

BC ELECTION 2005 – PART 2

THE HORSERACE AND LEADERSHIP

No Real Movement Yet in Vote or Best Premier Numbers
Impressions Improving for Carole James and the NDP
BC Liberal and NDP Voters Not Likely to Switch



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Vancouver, BC – A week into the British Columbia election campaign and not much has changed according to a new Ipsos-Reid survey conducted on behalf of BCTV News, The Vancouver Sun and The Victoria Times Colonist. The BC Liberals (46%) continue to lead the NDP (39%) among the province's decided voters. These results are unchanged from March. The Green Party (13%, up 1 point) is in a distant third place.

Among residents with an opinion, Gordon Campbell (50%, up 3 points from March) is still the choice over Carole James (38%, up 2 points) as the public's selection as best Premier. The small gains for both Campbell and James come at the expense of Green Party leader Adriane Carr, who is the choice of 12% (down 5 points) of residents as the best Premier.

While it hasn't translated into votes, Carole James and the NDP have better momentum numbers than Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals. Three-in-ten (29%) residents say their impression of Carole James and the NDP has improved since the start of the campaign, compared to 13% who say their impression has worsened. The results are nearly the opposite for Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals with 10% improved impressions compared to 29% worsened impressions. Far fewer voters say their impression of Adriane Carr and the Green Party has changed in either direction (13% improved vs. 8% worsened).

Votes for both of the two main contenders are very firm at this early point in the campaign. Only 16% of Liberal voters and 21% of NDP voters say they are "very" or "somewhat" likely to change their mind and end up voting for another party on Election Day. In contrast, nearly four-in-ten (38%) Green Party voters say they are "very" or "somewhat" likely to change their mind.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid telephone poll conducted April 23rd to 26th, 2005 with a randomly selected sample of 1,050 adult British Columbia residents, including 400 residents of

Vancouver Island. The overall 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 Vancouver Island results are considered accurate to within ± 4.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error will be larger 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.

No Real Movement Yet in Vote Numbers

The vote result is basically unchanged from a March 2005 Ipsos-Reid survey. The BC Liberals lead the NDP by a margin of 46% to 39% among decided voters – exactly the same result as in March. The Green Party has picked up a statistically insignificant 1-point since March and currently has the support of 13% of decided voters. Two percent of decided British Columbians say they will vote for “some other party”. These results exclude the 12% of voters who are undecided or express no party preference.

The usual regional and gender gaps are apparent in the vote result. By region, the Liberals have a 15-point lead in the Lower Mainland (51% Lib vs. 36% NDP), but narrowly trail the NDP by 4-points in the rest of the province (39% Lib vs. 43% NDP).

- The BC Liberals have a 10-point lead (49% Lib vs. 39% NDP) in the western portion of the Lower Mainland (North Shore, Vancouver, Burnaby, New West, Richmond) and a 20-point lead (53% Lib vs. 33% NDP) in the eastern portion of the Lower Mainland (all other municipalities).
- Outside the Lower Mainland, the NDP has a 6-point advantage on Vancouver Island (45% NDP vs. 39% Lib), while the two main parties are effectively tied in the Interior/North (41% NDP vs. 40% Lib).

In terms of gender, the Liberals have a massive 24-point lead among men (54% Lib vs. 30% NDP), while the NDP has a significant 10-point lead among women (48% NDP vs. 38% Lib).

- The BC Liberals also do better with older voters (55% 55+ years vs. 39% 18-34 years, 44% 35-54 years), non-union households (52% vs. 33% union) and higher income residents (58% \$75K+ vs. 33% <\$40K, 41% \$40-\$75K).
- The NDP also does better with union households (54% vs. 32% non-union) and lower/middle income residents (47% <\$40K, 41% \$40-\$75K vs. 32% \$75K+).

- The Green Party does best with younger voters (20% 18-34 years vs. 10% 35-54 years, 8% 55+ years) and lower/middle income residents (16% <\$40K, 16% \$40-\$75K vs. 7% \$75K+).

No Real Movement Yet in Best Premier Numbers

Gordon Campbell is still British Columbians' choice as best Premier. Among residents with an opinion, Gordon Campbell (50%, up 3 points from March) has a 12-point lead over Carole James (38%, up 2 points) as best Premier. Meanwhile, Adriane Carr is the choice of 12% of BC residents, down 5-points from March. These results exclude the 14% of voters who are undecided about which leader would make the best Premier.

- Gordon Campbell is more likely to be selected by Lower Mainland residents (54% vs. 45% Rest of BC), men (62% vs. 38% women), older voters (57% 55+ years vs. 45% 18-34 years, 48% 35-54 years), non-union households (57% vs. 36% union) and higher income residents (62% \$75K+ vs. 35% <\$40K, 47% \$40-\$75K).
- Carole James is more likely to be selected by women (48% vs. 27% men), union residents (51% vs. 31% non-union) and lower income residents (48% <\$40K vs. 39% \$40-\$75K, 30% \$75K+).
- Adriane Carr is more likely to be selected by Interior/North residents (17% vs. 12% overall), younger and middle aged voters (18% 18-34 years, 14% 35-54 years vs. 5% 55+ years) and lower/middle income residents (17% <\$40K, 14% \$40-\$75K vs. 8% \$75K+).

Impressions Improving for Carole James and the NDP

While Carole James and the NDP haven't made a dent in the BC Liberal lead, they have managed to generate better momentum numbers than their competition in the first week of the campaign. Three-in-ten (29%) voters say their impression of Carole James and the NDP has improved since the start of the campaign, compared to 13% who say their impression has worsened. This gives Carole James and the NDP a net momentum score of +16 points (improved % minus worsened %) for the campaign so far. Slightly more than half (53%) of voters say their impression of Carole James and the NDP has stayed the same.

- The net momentum for Carole James and the NDP is +46 points among NDP voters (50% improved vs. 4% worsened), +18 points among Green voters (31% improved vs. 13% worsened) and -7 points among Liberal voters (16% improved vs. 23% worsened).

The results are nearly the opposite for Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals with 10% improved impressions compared to 29% worsened impressions for a net momentum score of -19 points (improved % minus worsened %). Six-in-ten (60%) residents say their impression of Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals has stayed the same.

- The net momentum for Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals is +14 points among Liberal voters (21% improved vs. 7% worsened), -41 points among NDP voters (4% improved vs. 45% worsened) and -54 points among Green voters (1% improved vs. 55% worsened).

Far fewer voters say their impression of Adriane Carr and the Green Party has changed in either direction (13% improved vs. 8% worsened), for a net momentum score of +5 points (improved % minus worsened %). Seven-in-ten (69%) residents say their impression of Adriane Carr and the Green Party has stayed the same.

- The net momentum for Adriane Carr and the Green Party is +28 points among Green voters (31% improved vs. 3% worsened), +8 points among NDP voters (17% improved vs. 9% worsened) and -2 points among Liberal voters (6% improved vs. 8% worsened).

BC Liberal and NDP Voters Not Likely to Switch

There's a lot of hardness in the support for both of the main parties. Overall, only two-in-ten (21%) voters with a preference say they are "very likely" (2%) or "somewhat likely" (19%) to change their mind and vote for another party on Election Day. This statistic was 9-points higher (30% very or somewhat likely) at this point in the 2001 campaign.

The firmest support belongs to the BC Liberals. Only 16% (down 3 points from December) of BC Liberal voters say they are "very" (1%) or "somewhat" (15%) likely to switch before Election Day. Most Liberals (84%) say they are "not very likely" (26%) or "not at all likely" (58%) to change their mind.

NDP support is also quite firm. Two-in-ten (21%, down 12 points from December) NDP supporters say they are “very” (1%) or “somewhat” (19%) likely to switch before Election Day. Most NDP voters (79%) say they are “not very likely” (28%) or “not at all likely” (52%) to change their mind.

Green Party support is much softer. Four-in-ten (38%, down 15 points from December) Greens say they are “very” (5%) or “somewhat” (33%) likely to switch before Election Day. Six-in-ten (61%) Green supporters say they are “not very likely” (17%) or “not at all likely” (44%) to change their mind and end up voting for another party on Election Day.

The Vancouver Island Perspective

As part of this Ipsos-Reid poll, The Victoria Times Colonist commissioned an additional “oversample” of Island residents to bring the total Vancouver Island sample size to 400, including 200 residents in the Capital Region District (CRD) and 200 residents in the rest of the Island.

Vote: The NDP currently has a 6-point lead among decided voters on Vancouver Island. The current standings have the NDP at 45% support compared to 39% for the BC Liberals. The Green Party is in third place with the support of 14% of decided voters. These results exclude the 11% of Island voters who are undecided or express no party preference.

- The NDP leads the BC Liberals by the same 6-point margin in both the CRD (46% NDP vs. 40% Libs) and the Rest of the Island (44% NDP vs. 38% Libs).
- The gender gap extends to Vancouver Island. Across the entire Island, the NDP has an 18-point advantage with women (50% NDP vs. 32% Libs) and a 5-point deficit with men (40% NDP vs. 45% Libs).

Best Premier: Among Island residents with an opinion, Carole James (46%) and Gordon Campbell (43%) are in a statistical tie as the choice for best Premier of British Columbia. Adriane Carr is selected as best Premier by 10% of Island residents. These results exclude the 14% of Island voters who are undecided.

- Carole James leads Gordon Campbell by 7-points in the CRD (49% James vs. 42% Campbell), while Gordon Campbell has a statistically insignificant 1-point lead on the Rest of the Island (45% Campbell vs. 44% James).

Campaign Momentum: Carole James and the NDP have the strongest momentum on Vancouver Island. One-third (32%) of Island voters say their impression of Carole James and the NDP has improved over the first week of the campaign, compared to 13% who say their impression has worsened. This gives Carole James and the NDP a net momentum of +19 points.

- The net momentum for Carole James and the NDP is similar for CRD residents (+19 points, 32% improved vs. 13% worsened) and Rest of Island residents (+18 points, 32% improved vs. 14% worsened).

Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals have negative momentum on Vancouver Island. Only one-in-ten (9%) voters say their impression of Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals has improved over the first week of the campaign, compared to 33% who say their impression has worsened. This gives Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals a net momentum of -24 points.

- The net momentum for Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals is similar for CRD residents (-23 points, 9% improved vs. 32% worsened) and Rest of Island residents (-24 points, 10% improved vs. 34% worsened).

Adriane Carr and the Green Party have a fairly neutral momentum on Vancouver Island. Fourteen percent of Island voters say their impression of Adriane Carr and the Green Party has improved over the first week of the campaign, compared to 8% who say their impression has worsened. This gives Adriane Carr and the Green Party a net momentum of +6 points.

- The net momentum for Adriane Carr and the Green Party is similar for CRD residents (+5 points, 13% improved vs. 8% worsened) and Rest of Island residents (+6 points, 15% improved vs. 9% worsened).

Switching Potential: Like elsewhere in British Columbia, most Vancouver Island voters say they are unlikely to change their mind and end up voting for another party on Election Day. Overall, only two-in-ten (20%) Island voters with a preference say they are “very likely” (1%) or “somewhat likely” (19%) to change their mind before Election Day. This two-in-ten figure is consistent in the CRD (21%) and the Rest of the Island (19%).

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For more information on this news release, please contact:

*Kyle Braid
Vice-President
Ipsos-Reid Corporation
604-257-3200
kyle.braid@ipsos-reid.com*

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