

FEBRUARY 2011 UPDATE ON BC LIBERAL LEADERSHIP CONTENDERS

*Impressions of Christy Clark Worsen, but She's Still the Clear Favourite of
Past Liberal Voters*

Past NDP Voters Warm to George Abbott



Ipsos Reid

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Impressions of Christy Clark Worsen, but She's Still the Clear Favourite of Past Liberal Voters

Past NDP Voters Warm to George Abbott

Vancouver, BC – With less than a week to go before BC Liberal party members choose a new leader and Premier, a new Ipsos Reid online poll shows that overall public impressions of Christy Clark have slipped somewhat in the last month. Nevertheless, Clark remains a clear favourite to lead the party among past Liberal voters. The poll also shows that George Abbott has improved his standing among past NDP voters.

It is very important for readers to note that this poll is a survey of British Columbians as a whole, not of BC Liberal party members. References to Liberal voters refer to 2009 BC Liberal voters and not to BC Liberal party members.

How Closely Following Leadership Contest

A slight majority (52%, down 5 points from January) of British Columbians say they have been following the BC Liberal leadership contest either “very closely” (12%) or “somewhat closely” (40%) so far. Past Liberal voters (64%, down 7 points) are somewhat more likely than past NDP voters (52%, down 6 points) to be following the contest closely.

How Closely Following BC Liberal Leadership Contest

<i>How closely have you been following each of these two leadership contests so far?(The BC Liberal leadership contest)</i>	All Respondents (n=800) %	2009 Liberal Voters (n=317) %	2009 NDP Voters (n=289) %
Very closely	12 (17)	19 (22)	12 (19)
Somewhat closely	40 (40)	45 (49)	40 (39)
Not very closely	29 (25)	25 (20)	34 (27)
Not at all closely	18 (17)	11 (9)	13 (15)
Don't know	1 (1)	0 (1)	<1 (1)
<i>Total Closely (Very + Somewhat)</i>	52 (57)	64 (71)	52 (58)
(numbers in brackets are from Jan 20-24, 2011 poll; n=750, n=289, n=264)			

Impressions of Leadership Contenders

Impressions among All Voters: Among all British Columbians, George Abbott currently has 25% positive impressions versus 19% negative impressions, for a NET impression score of +6. George Abbott is now the only one of the four Liberal leadership candidates with more positive than negative impressions.

Christy Clark is next best with the same number of positive impressions (32%) as negative impressions (32%), for a NET score of 0. The NET ratings are negative for Mike de Jong (-14) and Kevin Falcon (-27).

Since January, the ratings have shifted most for Christy Clark, who has seen her NET impression score drop from +11 to 0, based on an 8 point drop in positive ratings (from 40% to 32%) and a 3 point increase in negative ratings (from 29% to 32%).

IMPRESSIONS: Among All Respondents (n=800)

<i>Listed below are the names of the people who have entered the race for the BC Liberal leadership. Please indicate your impression of each of these individuals.</i>	Positive %	Negative %	Neutral %	Never Heard of Person %	NET Positive - Negative
George Abbott	25 (24)	19 (19)	43 (40)	13 (16)	+6 (+5)
Christy Clark	32 (40)	32 (29)	32 (28)	4 (3)	0 (+11)
Mike de Jong	13 (16)	27 (31)	53 (46)	7 (7)	-14 (-15)
Kevin Falcon	16 (17)	43 (39)	32 (33)	9 (10)	-27 (-22)
(numbers in brackets are from Jan 20-24, 2011 poll; n=750)					

Impressions among 2009 BC Liberal Voters: Christy Clark continues to have the most positive image among those who voted for the BC Liberals in 2009. Half (50%) of past Liberal voters have a positive impression of Clark versus 18% with a negative impression, for a NET score of +32.

George Abbott is now the only other candidate with more positive than negative impressions among past Liberal voters (NET +15). Both Mike de Jong (NET -2) and Kevin Falcon (-5) now have slightly more negative than positive impressions.

Impressions scores of all four candidates have worsened since January.

IMPRESSIONS: Among 2009 BC Liberal Voters (n=317)

<i>Listed below are the names of the people who have entered the race for the BC Liberal leadership. Please indicate your impression of each of these individuals.</i>	Positive %	Negative %	Neutral %	Never Heard of Person %	NET Positive - Negative
Christy Clark	50 (60)	18 (15)	30 (23)	2 (2)	+32 (+45)
George Abbott	31 (38)	16 (11)	47 (42)	7 (9)	+15 (+27)
Mike de Jong	18 (25)	20 (20)	59 (52)	3 (3)	-2 (+5)
Kevin Falcon	27 (33)	32 (24)	37 (38)	4 (5)	-5 (+9)
(numbers in brackets are from Jan 20-24, 2011 poll; n=289)					

Impressions among 2009 NDP Voters: Impressions of George Abbott have improved among past NDP voters over the past month. In fact, Abbott now has more positive impressions (26%, up 10 points) than negative impressions (23%, down 7 points) among past NDP voters. His NET impressions score now stands at +3.

Past NDP voters continue to be most negative toward Kevin Falcon (NET -48), but are also quite negative toward both Christy Clark (-35) and Mike de Jong (-27).

While Abbott is making gains with past NDP voters, Christy Clark is moving in the opposite direction. Her positive ratings are down 8 points since January (from 25% to 17%), while her negative ratings are up 9 points (from 43% to 52%).

IMPRESSIONS: Among 2009 NDP Voters (n=289)

<i>Listed below are the names of the people who have entered the race for the BC Liberal leadership. Please indicate your impression of each of these individuals.</i>	Positive %	Negative %	Neutral %	Never Heard of Person %	NET Positive - Negative
George Abbott	26 (16)	23 (30)	38 (39)	13 (15)	+3 (-14)
Mike de Jong	10 (12)	37 (46)	47 (36)	7 (6)	-27 (-34)
Christy Clark	17 (25)	52 (43)	27 (31)	4 (1)	-35 (-18)
Kevin Falcon	8 (7)	56 (54)	27 (30)	8 (9)	-48 (-47)
(numbers in brackets are from Jan 20-24, 2011 poll; n=264)					

Candidate Most and Least Likely to Generate Interest in Voting BC Liberal

Most Likely to Generate Interest: The poll also asked respondents to select the leadership candidate that would be most likely to get them to consider voting for the BC Liberals in the next provincial election. On this measure, Christy Clark continues to stand out from her rivals, especially among past Liberal voters.

Overall, one-quarter (25%) of British Columbians say that Christy Clark is the leadership candidate that would be most likely to get them to consider voting for the BC Liberals in the next election. George Abbott (14%) and Kevin Falcon (7%) are well back in second and third place, respectively. These overall results are basically unchanged from January

Among 2009 BC Liberal voters, Christy Clark (43%) has more support than the four other contenders combined. George Abbott is second at 17%, followed by Kevin Falcon at 15%. Christy Clark has moved up 7 points since January (from 36% to 43%).

Among 2009 NDP voters, George Abbott (15%) has jumped ahead of Christy Clark (11%). Notably, a majority (59%) of past NDP voters say that none of the candidates would be likely to get them to consider voting for the BC Liberals.

MOST LIKELY TO CONSIDER VOTING BC LIBERAL

<i>If elected as party leader, which one of these BC Liberal leadership candidates would be most likely to get you to consider voting for the BC Liberals in the next provincial election?</i>	All Respondents (n=800) %	2009 Liberal Voters (n=317) %	2009 NDP Voters (n=289) %
Christy Clark	25 (26)	43 (36)	11 (16)
George Abbott	14 (12)	17 (18)	15 (10)
Kevin Falcon	7 (7)	15 (14)	2 (4)
Mike de Jong	4 (4)	5 (4)	3 (7)
Ed Mayne (not included in this poll)	- (1)	- (<1)	- (1)
Moir Stiller (not included in this poll)	- (<1)	- (0)	- (0)
None of them	34 (31)	7 (8)	59 (54)
Don't know	15 (19)	14 (20)	10 (8)
(numbers in brackets are from Jan 20-24, 2011 poll; n=750, 289, 264)			

Least Likely to Generate Interest: The poll also asked respondents to select the leadership candidate that would be least likely to get them to consider voting for the BC Liberals in the next provincial election.

Overall, Kevin Falcon (25%) is mentioned most often as the candidate that would be least likely to get British Columbians to consider voting for the BC Liberals. Christy Clark (18%) is next most frequently mentioned, followed by Mike de Jong (11%) and George Abbott (10%). The ranking of the four candidates remains the same as in January.

- Among 2009 BC Liberal voters, Kevin Falcon (24%) is mentioned most often, followed by Mike de Jong (16%), George Abbott (15%) and Christy Clark (14%).
- Among 2009 NDP voters, Kevin Falcon (26%) and Christy Clark (24%) continue to stand out as the top two candidates that would be least likely to get them to consider voting for the BC Liberals.

LEAST LIKELY TO CONSIDER VOTING BC LIBERAL

<i>If elected as party leader, which one of these candidates would be least likely to get you to consider voting for the BC Liberals in the next provincial election?</i>	All Respondents (n=800) %	2009 Liberal Voters (n=317) %	2009 NDP Voters (n=289) %
Kevin Falcon	25 (22)	24 (16)	26 (28)
Christy Clark	18 (14)	14 (10)	24 (21)
Mike de Jong	11 (5)	16 (7)	10 (4)
George Abbott	10 (3)	15 (3)	9 (4)
Moira Stilwell (not included in this poll)	- (8)	- (15)	- (4)
Ed Mayne (not included in this poll)	- (7)	- (14)	- (3)
None of them	16 (15)	11 (8)	20 (22)
Don't know	19 (25)	20 (26)	12 (13)
(numbers in brackets are from Jan 20-24, 2011 poll; n=750, 289, 264)			

Leadership Contender Best Described by Attributes

Attributes among All Voters: The poll also asked respondents to select the Liberal leadership candidate that they think is best described by a battery of 11 words. This question was not asked in previous polls.

The main finding of this question should be the high level of don't know responses, which range from 42% for 'likeable' to 65% for 'visionary'.

Christy Clark is chosen most often as the candidate best described by 7 of the 11 words. Her largest lead over her competitors is on the attributes of 'charismatic' (25 points ahead of Falcon), 'friendly' (22 points ahead of Abbott) and 'likeable' (15 points ahead of Abbott).

George Abbott is chosen most often as the candidate best described by 4 of the 11 words, most notably for 'down-to-earth' (9 points ahead of Clark).

ATTRIBUTES: Among All Respondents (n=800)

<i>Which of the four Liberal leadership candidates do you think is best described by each of the following words?</i>	George Abbott %	Christy Clark %	Kevin Falcon %	Mike de Jong %	Don't Know %
Caring	12	22	2	4	60
Charismatic	3	35	10	4	48
Down-to-earth	24	15	5	8	49
Friendly	13	35	2	6	44
Honest	14	12	4	5	64
Likeable	16	31	4	7	42
Open-minded	15	20	6	5	55
Sensible	22	17	7	8	46
Smart	12	21	15	4	47
Trustworthy	15	13	5	6	61
Visionary	7	14	11	3	65

Attributes among 2009 BC Liberal Voters: Among BC Liberal voters Christy Clark is chosen most often as the candidate best described by 9 of the 11 words. Her largest lead over her competitors is on the attributes of ‘charismatic’ (41 points ahead of Falcon), ‘friendly’ (32 points ahead of Abbott) and ‘likeable’ (24 points ahead of Abbott).

George Abbott is chosen most often as the candidate best described by 2 of the 11 words, most notably for ‘down-to-earth’ (7 points ahead of Clark).

ATTRIBUTES: Among 2009 BC Liberal Voters (n=317)

<i>Which of the four Liberal leadership candidates do you think is best described by each of the following words?</i>	George Abbott %	Christy Clark %	Kevin Falcon %	Mike de Jong %	Don’t Know %
Caring	15	32	4	6	43
Charismatic	3	51	10	5	31
Down-to-earth	29	22	6	11	32
Friendly	15	47	2	6	29
Honest	18	20	8	7	47
Likeable	18	42	6	8	27
Open-minded	17	32	7	6	38
Sensible	25	24	11	11	29
Smart	15	27	25	5	29
Trustworthy	20	22	10	6	43
Visionary	9	20	18	4	49

Attributes among 2009 NDP Voters: Among past NDP voters, the main finding is the very high level of don't know responses to all 11 words. Christy Clark leads on 6 of the 11 words, while George Abbott leads on the other 5.

ATTRIBUTES: Among 2009 NDP Voters (n=289)

<i>Which of the four Liberal leadership candidates do you think is best described by each of the following words?</i>	George Abbott %	Christy Clark %	Kevin Falcon %	Mike de Jong %	Don't Know %
Caring	11	13	2	3	71
Charismatic	2	28	10	4	57
Down-to-earth	25	9	3	5	58
Friendly	13	26	2	6	52
Honest	15	5	1	3	76
Likeable	19	23	3	7	48
Open-minded	17	11	5	3	65
Sensible	24	10	4	7	55
Smart	13	19	9	4	56
Trustworthy	15	5	2	5	73
Visionary	5	10	7	2	76

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid online poll conducted on behalf of Global BC. The poll was fielded February 17-21, 2011 with a representative sample of 800 adult British Columbia residents. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error will be larger 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 British Columbia population according to 2006 Census data. The polling was conducted using Ipsos Reid's "Voice of the West Interactive Forum" – an online panel of more than 6,500 British Columbians who have been recruited to match the overall characteristics of the adult residents of the province.

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