

Alberta Provincial Politics Vote Intention & Unite the Right

Alberta Public Opinion Study – October 2016

Faron Ellis, PhD
Research Chair

faron.ellis@lethbridgecollege.ca
www.lethbridgecollege.ca/go/csrl

Lethbridge College
3000 College Drive South
Lethbridge AB T1K 1L6



Methodology

- **Population** The province of Alberta has a total population of 4,233,933 residents (Statistics Canada, July 1, 2016) approximately 78% of which are 18 years of age or older for an adult population of 3,302,467.
- **Sample** Data were collected by Lethbridge College students in the fall of 2016. Students interviewed 1,513 adult Alberta residents by telephone from October 1 to 8, 2016 under the supervision of principal investigator Faron Ellis, Research Chair, Citizen Society Research Lab. Landline telephone numbers were selected from a sample drawn from InfoGroup directories and supplemented with a selection of mobile numbers from CSRL lists. We sincerely thank all participants who took time out of their day to respond to our inquiries. Further results from this study and results from past studies can be accessed by visiting the CSRL web pages at: www.lethbridgecollege.ca/go/csrl
- **Representativeness** Analysis of the demographic data indicates that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the adult population within the province of Alberta. The sample has been statistically weighted where necessary to even better reflect the demographic distribution of the population (gender, region of province and age).
- **Confidence** The weighted sample yields a margin of error ± 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data (Calgary ± 5.0 percentage points, Edmonton and immediate area ± 5.0 percentage points, North ± 5.2 percentage points, South ± 4.9 percentage points 19 times out of 20).
- **IB Commons Call Centre** Students conducted interviews using the facilities of the Lethbridge College IB Commons Call Centre. We thank members of Lethbridge College's IT team for their support in helping maintain the IB Commons Call Center.
- **Sponsorship** These data are part of a larger study of the opinions and attitudes of Alberta residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at Lethbridge College. This particular set of questions was derived from student and faculty interest in the topics.

Alberta Provincial Vote Intention

- A year and a half after its stunning majority victory in the 2015 Alberta provincial election, the governing NDP has fallen to third place (19.7%) among decided Alberta voters. The governing party maintains relatively strong support in the Edmonton region (28.8%) but still trails the PCs even there. It is running a distant third in all other areas of the province; northern Alberta excluding the Edmonton area (18.7%), in Calgary (17.2%), and in the rest of southern Alberta (14.4%),
- The resurgent Progressive Conservatives hold a substantial lead in the province overall (38.4%), and lead in every region of the province; Calgary (41.4%), south (38.1%), north (37.7%) and Edmonton (36.2%).
- Wildrose is running second provincially (25.7%), with support levels that are virtually unchanged from the same time last year (26.7%), and its results in the 2015 provincial election (24.2%). Wildrose is running a strong second in areas outside of the major metropolitan centers (approximately 29%) but is a distant second in Calgary (26.2%) and running third in the Edmonton area (18.4%).
- The provincial Liberals (9.4%) have rebounded somewhat from their 2015 election support levels (4.2%), but still trail the three major parties by large margins in every region of the province.
- The Alberta Party (3.5%) is currently polling slightly more votes than what it achieved in the 2015 election (2.3%).

Provincial Vote Intention by Region (decided voters) (%)

2016	Calgary	Edmonton	North	South	All Residents
Progressive Conservative	41.4	36.2	37.7	38.1	38.4
Wildrose	26.2	18.4	29.3	29.2	25.7
NDP	17.2	28.8	18.7	14.4	19.7
Liberal	9.0	11.9	5.9	10.8	9.4
Alberta Party	3.2	2.7	4.4	3.6	3.5
Other party-candidate	2.9	2.1	4.0	3.9	3.3
2015	Calgary	Edmonton	North	South	All Residents
NDP	25.2	42.9	27.0	29.7	31.1
Progressive Conservative	27.4	24.0	24.3	29.2	28.7
Wildrose	34.3	19.4	36.2	24.6	26.3
Liberal	7.4	8.7	7.0	12.8	9.0
Alberta Party	2.6	2.6	3.8	3.1	3.0
Other party-candidate	3.0	2.6	1.6	0.5	2.0

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Alberta Provincial Vote Intention (2009-2016) (%)

- The PC resurgence can be attributed to a number of factors, including the fact that the PC brand remains strong and its leadership campaign has so far generated more positive than negative commentary. Under these conditions it is understandable that some moderate Alberta voters who have already tired of the New Democrats are drifting back to a brand they are much more comfortable with than the alternatives, and within which they can invest a considerable amount of hope. In essence, the PCs are currently being viewed by many voters as a concept or a work in progress that represents continuity as well as change.
- Added to these is the fact that former federal Conservative cabinet minister Jason Kenny is the most recognized PC leadership candidate and is campaigning on a very popular unite the right platform. This too is a work in progress, but as the analysis below demonstrates, the concept has strong support from both Wildrose and Progressive Conservative voters.
- Any party's successes are at least in part the product of its opponents' weaknesses. PCs fortunes have clearly been bolstered because Wildrose has not capitalized on opportunities to expand its support base beyond the core it maintained in the 2015 election. The party has had too many recent incidents that have reinforced preexisting negatives or provided voters with new evidence that it is incapable of or unwilling to broaden its appeal and thereby become viewed as a possible government.
- The NDP has moved beyond its honeymoon period, appears to have spent much of the political capital it built in defeating the PCs in the 2015 election, and is clearly trending in the wrong direction as it heads into the middle part of its four-year mandate.
- Two and half years before a general election is an eternity, leaving plenty of time for any of the major parties to reverse their present course. But at this juncture, the concept of a reconfigured PC party has momentum and the attention Alberta voters.

Decided Voters (%)	2009 (± 3.2)	2010 (± 3.5)	2011 (± 3.1)	2012 (± 3.3)	2013 (± 3.6)	2014 (± 4.7)	2015 (± 3.5)	2016 (± 2.7)
Progressive Conservative	38.4	36.1	47.7	44.6	36.1	32.6	28.7	38.4
Wildrose	21.5	24.0	16.1	23.9	29.4	30.8	26.3	25.7
NDP	10.7	10.8	16.3	14.0	12.2	16.8	31.1	19.7
Liberal	20.8	20.7	13.4	11.1	15.7	12.8	9.0	9.4
Alberta Party	–	–	–	–	–	–	3.0	3.5
Other parties	8.5	8.4	3.4	3.4	5.6	7.0	2.0	3.3

All Voters (%)	2009 (± 2.9)	2010 (± 3.0)	2011 (± 2.9)	2012 (± 3.0)	2013 (± 3.1)	2014 (± 4.1)	2015 (± 3.2)	2016 (± 2.5)
Progressive Conservative	32.9	29.6	42.0	40.2	29.3	26.2	25.0	34.9
Wildrose	18.5	19.7	14.2	21.5	23.8	24.7	22.9	23.4
NDP	9.2	8.9	14.4	12.6	9.9	13.5	27.1	17.9
Liberal	17.9	17.0	11.8	10.0	12.7	10.3	7.8	8.6
Alberta Party	–	–	–	–	–	–	2.6	3.2
Other parties	7.3	6.9	3.0	3.1	4.5	5.6	1.7	3.0
Undecided	14.2	18.0	11.9	9.9	18.9	19.7	12.8	9.1

Alberta Provincial Vote Intention 2016 (decided voters) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	All Albertans
Progressive Conservative	36.8	40.2	38.4
NDP	17.3	22.0	19.7
Wildrose	30.0	21.3	25.7
Liberal	8.4	10.5	9.4
All other parties-candidates	7.5	6.0	6.7

Household Income*	Under \$60,000	\$60-120,000	Over \$120,000
Progressive Conservative	35.0	39.2	38.5
Wildrose	25.1	24.3	28.2
NDP	17.1	21.8	20.6
Liberal	13.5	8.6	7.6
All other parties-candidates	9.3	6.1	5.2

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Progressive Conservative	42.9	37.5	37.9	37.4
Wildrose	26.3	26.2	29.7	21.2
NDP	11.7	16.5	17.1	28.7
Liberal	10.5	13.5	8.9	6.8
All other parties-candidates	8.5	6.4	6.4	5.9

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Progressive Conservative	41.0	38.2	36.0	39.6
Wildrose	26.2	23.2	28.2	24.1
NDP	9.8	19.1	21.9	27.1
Liberal	15.1	12.4	6.2	5.6
All other parties-candidates	7.9	7.0	7.7	3.6

Religious Participation	1-3 per month/more	Several per year	Rarely/never
Progressive Conservative	39.0	38.7	38.5
Wildrose	25.7	26.6	25.5
NDP	18.6	18.8	19.9
Liberal	11.8	8.6	9.2
All other parties-candidates	5.0	7.4	6.8

Federal Vote Intention*	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green
Progressive Conservative	58.3	10.3	6.1	6.1
Wildrose	33.1	7.1	15.3	31.8
NDP	3.4	46.0	68.4	18.2
Liberal	1.7	30.9	7.1	7.6
All other parties-candidates	3.5	5.8	3.1	36.4

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Uniting the Alberta Right (%)

- A clear majority of Albertans who registered an opinion (66.2%) would prefer the provincial Progressive Conservatives and Wildrose parties to unite and present voters with a unified right of center alternative at the next provincial election.
- Fully one-quarter of all voters (25.0%) strongly support a united conservative option, while another one-third (34.1%) are somewhat supportive. Only 13.5% are somewhat opposed, while 16.6% are strongly opposed. One in ten Albertans (10.6%) is undecided.
- Tellingly, Alberta Progressive Conservative (79.0%) and Wildrose voters (81.9%) are most supportive, while NDP (67.1%) and Liberal voters (57.9%) are most opposed.
- Interestingly, although much of the unite-the-right discussion is being led by PC leadership candidate Jason Kenny, it is Wildrose supporters who are most strongly in favor of a united conservative party, with nearly half (45.2%) of all Wildrose voters strongly supportive and a further one-third (36.6%) somewhat supportive.
- Clearly this level of support for the concept of a united conservative party option should give both Wildrose and the PCs pause for reflection, while bolstering the unity argument with in the ongoing PC leadership contest.

<u>All Albertans</u>		<u>Decided Albertans</u>		<u>Decided Albertans Combined</u>	
Strongly support	25.0	Strongly Support	28.0	Support	66.2
Somewhat support	34.1	Somewhat Support	38.1	Oppose	33.8
Somewhat oppose	13.6	Somewhat Oppose	15.2		
Strongly oppose	16.6	Strongly Oppose	18.6		
Undecided	10.6				

<u>Unite the Right by Provincial Vote (%)</u>	<u>Progressive Conservative</u>	<u>Wildrose</u>	<u>NDP</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Other Parties and Candidates</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Strongly support	33.6	45.2	7.2	11.1	18.3	15.8
Somewhat support	45.6	36.6	25.7	31.5	36.6	42.1
Somewhat oppose	10.7	8.0	25.2	25.0	20.7	24.2
Strongly oppose	10.1	10.1	41.9	32.4	24.4	17.9

<u>Unite the Right Combined by Provincial Vote (%)</u>	<u>Progressive Conservative</u>	<u>Wildrose</u>	<u>NDP</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Other Parties and Candidates</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Support	79.0	81.9	32.9	42.1	54.9	58.3
Oppose	21.0	18.1	67.1	57.9	45.1	41.7

Unite the Right by Demographic Characteristics (decided voters) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	All Albertans
Support	67.2	65.1	66.2
Oppose	32.8	34.9	33.8

Household Income	Under \$60,000	\$60-120,000	Over \$120,000
Support	65.5	69.1	65.6
Oppose	34.5	30.9	34.4

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Support	66.5	71.7	68.8	60.1
Oppose	33.5	28.3	31.2	39.9

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Support	73.0	65.8	62.9	64.5
Oppose	27.0	34.2	37.1	35.5

Religious Participation	1-3 per month/more	Several per year	Rarely/never
Support	70.0	69.0	64.4
Oppose	30.0	31.0	35.6

Federal Vote Intention	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green
Support	81.3	38.7	38.5	53.3
Oppose	18.7	61.3	61.5	46.7

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Demographics

Area of Province (%)		Gender (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
Calgary	25.2	Male	49.9	Under \$60,000	35.1	H-School/less	18.2	18-29	22.1
Edmonton	25.1	Female	50.1	\$60-\$120,000	39.3	Some P-Sec.	20.0	30-44	22.5
North	23.2			Over \$120,000	25.6	Col-Tech-Grad	30.2	45-64	33.1
South	26.5					University Grad	31.6	65 or older	22.3

Mean age = 48 years old

Religious Participation (%)	
2-3/month-more	25.2
Several/year	20.6
Rarely-never	54.2

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100

Questions

- If a provincial election was held today, for which of the following parties would you be most likely to vote?
 - NDP
 - Wildrose
 - Progressive Conservative
 - Liberal
 - Alberta Party
 - Some other party or candidate
 - Undecided (unprompted)
- Since the last provincial election when the NDP was elected with a majority government, some Alberta groups and candidates have proposed uniting the provincial Progressive Conservative and Wildrose parties in an effort at providing voters with a unified conservative party for the next provincial election. Please tell me whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the Alberta Progressive Conservative and Wildrose parties uniting before the next provincial election.