

PUBLIC PRIORITIES FOR SEPTEMBER 1ST BC BUDGET



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Vancouver, BC – On September 1st, BC Finance Minister Colin will release a revised provincial budget reflecting an expected budget deficit of close to \$3 billion. Some of the public's priorities for this budget are revealed in a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the BC Federation of Labour and a number of public sector unions.

At the top of the priority list are investments for unemployed workers, a new job protection/creation initiative, and local health authorities. Specifically,

- 86% of British Columbians say they support *“Investing more in public services like post-secondary education and retraining programs for unemployed workers”* (52% strongly, 35% somewhat).
- 85% support *“Establishing a new initiative to protect and create jobs in British Columbia”* (49% strongly, 35% somewhat).
- 84% support *“Increasing funding for local health authorities to prevent cuts to health services”* (58% strongly, 26% somewhat).

In addition, roughly three-quarters of BC residents support a new child care program, raising taxes paid by corporations and the wealthy, and raising the minimum wage to \$10/hour.

- 76% support *“Creating a new child care program to help working families”* (42% strongly, 34% somewhat).
- 76% support *“Increasing taxes paid by corporations and wealthy British Columbians”* (47% strongly, 29% somewhat).
- 75% support *“Increasing the minimum wage from \$8 to \$10 to help low income workers”* (51% strongly, 24% somewhat).

The survey also found that BC residents would oppose cuts to some public services as well as to environmental protections/enforcement in order to balance the budget.

- 75% oppose *“Cutting public services such as child protection, legal aid and provincial parks in order to balance the budget”* (50% strongly, 25% somewhat).
- 61% oppose *“Cutting spending on environmental protections and enforcements in order to balance the budget”* (35% strongly, 26% somewhat).

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid telephone omnibus poll conducted between Aug 8 and 12, 2009, on behalf of the BC Federation of Labour and a number of public sector unions. For this survey, a random sample of 801 British Columbians was conducted by telephone. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data. A survey with a sample size of 801 has a margin of error of +/-3.5 percentage points 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of BC adults been polled. The margin of error will be wider for subgroups of the overall sample.

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