

PROVINCIAL BUDGET

Three-in-Five British Columbians Disapprove of Provincial Budget

Few believe that the BC government will keep its promise to devote all HST revenues to health care.

[VANCOUVER – Mar. 19, 2010] – The latest British Columbia provincial budget did not please many people in the province, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative provincial sample of 905 adults in British Columbia, only one-in-five respondents (20%) approve of the budget presented by the BC provincial government headed by Gordon Campbell, while three-in-five (60%) disapprove.

BC Liberal voters are clearly in favour of the government's spending plan (55%), while very few NDP supporters (4%) are satisfied with its contents.

Just one-in-four respondents (27%) are very or moderately confident that the provincial budget will promote economic recovery in BC. Two-thirds of British Columbians (66%) are not too confident or not confident at all.

In fact, 51 per cent of respondents think the budget will have a negative impact on the province, and 60 per cent foresee a negative impact on their household.

British Columbians are divided in their analysis of the \$1.7 billion provincial deficit, with 43 per cent believing it presents "a severe impediment" for the future, while 40 per cent think it is a "manageable situation." Almost half of British Columbians (46%) believe the province will not record a budget surplus until 2015 or later.

KEY FINDINGS

- **20% approve of the budget presented by the BC government; 60% disapprove**
- **12% think the BC government will keep its promise of allocating all revenues from the HST to health care**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From March 15 to March 17, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 905 randomly selected British Columbia adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.3%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of British Columbia. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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HST

Time has done little to change perceptions of the harmonized sales tax (HST). Three-in-four respondents (77%) disagree with the implementation of the HST, exactly the same proportion as in November.

The budget pledge of allocating all HST revenues to health care has little effect on the population. Only 12 per cent of respondents expect the BC government to keep this promise, including just 30 per cent of BC Liberal voters and four per cent of NDP voters.

The Leaders

Neither of the two main party leaders is getting rave reviews when it comes to the economy. Two-thirds of respondents think BC Premier and BC Liberals leader Gordon Campbell is more interested in his political career than in doing what's best for BC. Just over one-in-four British Columbians believe Campbell has a clear plan to deal with the economic slowdown (27%), is sensitive to the needs of the province (26%) and express confidence in the Premier to find the right solutions for the BC economy. Two-in-five respondents (39%) think Campbell has a strong team.

New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Carole James gets high marks for being sensitive to the needs of the province (51%). Also, one-third of respondents (32%) have confidence in James to find the right solutions for the BC economy and believe she has a strong team (33%). However, just 23 per cent think she has a clear plan to deal with the economic slowdown, and 36 per cent believe she is more interested in her political career at this point.

When the two leaders are pitted against each other on four economic issues, at least two-in-five British Columbians cannot select either of the two for the tasks at hand. Campbell is trusted more than James to boost the provincial economy (31% to 22%) and minimize the provincial deficit (29% to 17%). James is ahead of Campbell on job creation (33% to 25%) and dealing with taxes (26% to 22%).

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All things considered, do you agree or disagree with the implementation of a harmonized sales tax (HST) in BC?

	March 15-17	November 10-11
Strongly Agree	3%	5%
Moderately Agree	15%	13%
Moderately Disagree	13%	16%
Strongly Disagree	64%	61%
Not Sure	5%	6%

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The BC government has promised that it will use all revenues from the harmonized sales tax (HST) for health care. Do you expect the BC government to keep this promise?

	All respondents	BC Liberal Voters	NDP Voters
Yes	12%	30%	4%
No	79%	53%	94%
Not sure	10%	17%	3%

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Based on what you have seen, read, or heard, do you approve or disapprove of the budget presented by the BC Liberal provincial government headed by Gordon Campbell?

	All respondents	BC Liberal Voters	NDP Voters
Approve	20%	55%	4%
Disapprove	60%	24%	84%
Not sure	20%	20%	12%

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The budget predicts a provincial deficit of \$1.7 billion at the end of the current fiscal year. Do you think this budget deficit is a severe impediment for the future, or a manageable situation for the future?

	All respondents	BC Liberal Voters	NDP Voters
A severe impediment	43%	22%	54%
A manageable situation	40%	66%	31%
Not sure	17%	12%	16%

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Provincial Budget

How confident are you that the provincial budget will promote economic recovery in BC?

	All respondents	BC Liberal Voters	NDP Voters
Very confident	2%	5%	0%
Moderately confident	25%	59%	10%
Not too confident	42%	27%	47%
Not confident at all	24%	3%	37%
Not sure	8%	6%	6%

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What impact do you expect the provincial budget to have on each of the following?

	British Columbia	Your household
A major positive impact	3%	2%
A minor positive impact	23%	8%
No impact at all	11%	20%
A minor negative impact	25%	35%
A major negative impact	26%	25%
Not sure	12%	10%

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Now we'd like to ask you some questions about Gordon Campbell. Do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Gordon Campbell has a clear plan to deal with the economic slowdown	27%	63%	10%
Right now, Gordon Campbell is more interested in his political career than in doing what's best for BC	66%	23%	11%
I have confidence in Gordon Campbell to find the right solutions for the BC economy	26%	68%	7%
Gordon Campbell has a strong team	39%	52%	9%
Gordon Campbell is sensitive to the needs of the province	26%	67%	7%

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Now we'd like to ask you some questions about Carole James. Do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Carole James has a clear plan to deal with the economic slowdown	23%	52%	25%
Right now, Carole James is more interested in her political career than in doing what's best for BC	36%	40%	25%
I have confidence in Carole James to find the right solutions for the BC economy	32%	48%	19%
Carole James has a strong team	33%	42%	25%
Carole James is sensitive to the needs of the province	51%	30%	19%

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Which of these two leaders do you trust more to handle each of the following economic issues?

	Boosting the provincial economy	Minimizing the provincial deficit	Creating jobs	Dealing with taxes
Gordon Campbell	31%	29%	25%	22%
Carole James	22%	17%	33%	26%
Neither	33%	40%	28%	37%
Not sure	14%	13%	14%	14%

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When do you expect BC to record a budget surplus again?

	All respondents	BC Liberal Voters	NDP Voters
In 2011	2%	3%	1%
In 2012	6%	12%	6%
In 2013	8%	16%	3%
In 2014	11%	20%	7%
In 2015 or later	46%	29%	55%
Not sure	26%	21%	28%

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election. More information on our electoral record can be found at:
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More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at
<http://www.visioncritical.com/what-we-do/practices/angus-reid-public-opinion/>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

Copies of this poll are available on our website:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>

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