

BC PROVINCIAL POLITICAL UPDATE

*BC Liberals Maintain 3-Point Lead from 2005 Election
Premier's Approval Rating Flat; Carole James Slips a Few Points*



Ipsos Reid

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BC PROVINCIAL POLITICAL UPDATE

BC Liberals Maintain 3-Point Lead from 2005 Election Premier's Approval Rating Flat; Carole James Slips a Few Points

Vancouver, BC – A new Ipsos Reid poll on provincial politics in British Columbia shows that very little has changed in the 10 months since last May's provincial election. The BC Liberals (43%) currently have a 3-point edge over the opposition New Democrats (40%) among the province's decided voters. This is the same margin by which the BC Liberals won the popular vote last May.

The survey also reveals that Premier Gordon Campbell's approval rating (44%) has been mostly unchanged over the last 10 months. And while a majority (57%) of British Columbians approve of the performance of Carole James as leader of the NDP and Official Opposition, her approval rating has dropped from the period immediately following the last provincial election.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid telephone poll conducted between March 7th and March 14th, 2006. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 800 adult British Columbians. 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 of BC 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 data.

BC Liberals Maintain 3-Point Lead from 2005 Election

The BC Liberals (43%) currently hold a narrow 3-point lead over the NDP (40%) among British Columbia's decided voters. The Green Party is a distant third place at 12% support, with 5% of voters saying they would support some other party. These results exclude the 11% of British Columbians who are undecided or express no preference.

The BC Liberals lead the NDP by 5-points in the Lower Mainland (45% Lib to 40% NDP), while the two parties are tied outside the Lower Mainland (41% each) with the Liberals well ahead in the Interior/North (47% Lib to 35% NDP) and the NDP well ahead on Vancouver Island (49% NDP to 33% Lib).

The gender gap is alive and well in BC. The BC Liberals have a 15-point advantage with men (50% Lib vs. 35% NDP), while the NDP have a 10-point advantage with women (46% NDP vs. 36% Lib).

- The BC Liberals also do better with non-union households (49% vs. 30% union) and higher income households (54% vs. 40% middle, 30% lower).
- The NDP also do better with union households (52% vs. 35% non-union) and lower income households (50% vs. 39% middle, 35% higher).

The BC Liberal lead over the NDP hasn't moved in the last 10 months. The BC Liberals won the May 2005 election by 3-points, and have had leads of 3-points (Sep 05), 2-points (Dec 05) and 3-points (Mar 06) in Ipsos Reid polling since the election. The only change since the election is a rise in the support for the Green Party. The caveat is that Green Party support is typically soft and at risk of falling away during an election campaign.

Decided Vote Tracking				
	Mar 06	Dec 05	Sep 05	Vote 05
BC Liberal	43%	43%	42%	46%
NDP	40%	41%	39%	43%
Green	12%	13%	13%	9%
Other	5%	3%	5%	3%

Premier's Approval Rating Flat; Carole James Slips a Few Points

Gordon Campbell currently has a 44% approval rating as Premier, including 12% who “strongly” approve and 32% who “moderately” approve of his performance. A slight majority of British Columbians (52%) disapprove of Campbell’s performance, including 37% who “strongly” disapprove and 16% who “moderately” disapprove.

Campbell’s current approval rating of 44% is exactly the same as in December 2005 and September 2005. It is down a slight 3-points from June 2005 (47%).

- Campbell’s approval rating is higher with men (54% vs. 35% women), non-union residents (49% vs. 35% union) and higher income households (56% vs. 30% lower, 43% middle). His approval rating is much lower on Vancouver Island (35%) than any other region.

A majority (57%) of British Columbians approve of the job Carole James is doing as NDP and Official Opposition leader, including 12% who “strongly” approve and 45% who “moderately” approve of her performance. James’ disapproval rating currently stands at 26%, including 11% who “strongly” disapprove and 15% who “moderately” disapprove.

James’ current approval rating of 57% has slipped 4-points from December (61%) and 12-points from her immediate post election position (69% in Jun 05).

- James’ approval rating is higher on Vancouver Island (69%) and lower in the Interior/North (45%). Her approval is also higher with middle aged/older residents (61% among 35+ years vs. 48% among 18-34 years).

Leader Approval Tracking

	Mar 06	Dec 05	Sep 05	Jun 05
Gordon Campbell				
Approve	44%	44%	44%	47%
Disapprove	52%	54%	54%	52%
Carole James				
Approve	57%	61%	60%	69%
Disapprove	26%	30%	23%	20%

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