

BC LIBERALS (41%) AND NDP (39%) EFFECTIVELY TIED

*Advantage Liberals on Leadership: Christy Clark (47%) Leads
Adrian Dix (25%) by Wide Margin as Best Premier*

*Advantage NDP on Government Record: Only One-Third
Approve (35%) of Overall Government Performance*



Ipsos Reid

Public Release Date: Updated May 19, 2011

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

BC LIBERALS (41%) AND NDP (39%) EFFECTIVELY TIED

Advantage Liberals on Leadership: Christy Clark (47%) Leads Adrian Dix (25%) by Wide Margin as Best Premier

Advantage NDP on Government Record: Only One-Third Approve (35%) of Overall Government Performance

Vancouver, BC – As speculation grows that a provincial election could be held this fall, a new Ipsos Reid poll shows the BC Liberals and New Democrats effectively tied in voter support. The poll results reflect a divide in public opinion when it comes to leadership and government performance. On leadership, BC Liberal leader Christy Clark has a sizable advantage over NDP leader Adrian Dix. However, this leadership advantage is largely nullified by widespread public disapproval of the BC Liberal government record.

Ballot

Currently the BC Liberals have the support of 41% of decided voters. This is a statistically insignificant 2 point lead over the NDP at 39% support. The BC Conservative Party is a distant third choice at 10% support, followed closely by the Green Party at 8%. These results exclude the 16% of British Columbians who are undecided or express no preference.

Compared to the May 2009 election, both the BC Liberals (down 5 points from 46%) and NDP (down 3 points from 42%) are down. The BC Conservatives (up 8 points from 2%) who did not run a full slate of candidates in 2009 are up substantially. The Green Party is unchanged from the 8% they garnered in the 2009 election.

- **Region:** Ballot support for the two main parties is fairly even in both the Lower Mainland (43% BC Lib vs. 40% NDP) and outside the Lower Mainland (38% BC Lib vs. 38% NDP). However, the overall result outside the Lower Mainland masks a substantial NDP lead on Vancouver Island (51% NDP vs. 32% BC Lib) and a large BC Liberal lead in the Southern Interior/North (43% BC Lib vs. 27% NDP).

- **Gender:** A large gender gap has opened for both the BC Liberals and NDP, with men favouring the Liberals by 13 points (47% BC Lib vs. 34% NDP) and women favouring the NDP by 9 points (44% NDP vs. 35% BC Lib).
- **Age:** The BC Liberals lead by 10 points with voters 55+ years (47% BC Lib vs. 37% NDP) and by a much narrower 4 points with voters 35-54 years (41% BC Lib vs. 37% NDP). The NDP has a 10 point lead among younger voters under the age of 35 years (43% NDP vs. 33% BC Lib).

Voter Pools

Survey respondents were asked how likely they would be to vote for the various parties if a provincial election is held later this year.

The BC Liberals have the biggest voter pool, with nearly half (48%) of residents saying they would be either “very likely” (25%) or “somewhat likely” (24%) to vote for the BC Liberals led by Christy Clark.

The NDP voter pool is 5 points smaller than the Liberals, with 43% saying they would be either “very likely” (22%) or “somewhat likely” (21%) to vote for the NDP led by Adrian Dix.

About one-quarter of British Columbians say they would be at least somewhat likely to vote for the Green Party led by Jane Sterk (25% total; 7% “very likely”, 18% “somewhat likely”) and the BC Conservative Party led by John Cummins (24% total; 10% “very likely”, 15% “somewhat likely”).

Leadership Impressions

British Columbians are more likely to have a positive than negative impression of BC Liberal leader Christy Clark, but many have not formed an impression of her at all. Slightly more than one-third (36%) of residents have a positive impression of Clark as a political leader, while two-in-ten (22%) have a negative impression. More than four-in-ten (43%) voters say they have either a neutral impression (38%) or are undecided (5%) about Christy Clark.

Views of NDP leader Adrian Dix are more split than for Clark, although most British Columbians have not formed an impression of him yet. Two-in-ten (20%) residents say they have a positive impression of Dix as a political leader, while slightly more residents (22%) say they have a negative impression. Six-in-ten (59%) voters say they have either a neutral impression (47%) or are undecided (12%) about Adrian Dix.

Best Premier

Christy Clark has a big lead over Adrian Dix as the leader that British Columbians think would make a better Premier of the province. Nearly half (47%) of residents choose Clark as the better potential Premier compared to one-quarter (25%) for Dix. Three-in-ten (28%) British Columbians are unsure which of the two party leaders would make the better Premier.

- Clark leads Dix across all demographic groups, although the gap is much smaller among Vancouver Island residents (39% Clark vs. 35% Dix).

Government Approval

Christy Clark's strong leadership numbers haven't yet paid dividends in boosting public opinion of the BC Liberals' performance in government. Currently, only about one-third (35%) of voters say they approve of the overall performance of the BC Liberal government since last being elected in May 2009. Government approval includes 7% who "approve strongly" and 28% who "approve somewhat". Six-in-ten (61%) British Columbians say they disapprove of the overall performance of the BC Liberal government, including 36% who "disapprove strongly" and 25% who "disapprove somewhat".

- Government approval is higher among men (41%) than among women (29%).

Government Approval on Issues

In addition to overall government approval, survey respondents were asked to give their approval of the job the government in BC has been doing in terms of 8 specific issues.

The only issue on which the BC Liberal government has more approval than disapproval is the economy, where a very slight majority (51%) of British Columbians approve of the government's performance.

At the other end of the spectrum, only two-in-ten (21%) residents approve of the performance of the job the provincial government has been doing in terms of ethics and accountability.

- Economy – 51% approve vs. 43% disapprove
- Crime/justice – 38% approve vs. 53% disapprove
- Environment – 37% approve vs. 53% disapprove
- Education – 32% approve vs. 59% disapprove

- Taxes – 31% approve vs. 64% disapprove
- Health care – 30% approve vs. 65% disapprove
- Spending taxpayer money wisely – 29% approve vs. 65% disapprove
- Ethics and accountability – 21% approve vs. 70% disapprove

Approval of 2011 Election

British Columbians are split in their desire to have a provincial election later this year. Nearly half (46%) say they approve of the idea of holding the provincial election later this year instead of on the fixed election date of May 2013, including two-in-ten (21%) who “approve strongly”. A similar proportion (48%) of British Columbians say they disapprove of holding an election this year, including three-in-ten (28%) who “disapprove strongly” with the idea.

- Support for an election this year is much higher among current NDP supporters (59% approve) than among BC Liberal supporters (35% approve).

HST

British Columbians appear ready to scrap the HST in the upcoming referendum. Only about one-third (36%) of residents say they plan to vote to “keep the HST” in the mail-in referendum this summer. A slight majority (52%) of voters say they plan to vote to “remove the HST and reinstate the PST and GST”. Twelve percent say they are undecided or will not vote.

- A majority of BC Liberal voters (58%) say they will vote to keep the HST, while one-third (33%) will vote to scrap the tax. Among NDP voters, only 20% will vote to keep the HST, while 68% will vote to scrap it. There is also a desire to scrap the tax among BC Conservatives (27% keep vs. 67% scrap) and Greens (39% keep vs. 49% scrap).
- Support for the HST divides along gender lines. Men are split 46% to keep the HST and 45% to scrap the HST. Women are much less likely to say keep the HST (26%) than to scrap it (58%).

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll of 1,200 adult British Columbians conducted half by telephone (600n) and half using Ipsos Reid's national online household panel (600n) between May 9 and 13, 2011. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of ± 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error would 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 2006 Census data.

The government approval questions (overall and issues) in this release were asked only of the 600 online survey respondents (± 4.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20).

- 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/>.*