

DEAD HEAT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

NDP (38%, Down 6 Points) Lose Support to Greens (18%, Up 7 Points) Creating Tie With BC Liberals (37%, Unchanged)

NDP Leader Carole James (54%) Continues to Lead Premier Gordon Campbell (35%) in Job Approval

Three-in-Ten (30%) Think Province in Better Shape Than When Liberals First Elected; Four-in-Ten (42%) Say Worse Shape



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Vancouver, BC – With 10 months to go until the next British Columbia provincial election, a new BC Ipsos-Reid poll shows the NDP (38%) and BC Liberals (37%) in a statistical dead heat among decided voters. The NDP is down 6 points since May, with all of the benefit going to the Green Party (18%, up 7 points). The BC Liberals are unchanged from May.

A majority (54%, up 7 points from March) of British Columbians approve of the performance of Carole James as NDP leader. Gordon Campbell's approval rating as Premier (35%, up 1 point) is basically unchanged from March.

British Columbians are not convinced the province is in better shape than when the Liberals were first elected in May 2001. Three-in-ten (30%) voters think the province is now in better shape, while more than four-in-ten (42%) think the province is in worse shape than when the Liberals were first elected. While these numbers are not good news for the BC Liberals, they are an improvement over polls taken on their first anniversary (20% better, 53% worse in May 2002) and second anniversary (24% better, 45% worse in May 2003).

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid telephone poll conducted Monday July 5th to Wednesday July 7th, 2004 with a randomly selected sample of 800 adult British Columbia residents. The results are considered accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire BC adult population 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 BC population according to the 2001 Census.

NDP (38%, Down 6 Points) Lose Support to Greens (18%, Up 7 Points) Creating Tie With BC Liberals (37%, Unchanged)

The NDP (38%) and BC Liberals (37%) are effectively tied for the support of decided voters in British Columbia. While the BC Liberals are unchanged from May (37%), the NDP (38%, down 6 points) has lost considerable ground to the Green Party (18%, up 7 points). This puts the Green Party back at support levels they have held for most of the current Liberal mandate (17% to 20% range from May 2002 to Sep 2003).

BC Unity has the support of 4% of decided voters, down 1 point from May. These results exclude the 15% of BC residents who have no party preference or are undecided.

The regional analysis shows the BC Liberals ahead in the Lower Mainland (43% BC Liberals, 33% NDP) and the NDP well out front in the rest of the province (46% NDP, 28% BC Liberals).

Demographic differences are as follows.

- The BC Liberals do better with men (41% vs. 33% women), older residents (42% 55+ years vs. 31% 18 to 34 years), non-union residents (43% vs. 23% union) and higher income households (44% vs. 31% lower, 29% middle).
- The NDP do better with union households (57% vs. 31% non-union) and with middle-income residents (47% middle vs. 37% lower, 34% higher).
- The Greens do better with women (21% vs. 14% men) and younger voters (26% 18 to 34 years vs. 14% 35+ years).

NDP Leader Carole James (54%) Continues to Lead Premier Gordon Campbell (35%) in Job Approval

A majority (54%) of British Columbians approve of the performance of Carole James as NDP leader. This is an improvement of 7 points from March. One-in-ten (9%, unchanged) “strongly” approve of her performance, while 45% (up 7 points) “moderately” approve. One-quarter (24%, unchanged) of British Columbians disapprove of her performance as NDP leader (8% “strongly”, 16% “moderately”).

Gordon Campbell's approval rating is basically unchanged from March. Only one-in-three (35%, up 1 point) British Columbians approves of Campbell's performance as Premier. One-in-ten (8%, up 1 point) residents "strongly" approve of the job Campbell is doing as Premier, while three-in-ten (28%, up 1 point) "moderately" approve.

Six-in-ten (62%, down 2 points) BC residents currently disapprove of Campbell's performance as Premier, including 43% (down 2 points) percent who "strongly" disapprove and 19% (unchanged) who "moderately" disapprove.

Regional and demographic differences are as follows.

- James' approval is highest with union households (63% vs. 50% non-union).
- Campbell's approval is higher with non-union households (41% vs. 21% union) and higher income households (43% vs. 31% lower, 28% middle).

Three-in-Ten (30%) Think Province in Better Shape Than When Liberals First Elected; Four-in-Ten (42%) Say Worse Shape

British Columbians are split on how the overall shape of the province has changed since the BC Liberals were first elected in May 2001. At this point, more British Columbians think the province is in "worse shape" (42%) than "better shape" (30%). One-quarter (26%) think the province is in the "same shape" as when the Liberals were first elected.

For the Liberals, these results represent a slight improvement over polls taken on the Liberal's first anniversary (20% better, 53% worse in May 2002) and second anniversary (24% better, 45% worse in May 2003).

These mixed new numbers are a contrast to the mostly positive results of a June 2004 Ipsos-Reid poll that showed a majority of British Columbians think the economy is in good shape.¹ The implication is that British Columbians take more than the economy into account when assessing the "overall" shape of the province. For example, Ipsos-Reid polls have consistently shown health care and education ahead of the economy on the public's issues agenda.

¹ A June 2004 Ipsos-Reid poll showed 58% of British Columbians think the provincial economy is in "very good" or "good" shape. This was an increase from 36% in October 2003 and the highest rate recorded since 1997.

- 30 -

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