



Ipsos Reid



No BC STV Survey Report

Media Background Document

April 22, 2009





Background and Methodology

- ◆ These are the results of a telephone survey fielded with 800 adult British Columbians.
- ◆ The survey was fielded from March 24 to 30, 2009.
- ◆ The overall margin of error is $\pm 3.5\%$, 19 times out of 20.



Key Findings

- ◆ Four in ten (40%) are aware that British Columbians will be voting in a referendum to adopt a new electoral system.
- ◆ Respondents are split between the two electoral systems. Four in ten (41%) feel British Columbia should adopt the existing First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) electoral system, and 43% feel the province should use the new Single Transferable Vote (STV) system to elect members to the provincial Legislative Assembly. Fourteen percent (14%) are undecided on the issue.
- ◆ Three in ten (31%) decided voters (i.e. have a current preference for one system) are likely to switch their mind and vote for another option on Election Day.
- ◆ Two thirds (65%) claim to know a great deal or a fair amount about the current FPTP system, whereas only one third (35%) claim to have this level of knowledge of the new STV electoral system.
- ◆ A majority of respondents are content with the current electoral system. Three quarters (76%) feel the current electoral system is very or somewhat fair and 71% are very or somewhat satisfied with the range of choices of parties and candidates available to vote for under this system.



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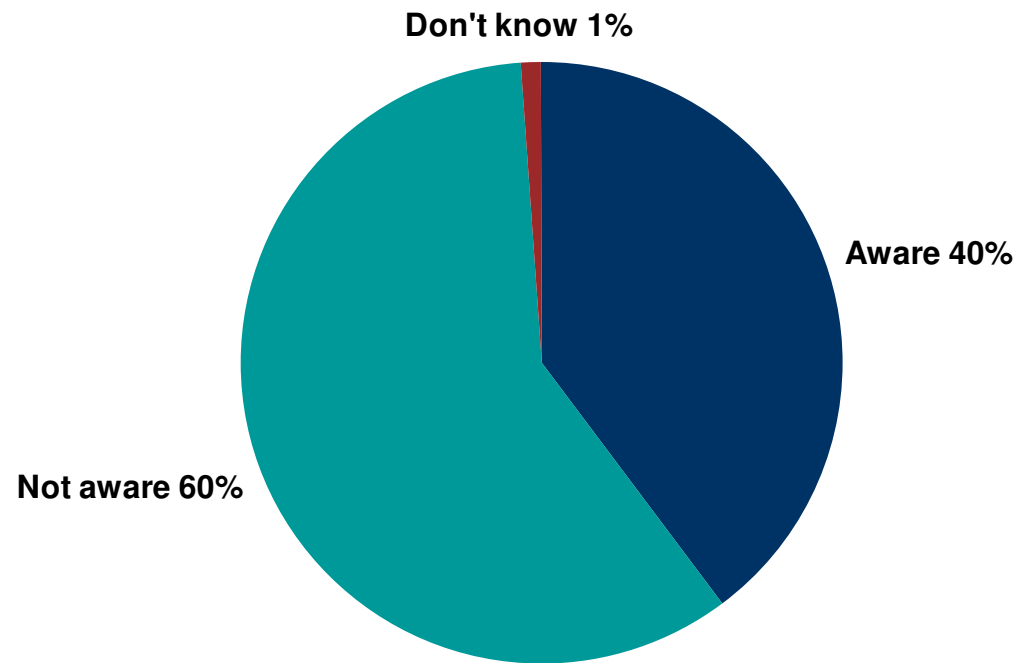
Detailed Findings





Four in Ten (40%) Aware of Referendum

- ◆ Four in ten (40%) are aware that British Columbians will be voting in a referendum on whether to adopt a new electoral system in the upcoming election.
- ◆ At the sub-group level, awareness of the referendum is higher among men (45% vs. 35% among women), and among those who are 55 years of age and older (51% vs. 35% among those between the ages of 18 and 54). Furthermore, Island respondents (49%) are the most likely to be aware of the referendum.
- ◆ Not surprisingly, university graduates are the most likely to be aware of the referendum.



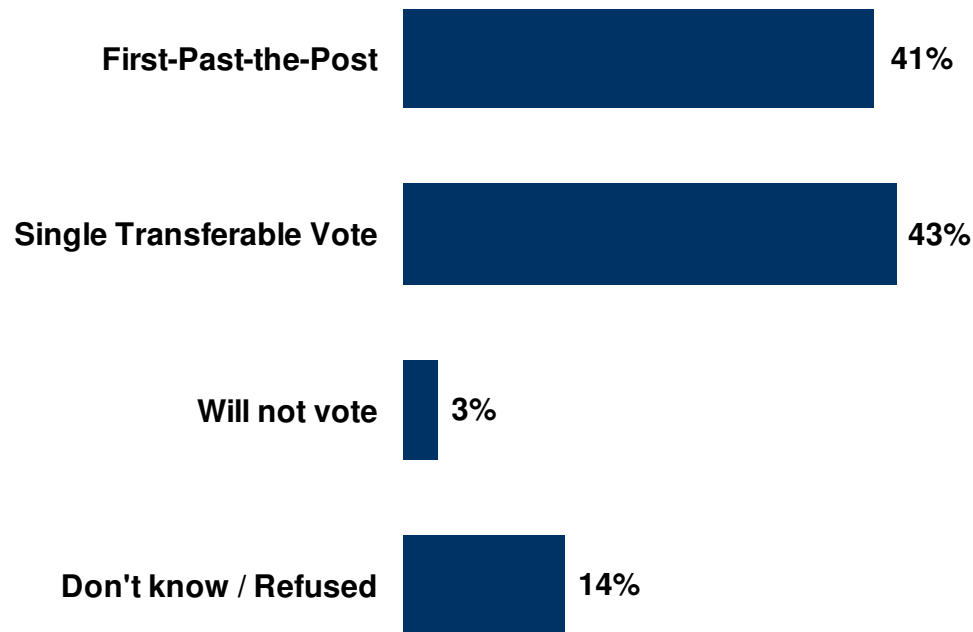
Base: All respondents (n=800)

Q. As you may know, a provincial election is scheduled for May 12th of this year. On Election Day, voters will also be asked to vote in a referendum on whether or not to change to a new electoral system called the BC-STV, also called the single transferable vote electoral system. Prior to today, were you aware that British Columbians would be voting in this election on whether to adopt this new electoral system?



British Columbians Split on Two Referendum Options

- ◆ Overall, voters are split between the two electoral systems. Forty one percent (41%) are more likely to vote for the FPTP system and 43% are more likely to vote for the STV electoral system. Fourteen percent (14%) don't know which electoral system British Columbia should be using to elect members to the provincial Legislative Assembly.
- ◆ Island respondents (54%) are the most likely to support the Single Transferable Vote electoral system. In contrast, only 40% of Lower Mainland, 40% Southern Interior, and 35% Northern BC respondents support the new electoral system.
- ◆ Another difference is observed by education, where university graduates (48%) are the most likely to prefer the Single Transferable Vote system. University graduates (35%) are the least likely to prefer the existing FPTP system.

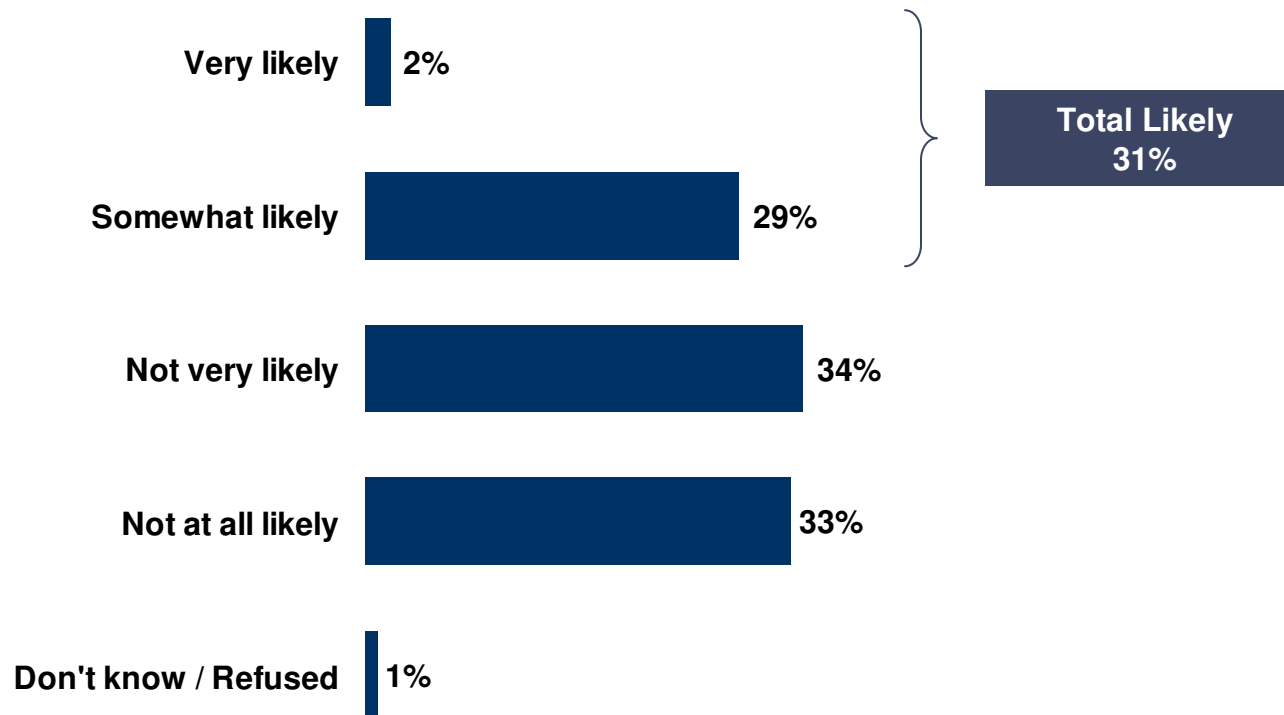


Base: All respondents (n=800)

Q. I am going to read you the referendum question and then ask you which of the two answer options you prefer. The question is ... Which electoral system should British Columbia use to elect members to the provincial Legislative Assembly? Option 1 is the existing electoral system, also known as First-Past-the-Post. Option 2 is the single transferable vote electoral system, also known as BC-STV, proposed by the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. Now, please tell me which of these two options you are more likely to vote for or lean towards.

Three in Ten Likely to Change Their Mind

- ◆ Overall, few decided voters (31%) are very or somewhat likely to change their mind and vote for another option on Election Day.
- ◆ At the sub-group level, women (38%) are more likely than men (25%) to change their minds on Election Day. Also, support appears to firm up with age, as those between the ages of 18 and 34 (39%) are the most likely to change their minds on Election Day, while those 55 years of age and older (25%) are the least likely to change their minds. Furthermore, those with less education are more inclined to change their minds for the other option.



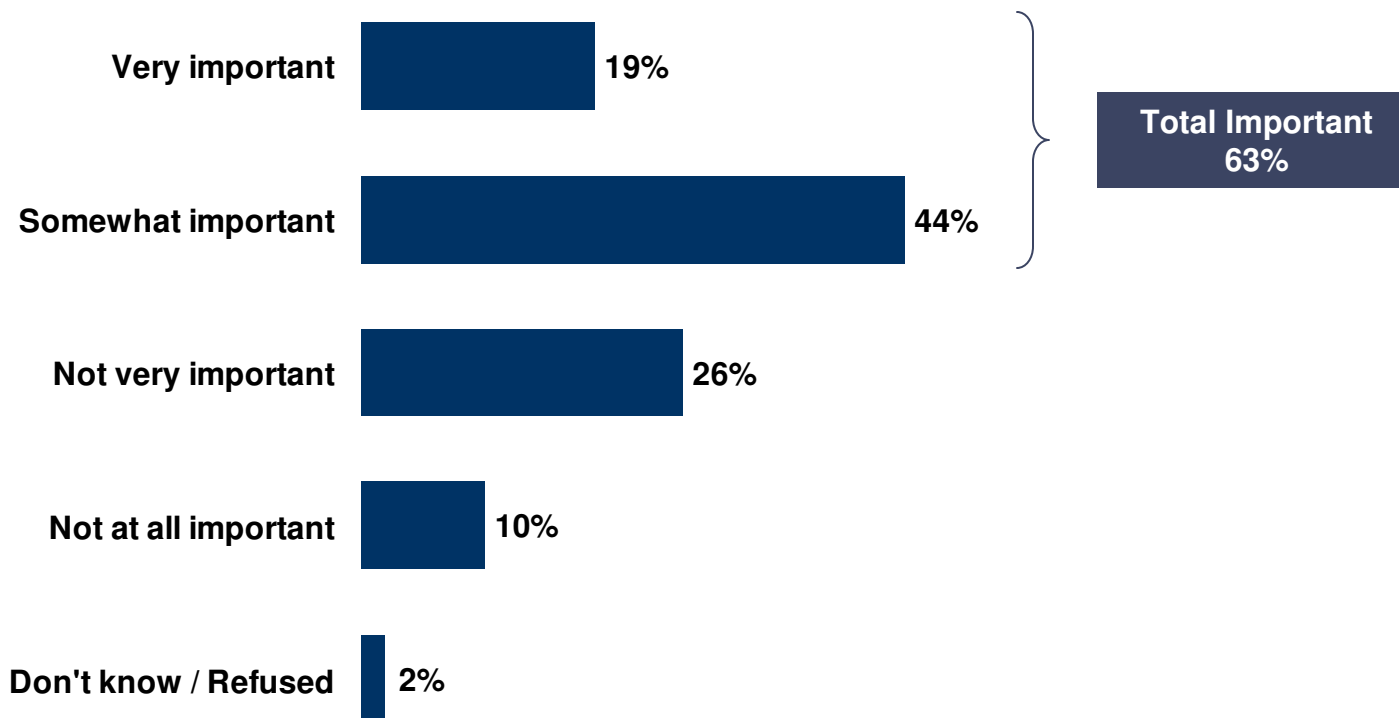
Base: Prefer FPTP or STV [i.e. excluding Undecided/ Will Not Vote] (n=676)

Q. And how likely is that you will change your mind and vote for the other option on Election Day? Is it...?



Two Thirds Say Referendum Outcome is Important

- ◆ Nearly two thirds of all respondents (63%) feel the outcome of this referendum is very or somewhat important to them personally. Only one in five (19%) feel it is a 'very important' issue.
- ◆ University graduates (70%) are the most likely to feel that the outcome of this referendum is very or somewhat important.

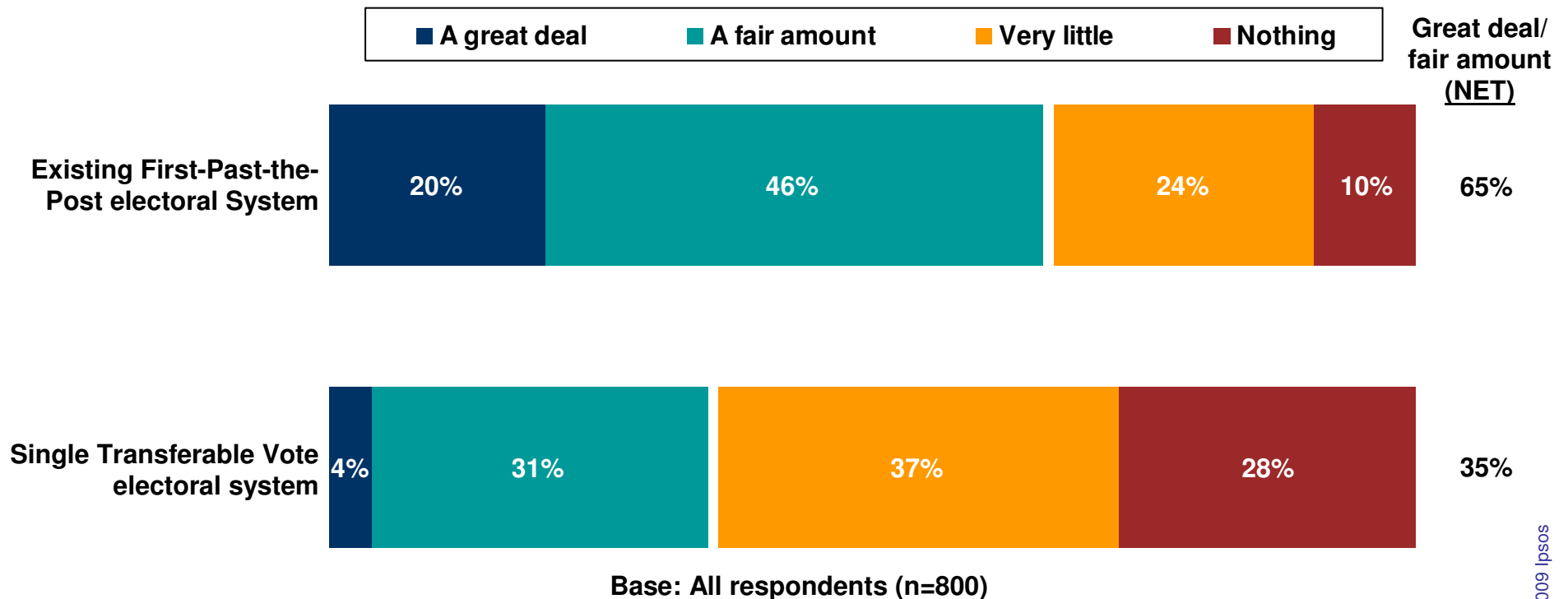


Base: All respondents (n=800)

Q. Overall, how important is the outcome of this referendum on electoral reform to you personally? Is it...?

Low Knowledge of BC-STV

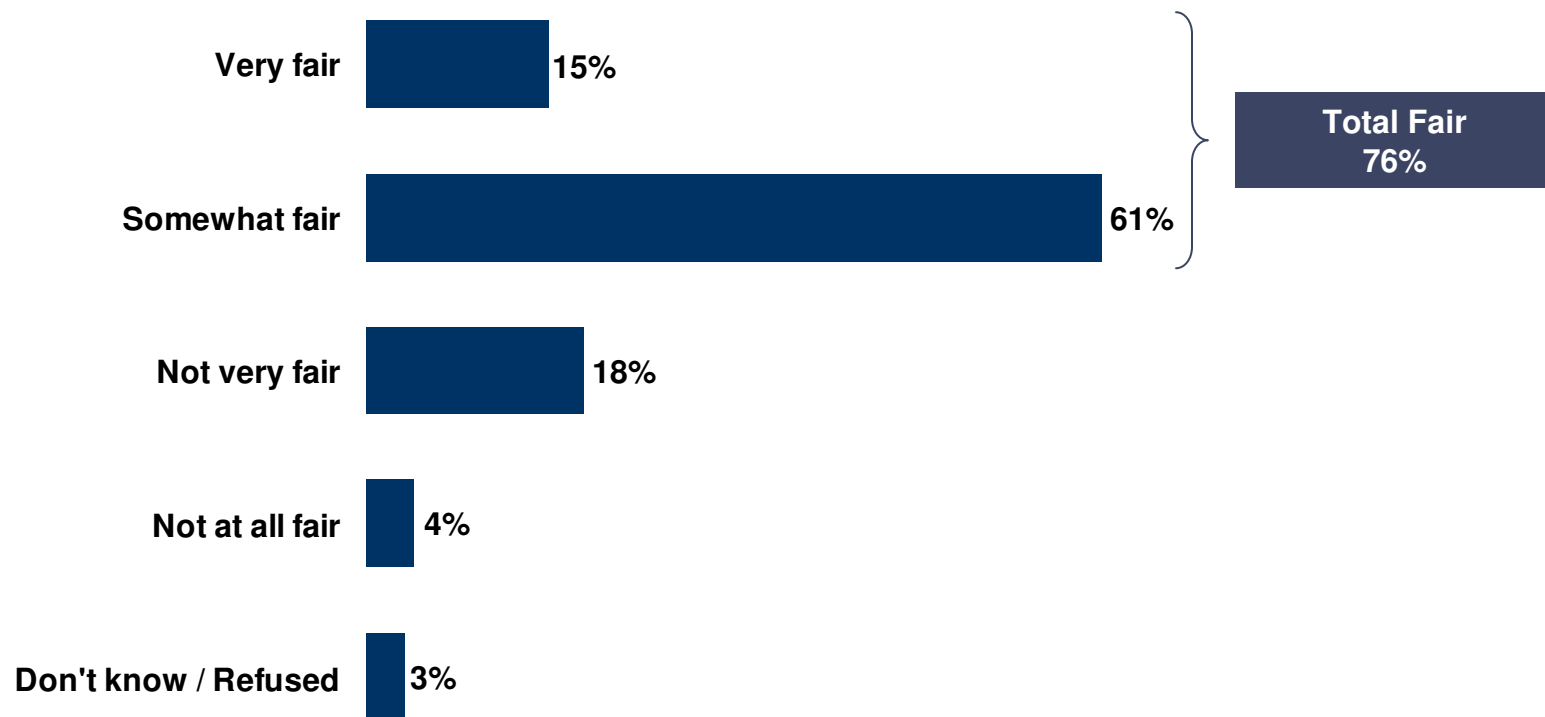
- ◆ Two thirds of respondents (65%) claim to know a great deal or a fair amount about the existing First-Past-the-Post electoral system. Knowledge of the STV system is substantially lower, with only one third of respondents (35%) claiming to know a great deal or a fair amount about it.
- ◆ A number of significant differences are observed at the sub-group level. Men (71%) are more likely than women (60%) to claim to know a great deal or a fair amount about the current system. As one would expect, knowledge of FPTP appears to vary with age, with older respondents being the most likely to claim that they know a great deal or a fair amount in this area, and younger respondents being least likely to make such a claim. Similar to the FPTP system, men (43%) are more likely than women (28%) to claim they know a great deal or a fair amount about the STV system.
- ◆ Self-reported knowledge of FPTP system is higher among university graduates and among the more affluent. Self-reported knowledge of the STV system is seen to increase with age and education.



Q. How much would you say you know about the [INSERT IN RANDOM ORDER]? Is it...?

Three Quarters Consider Existing System to be Fair

- ◆ Three-quarters of respondents (76%) feel the current electoral system is very or somewhat fair.
- ◆ Those between the ages of 18 and 54 (79%) are more likely than older respondents (70%) to perceive the FPTP system to be very or somewhat fair. Those with a high-school education (86%) are the most likely to believe the current electoral system is very or somewhat fair. In contrast, only 76% of those with some post-secondary education and 71% of those with a university education share this sentiment.



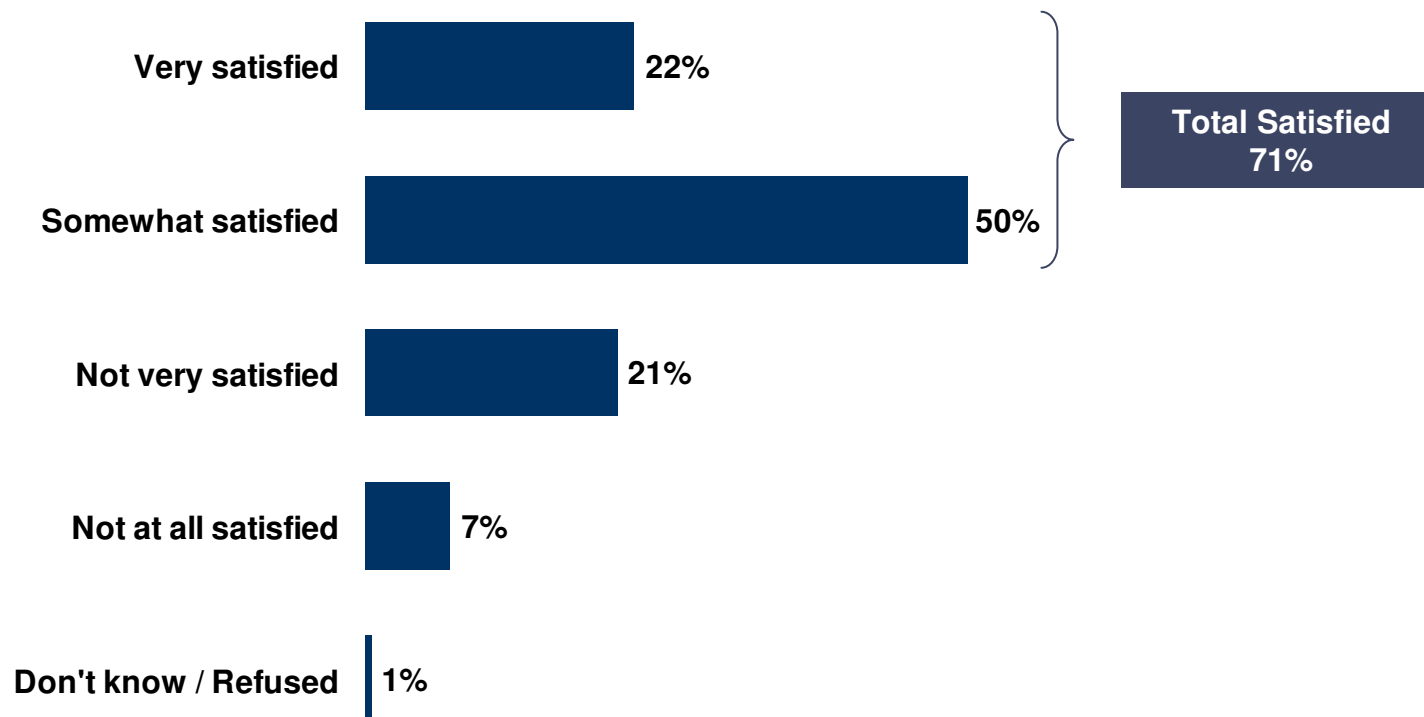
Base: All respondents (n=800)

Q. How would you rate the fairness of our current electoral system? Would you say it is...?



Seven in Ten Satisfied with Range of Choices of Parties & Candidates in Existing System

- ◆ Seven in ten (71%) are very or somewhat satisfied with the range of choices of parties and candidates available to vote for under the current electoral system.
- ◆ Those in the Northern BC region (59%) are the least likely to be satisfied with the ranges of choices available to them. In contrast, 71% of those in the Lower Mainland, 74% of Island, and 73% of South Interior respondents are satisfied in this regard.



Base: All respondents (n=800)

Q. How satisfied are you with the range of choices of parties and candidates available to vote for under our current electoral system? Are you...?

Sample Characteristics

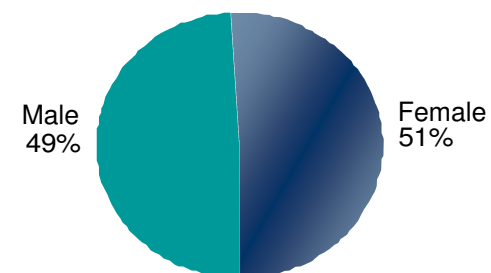
Region

Lower Mainland	58%
Vancouver Island	19%
South Interior	16%
North BC	7%

Age

18 to 34	29%
35 to 54	39%
55+	32%

Gender



Highest Education

Grade school or some high school	4%
Complete high school	14%
Technical, vocational post-secondary	13%
Some university or college	18%
Completed college diploma	11%
Completed university degree (Bachelors)	23%
Post-graduate degree (Masters/PhD)	15%
Don't know / Not stated	1%

Household Income

Less than \$30,000	12%
\$30,000 to just under \$40,000	12%
\$40,000 to just under \$50,000	11%
\$50,000 to just under \$60,000	9%
\$60,000 to just under \$75,000	11%
\$75,000 to just under \$100,000	14%
\$100,000 or more	21%
Don't know / Not stated	11%

Labour Union Affiliation

Yes	29%
No	70%
Don't know / Not stated	1%