

READY, SET, GO – ALBERTA HEADS TO THE POLLS

Klein and the PCs (50%) Start the Election Campaign with a Commanding Lead Over the Alberta Liberals (26%), NDP (10%) and Alberta Alliance (9%)

Albertans Say Healthcare (49%) and Education (26%) are Most Important Issues in this Election

Despite Some Concern Over Voter Fatigue, 69% Say it Was Okay for Klein to Call the Election Now

If the PCs Win this Election, Albertans Are Divided Over Whether Ralph Klein Should Complete his Term and Run Again (46%) or Step Aside Before the End of His Term (44%)



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Calgary, AB – The first poll released after the Klein government called a provincial election for November 22nd shows the PCs clearly ahead of the opposition parties, capturing 50% of the decided vote compared with 26% support for the Alberta Liberals, 10% for the Alberta NDP and 9% for the Alberta Alliance Party. Currently 15% of voters say they are undecided. In the campaign, Albertans say that healthcare (49%) and education (26%) are the most important issues.

There had been some concern about voter fatigue given that this will be the third time Albertans go to the polls this year. It seems as if this fear is unfounded as seven-in-ten (69%) Albertans say it was okay to call the election now compared with only a quarter (24%) who say the election should have been delayed.

Finally, assuming the PCs win the election, Albertans seem to be divided over whether they would like to see Premier Klein complete his term and run in another election (46%) or step aside before the end of his term (44%).

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/CTV/Globe and Mail poll conducted between October 22nd and October 26th 2004. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 800 adult Albertans (640 interviews were conducted just prior to the election call, 160 interviews were conducted after the election call). With a sample of this size, 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 adult Alberta 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 Alberta population according to the 2001 Census.

Klein and the PCs (50%) Start the Election Campaign with a Commanding Lead Over the Alberta Liberals (26%), NDP (10%) and Alberta Alliance (9%)

Despite facing some recent controversy over spending, the Klein government is entering the provincial election campaign with a commanding lead over the other parties. With the support of 50% of decided voters, support for the PCs is almost double that of the Alberta Liberals (26%) and five times that of the Alberta NDP (10%) and the relatively new Alberta Alliance Party (9%). Currently, 15% of Albertans say they do not know who they will vote for.

The recent spending controversy has not dented the support for the PCs which is unchanged since September 2004. Meanwhile, the Alberta Liberals seem to be drawing support away from the Alberta NDP and the Alberta Alliance. Liberal support is up 4 points (from 22% in September 2004) while NDP support has dropped three points (from 13%) and the Alberta Alliance has dropped one point (from 10%) .

- Support for the PCs is highest among men (54%) and those earning over \$70K per year (57%).
- Support for the Alberta Liberals and the Alberta Alliance is consistent across all demographic groups.
- Support for the Alberta NDP is higher among those earning less than \$30K per year (15%).
- The only area of the province that is competitive is Edmonton where the PCs (38% support) and the Alberta Liberals (35% support) are in a virtual tie. Support for the Alberta NDP is 14% and support for the Alberta Alliance is 8% in Edmonton.

Albertans Say Healthcare (49%) and Education (26%) are Most Important Issues in this Election

Healthcare and education continue to be the most important issues in the province. Half (49%) of Albertans say “healthcare/hospital funding/user fees” should be the most important issue in the election and a quarter (26%) say it should be “education”. “Energy” (12%), “Alberta beef” (11%), “tax/tax reform” (8%) and “budget/managing the surplus” (8%) round out the top 6.

Despite Some Concern Over Voter Fatigue, 69% Say it Was Okay for Klein to Call the Election Now

With a federal election in June and municipal elections in October, some commentators have been concerned about voter fatigue. Clearly Albertans do not feel this is a problem with 69% agreeing with the opinion that “Alberta voters are capable of handling three election campaigns in one year and that Ralph Klein should not delay the election over unfounded worries about voter fatigue” compared with only 24% who agree with

opinion that “there is a real possibility of voter fatigue and Ralph Klein should delay calling the election”.

Even supporters of the Alberta Liberals (71%) and supporters of the Alberta NDP (67%) say that Ralph Klein should not have delayed calling the election over concerns about voter fatigue.

If the PCs Win this Election, Albertans Are Divided Over Whether Ralph Klein Should Complete his Term and Run Again (46%) or Step Aside Before the End of His Term (44%)

After nearly 12 years as premier, Albertans are divided over what Ralph Klein should do if he secures a fourth term. Assuming the PCs win the election, 46% say he should “stay on until the end of his term and run in another election in the future”, while 44% say he should “step aside before the end of his term to make room for new leadership.”

On this issue there are clear divisions based on party lines but even among PC supporters there may be some desire for change. Thirty percent of PC supporters say Ralph Klein should “step down to make room for new leadership” compared with 66% who say he should “stay on until the end of his term and run in another election in the future”.

- Edmontonians (53%) are more likely to say Klein should step down before the end of his term as opposed to staying on to run again (36%).
- In Calgary the situation is reversed, 50% say he should complete his term and run again compared with 40% who say he should step aside.



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