

Alberta After the Election

Albertans Say Health Care (60%) and Education (33%) Are The Most Important Issues to Address After the Election – Taxes (8%) and the Economy (8%) Distant Third

Potential Successors to Klein All Have Low Profiles – Jim Dinning Has Early Lead in Favourability



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Calgary, AB – A new Ipsos-Reid/CTV poll conducted in the last few days of the provincial election campaign shows that Albertans want health care (60%) and education (33%) at the top of the government's agenda in the months following the campaign. Much smaller proportions of Albertans also think taxes and the economy are an important issue to address (8%, respectively).

Having already signaled his intent to step down before the next election, rumours are starting to swirl about who will step forward to lead the Progressive Conservatives. All rumoured replacements have work to do in building their profiles but of the four candidates tested (Health Minister Gary Mar, former Provincial Treasurer Jim Dinning, Minister of Economic Development Mark Norris and senator-elect Ted Morton) Jim Dinning currently has a lead in terms of favourability.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between November 12th and November 17th, 2004. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 800 adult Albertans. 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 population in Alberta 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 provincial population according to the 2001 Census data.



Albertans Say Health Care (60%) and Education (33%) Are The Most Important Issues to Address After the Election – Taxes and the Economy Distant Third (8%)

Looking past the current campaign, Albertans clearly identify health care (60%) and education (33%) as the two primary issues they want a government with a new mandate to address in the months following the current campaign. No other issue is as prominent in the public agenda as these two areas. In fact, healthcare and education have been at the top of Albertans' issue agenda since October 1997.

Much smaller proportions of Albertans identified taxes (8%) or the economy (8%) as issues that need to be dealt with in the coming months. Roads and Infrastructure, along with seniors' issues were raised by 5% of those surveyed as other issues that will be important for the government to address.

- While health care is clearly important to a majority of Albertans, women (63%), those over the age of 55 (65%) and those with an annual household income of \$50,000 to \$70,000 (70%) are most likely to identify this issue as important for the new government to deal with.
- Education is an issue that is most important to women (41%), Albertans under the age of 55 (36%), those with a university education (45%) and to residents of Calgary (40%).

Potential Successors to Klein All Have Low Profiles – Jim Dinning Has Early Lead in Favourability

Premier Klein has indicated on several occasions that this is his last election and if he wins, he will retire at some point in his fourth mandate. Initial polling reveals that four leading political figures who are rumoured to be interested in succeeding the Premier are all relatively unknown to Albertans.



Gary Mar enjoys the highest profile of the four but still, one-in-five (19%) Albertans say they did not know enough about him to say if they had a favourable or unfavourable impression. A slightly larger number (33%) could not rate Jim Dinning - the former Provincial Treasurer who is widely credited as the architect of the deficit fighting program of the mid 1990's. Meanwhile almost half of Albertans (48%) could not rate Mark Norris the current Minister of Economic Development and a majority (57%) were unable to rate senator-elect Ted Morton (who is also a candidate in the current election).

Of the four, Jim Dinning enjoys the highest favourability ratings. Almost half (47%) of Albertans say they have a favourable impression (10% "very favourable", 37% "somewhat favourable" compared with one-in-five (20%) who says their impression of him is unfavourable (11% "not very favourable", 9% "not at all favourable"). This gives Dinning a net favourability score of +27 for Dinning and makes him the early leader in any race to succeed Klein.

Mark Norris trails Dinning with a net favourability score of +18, with 35% of Albertans saying they have a favourable impression of him compared with 17% who say they have an unfavourable impression.

Ted Morton, a Senator-elect and current candidate in this election, receives a favourable rating from 27% of Albertans and an unfavourable rating from 16% (net favourability score +11).

Despite having the highest profile, Albertans are split in their impressions of Gary Mar. While 40% have a favourable impression of the Health Minister, an equal proportion (41%)



has a negative impression. For this reason Mar's net favourability score is -1 (the only potential candidate with a negative net rating).

It is also important to note that while Dinning appears to be the early leader among all Albertans, the race is much different among PC supporters. In terms of those Albertans who are likely to support the Tories in the upcoming election, Mar (56%) edges Dinning (55%) in terms of overall favourability, followed by Norris (43%) and Morton (30%). While this points to a much closer contest within the party, net favourability scores still give Dinning a slight edge (+42) over his competitors (Norris +34, Mar +29 and Morton +17).

- Dinning is more likely to earn favourable ratings from men (52%), Albertans over the age of 55 (57%), residents of Calgary (54%), from those with a university education (58%), and from Albertans with an annual household income of more than \$50,000 (51%).
- Norris earns higher evaluations from Albertans under the age of 35 (42%) and residents of Central Alberta (41%) and Edmonton (40%). Albertans with an annual household income of less than \$30,000 are least likely to offer a positive assessment (27%).
- Ted Morton earns higher favourability ratings from Albertans under the age of 35 (30%), from those who have a high school education or less and from residents of Central Alberta (37%).
- Gary Mar receives slightly higher ratings from Albertans under the age of 35 (48%) and from those with an annual household income of \$50,000 to \$70,000 (48%)



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