

FOR THE RECORD: IPSOS REID AND THE MAY 12, 2009 B.C. ELECTION

Polling You Can Count On



Ipsos Reid

Public Release Date: May 15, 2009

Ipsos Reid is Canada's market intelligence leader and the country's leading provider of public opinion research. With operations in eight cities, Ipsos Reid employs more than 300 researcher professionals and support staff in Canada. The company has the biggest network of telephone call centres in Canada, as well as the largest pre-recruited household and online panels. Ipsos Reid's Canadian marketing research and public affairs practices are staffed with seasoned research consultants with extensive industry-specific backgrounds, offering the premier suite of research vehicles in Canada – including the Ipsos Trend Report, the leading source of public opinion in the country – all of which provide clients with actionable and relevant information. Ipsos Reid is an Ipsos company, a leading global survey-based market research group.

To learn more, visit www.ipsos.ca

*For copies of other news releases, please visit:
<http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/>*

© Ipsos Reid

Vancouver & Calgary & Winnipeg & Toronto & Ottawa & Montreal

For the Record: Ipsos Reid and the May 12, 2009 B.C. Election

Polling You Can Count On

Vancouver, BC – The British Columbia provincial election campaign is now over, the votes have been tallied, and Liberal Premier Gordon Campbell has been returned with a third term majority. The current party standings are 49 BC Liberal seats and 36 NDP seats, with the popular vote for each of the parties currently listed as 46% BC Liberal, 42% NDP, 8% Green and 4% Others. BC voters also soundly rejected the proposed single transferable vote (STV) electoral system, with 61% voting to keep the existing First-Past-the-Post system.

During the election campaign, Ipsos Reid worked with various media partners and demonstrated, once again, that it is a mainstay of trust and accuracy when it comes to polling and market research.

On Election Day, Ipsos Reid undertook an online exit poll among 805 voters on behalf of Global BC. The exit poll feature has now become a mainstay of Ipsos Reid and our media partners – first used in the federal election of 2006 where the exit poll correctly predicted a Harper minority government, then in Ontario in 2007, the federal election campaign of 2008 and again in BC in 2009.

The Election Day exit poll goes beyond just the top line and, more importantly, helps understand what has motivated voters and how they felt about the campaign as a whole.

Exit Poll Results

Expected Winner: A majority of voters (61%) expected the BC Liberals would win a majority government, compared to only 12% forecasting an NDP victory. Even among NDP voters, a plurality expected a Liberal victory (36% Liberal vs. 26% NDP).

When Made Up Mind: One-in-four (24%) voters said they did not decide who they were going to vote for until the last week of the campaign (15%) or on the day they voted (9%). These late deciders broke in favour of the NDP, with 45% voting NDP, 33% Liberal, 14% Green and 8% Other.

Feelings About Vote Choice: Half (48%) of voters said they “felt good about their choice of party or candidate”, while half (51%) said they “just made the best choice from the options available”. Liberal (49%) and NDP (50%) voters were equally likely to say they felt good about their vote choice.

Voting For/Against: A slight majority (55%) of voters said they voted more “FOR a particular party or candidate”, while four-in-ten (42%) voted more “AGAINST some other party or candidate”. BC Liberal voters were more likely to vote for positive reasons (68% for vs. 30% against), while NDP voters were split in their motivation (48% for vs. 51% against).

Importance of Issues: We asked voters to indicate how important certain issues/factors were in their final vote decision. The factors most often rated as “very important” were the economy, healthcare, leadership and trust.

- Economic issues (60% very important)
- Healthcare issues (56% very important)
- Leadership (55% very important)
- Trust in a particular leader/party (54% very important)
- Crime and public safety (44% very important)
- Social issues (42% very important)
- A desire for change (38% very important)
- Education issues (38% very important)
- Environmental issues (38% very important)
- The candidates in my riding (35% very important)
- Transit and transportation issues (26% very important)
- The carbon tax (26% very important)
- The televised leaders debate (9% very important)

Turning the Top Issues into Votes: Two of the top four issues worked in favour of the BC Liberals. Among voters saying that economic issues were very important, the Liberals led by 23 points (57% Lib, 34% NDP, 6% Green). Leadership voters gave the Liberals the edge by 13 points (51% Lib, 38% NDP, 7% Green).

The NDP scored well with voters rating healthcare and trust as very important. Healthcare voters gave the NDP a 24 point edge (57% NDP, 33% Liberal, 7% Green), while Trust voters gave the NDP a 7 point edge (49% NDP, 42% Lib, 6% Green).

Turning the Lesser Issues into Votes: The Liberals really needed to take advantage of the issues of the economy and leadership, because they trailed the NDP among voters who considered all other issues to be very important.

- Crime and public safety voters (46% NDP, 44% Lib, 8% Green)
- Social issues voters (69% NDP, 21% Lib, 8% Green)
- A desire for change voters (74% NDP, 8% Lib, 12% Green)
- Education issues voters (61% NDP, 29% Lib, 8% Green)
- Environmental issues voters (53% NDP, 29% Lib, 16% Green)
- The candidates in my riding voters (49% NDP, 39% Lib, 7% Green)
- Transit and transportation issues voters (61% NDP, 28% Lib, 9% Green)
- The carbon tax voters (57% NDP, 25% Lib, 13% Green)
- The televised leaders debate voters (69% NDP, 14% Lib, 17% Green)

Impressions of the Campaign: In terms of excitement, most voters (62%) rated the campaign as “about average”. Three-in-ten (30%) said the campaign was “more boring than other campaigns” while just 6% said it was “more exciting than other campaigns”.

In terms of changing impressions over the campaign:

- Only one-in-ten (11%) voters said their impression of Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals improved through the campaign. Four-in-ten (38%) said their impression worsened, while half (50%) said it stayed the same.
- The results were more evenly split for Carole James and the NDP with 31% improved impressions and 31% worsened impressions (37% stayed the same).
- Despite their poor showing on Election Day, Jane Sterk and the Green Party had more improved impressions (25%) than worsened impressions (16%). Nearly half (46%) said their impression of Sterk and the Greens stayed about the same.

Overall, voters narrowly selected Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals (36%) ahead of Carole James and the NDP (31%) as the main party that ran the best campaign. Only 6% thought Jane Sterk and the Green Party ran the best overall campaign.

Should Carole James Step Down: Nearly half (46%) of voters said that Carole James should step down as party leader if the NDP loses the election. This includes six-in-ten (57%) Liberal voters, but only about one-in-three (36%) NDP voters.

STV Electoral Referendum: Voters rejected STV by a margin of 61% to 39%. In our exit poll, STV was supported by 66% of Green voters, 51% of NDP voters and 22% of Liberal voters.

We also asked voters to tell us (from a prompted list) the reasons why they voted the way they did. The top reasons given for rejecting STV were the way the votes get split/transferred, comfort with the existing system, and worry that local representation might be lost.

- Don't like way votes are split/transferred (65% of FPTP voters said this was an important reason for voting against STV)
- Comfortable with the existing system (55%)
- Might lose local representation under STV (54%)
- The ridings are too big (48%)
- It's too complicated (46%)
- MLAs would be less accountable (44%)
- Worried about minority/coalition governments (43%)
- Didn't know enough about it (21%)
- Too few countries use STV (18%)
- Some other reason (7%)

The top reasons for supporting STV were an affinity for proportional representation and a view that STV would be more democratic.

- I like proportional representation (66% of STV voters said this was an important reason for voting in favour of STV)
- More democratic (64%)
- More fair (55%)
- Transfers power from political parties to the people (53%)
- No votes are wasted (53%)
- Existing system is broken/flawed (52%)
- MLAs would be more accountable (51%)
- Better chance for smaller parties to get elected (44%)
- No more safe seats (35%)
- Better chance of getting my candidates elected (27%)
- Some other reason (4%)

Polling You Can Count On

Ipsos Reid is the only pollster to hit the mark in both the general party election and the referendum.

- In the general party election, Ipsos Reid's final poll correctly forecast a Liberal victory and was within the margin of error (± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20) for all parties. The final poll compared to the actual results was BC Liberals 47% (actual 46%), NDP 39% (actual 42%), Green 10% (actual 8%) and Others 4% (actual 4%).
- In addition, Ipsos Reid was the only pollster within the margin of error on the referendum on electoral reform. The final poll pegged support for BC-STV at 39% - exactly the support the proposed electoral system received on Election Day.

Said Ipsos Reid Vice-President Kyle Braid, "We're proud of our team here at Ipsos Reid for their hard work and continued commitment to quality and accuracy. Election campaigns are just a small part of what we actually do as Canada's largest opinion and market research provider, but we believe our balanced and transparent polling is an important contribution to the political landscape in assisting people in making their choices at the ballot box in a fully informed way."

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid online poll conducted on Election Day, May 12th, 2009. Survey respondents were pre-recruited to respond to the survey as soon as possible after they voted. The survey of 805 adult British Columbians was conducted using Ipsos Reid's proprietary "Voice of the West Interactive Forum" – an online panel of more than 6,000 British Columbians who have been randomly recruited to match the overall characteristics of the adult residents of the province. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls, however, an unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual BC voting population according to 2006 Census data and 2005 Elections BC turnout statistics.

- 30 -

For more information on this news release, please contact:

*Kyle Braid
Vice-President
Ipsos Reid Public Affairs
778-373-5130*

*For full tabular results, please visit our website at www.ipsos.ca.
News releases are available at <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/>.*