

FEDERAL ELECTION - FOCUS ON BC

Vote: Conservatives (33%), Liberals (32%), NDP (25%)

Best PM: Martin (36%), Harper (31%), Layton (21%)

Top Issues: Health (30%), Corruption (13%), Taxes (7%)



Ipsos Reid

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Vancouver, BC – A new Ipsos Reid poll reveals that British Columbia continues to be a three-way race in the federal election campaign. As the stage is set for the first leaders' debates, none of the parties has managed to attract more than one-third of British Columbia's voters. The decided vote currently shows the Conservatives out front at 33% support, with the Liberals effectively tied at 32% and the NDP not too far behind at 25%. The Green Party has the support of 9% of decided voters.

There is also little consensus among British Columbians as to who would make the best Prime Minister of Canada. Paul Martin (36%) has a narrow 5-point lead over Stephen Harper (31%), with Jack Layton (21%) trailing the other two leaders by a considerable margin.

The top three issues British Columbians would like to see the leaders focus on are health care (30%), corruption (13%) and taxes (7%).

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid telephone poll conducted December 7 to 12, 2005 with a randomly selected sample of 1,600 adult British Columbia residents. The results are considered accurate to within ± 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire BC adult population been polled. The "Best Prime Minister" question was asked of half the survey respondents (800n) and has a margin of error of within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margins 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.

Vote: Conservatives (33%), Liberals (32%), NDP (25%)

The Conservatives and Liberals are effectively tied for the lead in voter support in British Columbia. The Conservatives have the support of 33% of decided voters, an insignificant 1-point ahead of the Liberals at 32%. The NDP is not far behind with the support of 25% of the province's decided voters. The Green Party draws the support of about one-in-ten (9%) decided British Columbia voters. These results exclude the 15% of residents who are undecided or express no preference for any political party.

These results are nearly identical to an earlier campaign survey (Nov 29 – Dec 1) that showed the Conservatives (34%) narrowly ahead of the Liberals (31%), with the NDP (26%) in third place and the Greens well behind (8%).

Compared with the last federal election in June 2004, the Conservatives have dropped 3 points (36% to 33%) and the Liberals have gained 3-points (29% to 32%). The NDP has dropped 2 points since the 2004 election (27% to 25%), while the Greens have gained 3-points (6% to 9%).

In the Lower Mainland, the Liberals (35%) lead the Conservatives (33%) by a statistically insignificant 2 points, with the NDP in third place (24%).

- In the City of Vancouver, the Liberals (37%) have a 6-point lead over the NDP (31%), with the Conservatives (21%) well back in third place.
- In the region stretching from Burnaby/New Westminster through the Tri-Cities and out to Maple Ridge, the Liberals (36%) have a 6-point lead over the NDP (30%), with the Conservatives (26%) not far back in third place.
- In the South of Fraser region (Richmond out to Fraser Valley), the Conservatives (40%) have a 7-point lead over the Liberals (33%) with the NDP (19%) well back in third place.

Outside the Lower Mainland, the Conservatives (34%) hold a 6-point lead over the Liberals (28%) and a 7-point lead over the NDP (27%).

- On Vancouver Island, it's a very tight three-way race, with the NDP (31%) out front of the Conservatives (29%) and Liberals (26%). The Green Party (14%) draws its greatest support on Vancouver Island.
- In the Southern Interior (generally south of Williams Lake), the Conservatives (35%) have a small 3-point lead on the Liberals (32%), with the NDP well back in third place (21%).
- In the North, the Conservatives (41%) have a 12-point lead on the NDP (29%) and a 15-point lead on the Liberals (26%).

Other demographic differences include the following.

- Men prefer the Conservatives (39%) by an 8-point margin over the Liberals (31%) and an 18-point margin over the NDP (21%). Among women, there's little to separate the three major parties with the Liberals (33%) barely ahead of the NDP (29%) and Conservatives (27%).
- Younger voters (18 to 34 years) select the Liberals (34%) slightly more often than the Conservatives (28%) and the NDP (24%). Older voters (55+ years) select the Conservatives (39%) ahead of the Liberals (30%) and NDP (24%). It's basically a three-way tie among middle-aged voters (35 to 54 years), with the Liberals (32%), Conservatives (31%) and NDP (27%) all within 5 points.

Best PM: Martin (36%), Harper (31%), Layton (21%)

British Columbians show no real consensus as to which major party leader would make the best Prime Minister of Canada. Paul Martin (36%) has a narrow 5-point lead over Stephen Harper (31%), with Jack Layton (21%) trailing the other two leaders by a considerable margin. One-in-ten (12%) residents is unsure which leader would make the best Prime Minister.

Of the three leaders, Paul Martin has been the most successful at convincing his party's supporters that he'd make the best Prime Minister. Eight-four percent of Liberal voters say that Paul Martin would make the best PM. This compares to 75% of Conservative supporters who think that Stephen Harper would make the best PM and 63% of NDP supporters who think that Jack Layton would make the best PM.

Top Issues: Health (30%), Corruption (13%), Taxes (7%)

The top three issues British Columbians would like to see the leaders focus on are health care (30%), corruption (13%) and taxes (7%). Other issues on the minds of British Columbians include education (5%), social programs (5%), the economy (5%), crime (4%) and the environment (3%).

There are some interesting differences in how British Columbians will vote depending on their most important issue.

- Health care voters are most likely to vote NDP (38%), followed by the Liberals (30%) and the Conservatives (24%).
- Corruption voters strongly favour the Conservatives (59%) over the Liberals (18%) or NDP (15%).
- Tax voters are most likely to support the Conservatives (41%), followed by the NDP (32%) and the Liberals (22%).



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