

BC ELECTION DAY NEARS - PART I

THE HORSERACE AND LEADERSHIP

Still No Real Movement in Vote or Best Premier Numbers

Vote is Firm - Very Few Potential Switchers



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Vancouver, BC — As the BC election campaign moves into its final week, a new Ipsos-Reid survey conducted on behalf of BCTV News, The Vancouver Sun and The Victoria Times Colonist shows that not much has changed in terms of voter preferences over the course of this campaign. The BC Liberals (47%, up 1 point) continue to lead the NDP (39%, unchanged) among the province's decided voters. The Green Party (11%, down 2 points) remains in a distant third place. These results are basically unchanged from Ipsos-Reid polls taken early in the campaign (46% Libs vs. 39% NDP) and in March (46% Libs vs. 39% NDP).

Among residents with an opinion, Gordon Campbell (48%, down 2 points) is still the choice over Carole James (39%, up 1 point) as the public's selection as best Premier. Green Party leader Adriane Carr is the choice of 13% (up 1 point) of British Columbians as best Premier.

Votes for both of the two main contenders remain very firm at this late point in the campaign. Only 15% (down 1 point) of Liberal voters and 18% (down 3 points) 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, one-in-three (33%, down 5 points) Green Party voters say they are "very" or "somewhat" likely to change their mind. If Green votes do shift, nearly half (45%) say their second choice is the NDP, compared to 20% who say their second choice is the BC Liberals.

With votes so firm, any big changes on Election Day may be the result of voter turnout. Among residents who say they will "definitely" vote, the Liberal lead is reduced marginally to 6-points (47% Liberal vs. 41% NDP, with the Greens at 10%).

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid telephone poll conducted May 8th to 10th, 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.

Still No Real Movement in Vote Numbers

The three main parties are at a standstill in terms of voter support. The BC Liberals lead the NDP by a margin of 47% to 39% among decided voters, with the Greens trailing at 11% support. These results are basically unchanged from Ipsos-Reid polls taken early in the campaign (46% Libs, 39% NDP, 13% Green) and in March (46% Libs, 39% NDP, 12% Green). Three percent (up 1 point) of decided British Columbians say they will vote for “some other party”. These results exclude the 10% (down 2 points) of voters who are undecided or express no party preference.

The usual regional and gender gaps are still apparent in the vote result. The Liberals have a 15-point lead (unchanged) in the Lower Mainland (51% Lib vs. 36% NDP), while the two main contenders are tied (42% Lib vs. 42% NDP) in the rest of the province (formerly a 4 point NDP lead).

- The BC Liberals have a 4-point lead (47% Lib vs. 43% NDP) in the western portion of the Lower Mainland (North Shore, Vancouver, Burnaby, New West, Richmond) and a 26-point lead (55% Lib vs. 29% NDP) in the eastern portion of the Lower Mainland (all other municipalities). The Liberal lead has shrunk by 6-points in the west (formerly a 10 point Lib lead), which has been offset by a 6-point lead increase in the east (formerly a 20 point Lib lead).
- Outside the Lower Mainland, the NDP has a 10-point (up 4 points) advantage on Vancouver Island (48% NDP vs. 38% Lib), while the Liberals have an 8-point lead (formerly 1 point NDP lead) in the Interior/North (45% Lib vs. 37% NDP).

In terms of gender, the Liberals have a large 21-point (down 3 points) lead among men (54% Lib vs. 33% NDP), while the NDP has a slight 3-point lead (down 7 points) among women (44% NDP vs. 41% Lib).

- The BC Liberals do better with older and middle aged voters (52% 55+ years, 49% 35-54 years vs. 38% 18-34 years), non-union households (53% vs. 33% union) and higher income residents (57% \$75K+ vs. 36% <\$40K, 46% \$40-\$75K).

- The NDP does better with union households (54% vs. 32% non-union) and lower/middle income residents (47% <\$40K, 41% \$40-\$75K vs. 31% \$75K+).
- The Green Party does best with younger voters (15% 18-34 years vs. 11% 35-54 years, 7% 55+ years).

Voter Turnout

Voter turnout can always play a key role on Election Day. Currently, eight-in-ten (80%, up 2 points from a late campaign survey in 2001) voters say they will “definitely” go to the polls and vote on Election Day. Among these “definite” voters, the Liberals continue to lead, although their margin drops from 8-points to 6-points (47% Libs, 41% NDP, 10% Green).

Still No Real Movement in Best Premier Numbers

Gordon Campbell is still British Columbians’ choice as best Premier. Among residents with an opinion, Gordon Campbell (48%, down 2 points) has a 9-point lead over Carole James (39%, up 1 point) as best Premier. Meanwhile, Adriane Carr is the choice of 13% (up 1 point) of BC residents. These results exclude the 12% (down 2 points) 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 (52% vs. 43% Rest of BC), men (56% vs. 40% women), older/middle-aged voters (54% 55+ years, 51% 35-54 years vs. 37% 18-34 years), non-union households (55% vs. 34% union) and higher income residents (57% \$75K+ vs. 39% <\$40K, 47% \$40-\$75K).
- Carole James is more likely to be selected by residents outside the Lower Mainland (44% vs. 35% LM), women (46% vs. 31% men), union residents (52% vs. 33% non-union) and lower income residents (46% <\$40K vs. 40% \$40-\$75K, 33% \$75K+).
- Adriane Carr is more likely to be selected by younger voters (20% 18-34 years vs. 13% 35-54 years, 7% 55+ years).

Vote is Firm - Very Few Potential Switchers

There continues to be a lot of hardness in the support for both of the main parties. Overall, only two-in-ten (18%, down 3 points) voters with a preference say they are “very likely” (1%) or “somewhat likely” (17%) to change their mind and vote for another party on Election Day.

The firmest support belongs to the BC Liberals. Only 15% (down 1 point) of BC Liberal voters say they are “very” (2%) or “somewhat” (13%) likely to switch before Election Day. Most Liberals (85%) say they are “not very likely” (22%) or “not at all likely” (63%) to change their mind.

NDP support is also quite firm. Two-in-ten (18%, down 3 points) NDP supporters say they are “very” (1%) or “somewhat” (17%) likely to switch before Election Day. Most NDP voters (82%) say they are “not very likely” (22%) or “not at all likely” (60%) to change their mind.

Green Party support is still much softer. One-third (33%, down 5 points) of Greens say they are “very” (0%) or “somewhat” (33%) likely to switch before Election Day. Two-thirds (66%) say they are “not very likely” (36%) or “not at all likely” (30%) to change their mind and end up voting for another party on Election Day.

If the Greens do switch, the NDP stand to gain the most. Nearly half (45%) of Green voters say their second choice is the NDP, compared to 20% who say their second choice is the BC Liberals.

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 has a 10-point lead among decided voters on Vancouver Island. The current standings have the NDP at 48% (up 3 points) support compared to 38% (down 1 point) for the BC Liberals. The Green Party is in third place with the support of 13% (down 1 point) of decided voters. These results exclude the 7% (down 4 points) of Island voters who are undecided or express no party preference.

- The NDP leads the BC Liberals by similar margins in both survey regions. The NDP has a 9-point lead in the CRD (46% NDP vs. 37% Libs) and a 10-point lead in the Rest of the Island (49% NDP vs. 39% Libs).
- The gender gap extends to Vancouver Island. Across the entire Island, the NDP has a 25-point advantage with women (55% NDP vs. 30% Libs) and a 7-point deficit with men (40% NDP vs. 47% Libs).

Best Premier: Among Island residents with an opinion, Carole James (48%, up 2 points) leads Gordon Campbell (40%, down 3 points) as the choice for best Premier of British Columbia. Adriane Carr is selected as best Premier by 12% (up 2 points) of Island residents. These results exclude the 8% (down 6 points) of Island voters who are undecided.

- Carole James leads Gordon Campbell by 14-points in the CRD (51% James vs. 37% Campbell), while James and Campbell are statistically tied on the Rest of the Island (45% James vs. 44% Campbell).

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 (18%, down 2 points) Island voters with a preference say they are “very likely” (2%) or “somewhat likely” (15%) to change their mind before Election Day. The proportion of potential “switchers” is much higher in the CRD (23%) than in the Rest of the Island (12%).

Likelihood of Voting: Nearly nine-in-ten (86%) Island residents say they will “definitely” go to the polls and vote on Election Day – the highest result of any region in the province. The level of “definite” voters is similar in the CRD (87%) and the Rest of the Island (85%).

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