

BC PROVINCIAL POLITICS – PART III

Testing Some Possible Campaign Messages



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Vancouver, BC— As part of Ipsos-Reid’s December 9th breakfast event “BC Election 2005: Are You Ready to Rumble?” we presented the results of a comprehensive poll looking ahead to next spring’s provincial election. A key element of this poll was testing the credibility or resonance of some specific messages that might be delivered during the election campaign. We tested 5 things Carole James and the NDP might say and 6 things Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals might say.

5 Things Carole James and the NDP Might Say

British Columbians are receptive to arguments that Gordon Campbell and the Liberals can’t be trusted to keep their promises and that Gordon Campbell and the Liberals hurt the poor and vulnerable to balance the budget. Six-in-ten residents agree with the statements “You can’t trust Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals to keep their promises” (63% agree) and “Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals have balanced the budget on the backs of the poor and vulnerable” (61% agree).

BC residents are less receptive to arguments that the Liberals are mean spirited and that Carole James and the NDP will get British Columbians working together. Specifically, four-in-ten residents agree with the statements “Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals are mean spirited” (41% agree) and “Carole James and the NDP will get all British Columbians working together again” (38% agree).

Residents are split down the middle on a final statement. Fifty percent agree with the statement “British Columbia can’t afford another four years of Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals”, while 49 percent disagree.

6 Things Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals Might Say

British Columbians are open to arguments that the NDP is too closely aligned with unions and that the Liberals have set the province on the path to prosperity. Six-in-ten residents agree with the statements “Carole James and the NDP are too closely tied to organized labour unions” (61% agree) and “Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals have put BC on the right track to prosper over the next few years” (57% agree).

Somewhat less effective for Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals are arguments that all their actions were necessary, that Carole James is too inexperienced and that BC can't afford to have the NDP in power again. Specifically, about half of British Columbians agree with the statements "The actions taken by Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals may seem harsh, but they were necessary to ensure British Columbia prospers in the future" (53% agree), "Carole James is too inexperienced to be Premier of British Columbia" (51%) and "British Columbia CAN'T afford another NDP government" (50%).

Finally, many British Columbians believe that the NDP has changed since its governing decade of the 1990's. Fewer than half of residents agree with the statement "Carole James and the NDP are really no different than the 1990's NDP" (45% agree).

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid telephone poll conducted November 24th to 30th, 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.

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