performed as Premier.

"We have reported for some time that much of the Liberal support is soft and could be attracted by a credible alternative," says Ipsos-Reid Vice-President Kyle Braid. "It seems that Carole James has done just enough to attract some attention from these soft Liberals. Even better for the NDP is that she's also managed to appeal to some voters in the Green camp."



*These are the findings of a BC Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between December 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003 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  $\pm 3.5$  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.*

### ***NDP (37%, up 6 points) Steal Support from BC Liberals (41%, down 4 points) and Green Party (14%, down 3 points)***

The NDP has closed the gap to the BC Liberals from 14 points in September (31% NDP vs. 45% Liberal) to just four points today (37% NDP vs. 41% Liberal). The NDP now stands at 37 percent support among decided voters in the province, up six percentage points from September. This is the highest level of support recorded for the NDP in more than seven years (37% in Sep 1996).

The NDP's gains have come at the expense of both the BC Liberals (41%, down 4 points) and the Green Party (14%, down 3 points). BC Unity has the support of five percent (up 1 point) of British Columbians. These results exclude the 17 percent of BC residents who have no party preference or are undecided.

There are several regional and demographic differences in this quarter's results.

- The BC Liberals do better in the Lower Mainland (44%) and Interior/North (42%), compared to Vancouver Island (30%). The Liberals also do better with men (44% vs. 37% women), non-union residents (44% vs. 31% union) and higher income households (50% vs. 31% lower).
- The NDP do much better on Vancouver Island (44%) and much worse in the Interior/North (27%). They also do better with union households (48% vs. 33% non-union) and lower income households (44% vs. 30% higher).



- The Greens do better on Vancouver Island (18%) and in the Interior/North (16%) than in the Lower Mainland (11%). The Greens also do better with women (17% vs. 10% men) and with younger residents (20% vs. 10% older).

### ***Two-Thirds (64%) Have No Impression of New NDP Leader Carole James; 23% Positive – 10% Negative***

Two-thirds (64%) of British Columbians say they have no impression at all of newly elected NDP leader Carole James. Nevertheless, James does get more favourable than unfavourable reviews. Overall, one-quarter (23%) of residents say they have a positive impression of James, while only one-in-ten (10%) have a negative impression. Three percent did not know enough to answer the question.

- Positive impressions of James are highest on Vancouver Island (33% vs. 22% Lower Mainland, 18% Interior/North), with older British Columbians (29% vs. 19% younger) and lower income households (35% vs. 19% higher).

### ***Gordon Campbell Matches His Lowest Approval Rating as Premier (37%, down 2 points)***

Gordon Campbell's approval rating has slipped two percentage points since September. While the drop is not statistically significant, his current 37 percent approval rating matches his lowest ever rating as Premier (37% in Dec 2002). One-in-ten (11%) residents "strongly" approve of the job Campbell is doing as Premier, while 26 percent "moderately" approve.

Six-in-ten (60%, up 1 point) BC residents currently disapprove of Campbell's performance as Premier, including 40 percent who "strongly" disapprove and 20 percent who "moderately" disapprove.

- Campbell's approval is much higher in the Lower Mainland (39%) and the Interior/North (40%) than on Vancouver Island (27%). Campbell's approval is also higher with men (43% vs. 32% women), non-union households (41% vs. 27% union) and higher income households (44% vs. 29% lower).



**Ipsos Reid**

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