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BC NDP VICTORY ALL BUT CERTAIN

Is BRITISH COLUMBIA BREAKING AWAY FROM ITS TWO-PARTY SYSTEM?

[Ottawa – April 12, 2013] – With barely a month to go until the 40th British Columbia general election, the provincial NDP holds a commanding lead and are well-poised to recapture government after the Liberals’ 12-year reign. Despite their best efforts, the BC Liberals have been unable to improve their fortunes from two months ago and the party is mired at 27 per cent. With no forward momentum and time running out, Christy Clark stands little chance at retaining her status as Premier on May 14.

It is important to note, however, that the riding dynamics in British Columbia are highly complex and we do not fully understand how popular vote translates to seats. Further complicating the problem is that British Columbia voters are somewhat politically promiscuous. Unlike in neighbouring Alberta, where voters are fiercely loyal in terms of party support and the province has switched parties only three times in its history, public opinion in British Columbia can shift suddenly and voters will not hesitate to depose of an unpopular government. For these reasons, we are unwilling to offer seat projections.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to envision a scenario where the NDP could lose with a 12-point lead in popular support. Furthermore, when we turn to our “likely voter” model, the NDP widens its lead to 17 points, revealing that NDP voters are more committed to voting on Election Day. Indeed, we do not believe it to be a question of whether or not the NDP will win – it is simply a matter of whether or not they will capture a coveted majority government.

Perhaps the most interesting finding is the surprising growth of BC’s erstwhile fringe parties. Whereas the Liberals and NDP have held an oligopoly on the Legislature since 1996 when the BC Reform Party and the Progressive Democratic Alliance eked out three seats combined, there is strong evidence that British Columbians are beginning to consider political alternatives.

At one end of the political spectrum, BC’s Green Party seems to be siphoning votes from the youth wing of the provincial NDP. At 16 points, the Green Party has doubled its support since the last provincial election. However, as we have stated in the past, much of this support is concentrated among new voters, many of whom will stay home on election day. The rise in GP is

HIGHLIGHTS

- **British Columbia provincial vote intention:**
 - ▣ **39.3% NDP**
 - ▣ **27.3% Liberal**
 - ▣ **16.2% Green**
 - ▣ **13.4% Conservative**
 - ▣ **3.8% Other**
- **“Likely voter” model:**
 - ▣ **44.9% NDP**
 - ▣ **28.4% Liberal**
 - ▣ **11.1% Green**
 - ▣ **13.0% Conservative**
 - ▣ **2.7% Other**

Please note that the methodology is provided at the end of this document.

real though and we have seen them rebounding from a very poor outing in the last federal election.

At the other end of the political spectrum, meanwhile, the BC Conservatives have been highly successful in rallying the support of disgruntled Liberal voters. Over the last four years, the party has leapt from virtual obscurity to an impressive 13 points. If these figures hold, it is possible that the BC Conservative Party may elect its first representative to the Legislature since 1978.

The growth of support for newer parties may well reflect growing fatigue with the mainstream political parties of old and the fragmentation of a rapidly pluralising society. This is an interesting development, but the same disdain for mainstream political parties dampens likelihood of voting which effectively politically mutes much of this portion of society (much of it relatively younger).

Top Line Results:

British Columbia vote intention

Q. If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

Provincial results



Provincial Results – “Likely voter” model



2009 British Columbia Election Results



Note: The data on provincial vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only.

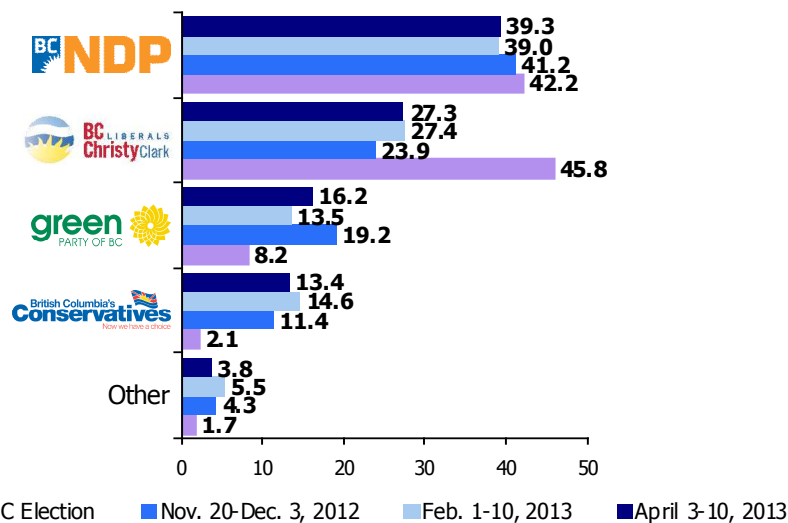
**Our “likely voters” involves dropping those respondents who did not vote in the 2011 Federal Election and then weighting the remaining cases by how they voted.*

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BASE: British Columbia residents; April 3-10, 2013 (n=917)

Tracking British Columbia provincial vote intention

Q. If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?







Note: The data on provincial vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only.

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BASE: British Columbia residents; most recent data point April 3-10, 2013 (n=917)

Detailed Tables:

Provincial Vote Intention: British Columbia							
<i>Q. If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for? [If undecided] Even if you do not have a firm idea, are you leaning towards a party? [If yes] As it stands, towards which party are you leaning?</i>							
					Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
OVERALL	39.3%	27.3%	16.2%	13.4%	3.8%	793	3.5
GENDER							
Male	35.8%	31.4%	14.4%	15.1%	3.3%	420	4.8
Female	43.7%	23.5%	17.4%	11.6%	3.8%	362	5.2
AGE							
<25	33.4%	16.6%	27.9%	19.4%	2.7%	36	16.3
25-44	36.1%	27.2%	18.4%	12.2%	6.1%	147	8.1
45-64	48.6%	21.9%	13.2%	13.9%	2.4%	331	5.4
65+	32.4%	41.9%	10.9%	11.5%	3.4%	268	6.0
EDUCATION							
High school or less	38.1%	22.8%	19.3%	15.9%	4.0%	203	6.9
College or CEGEP	34.1%	31.4%	16.7%	14.0%	3.8%	254	6.2
University or higher	45.0%	26.7%	12.9%	11.5%	3.9%	326	5.4
COUNTRY OF BIRTH							
Canada	40.1%	26.8%	16.1%	13.3%	3.6%	584	4.1
Other	35.6%	29.1%	16.0%	14.4%	4.9%	202	6.9
FEDERAL VOTE INTENTION							
Liberal Party	39.3%	45.6%	10.0%	4.7%	0.5%	175	7.4
Conservative Party	16.0%	49.6%	2.7%	30.3%	1.5%	218	6.6
NDP	79.2%	2.5%	8.7%	5.1%	4.5%	231	6.5
Green Party	18.6%	8.4%	66.2%	5.3%	1.5%	91	10.3
Other	8.7%	11.1%	30.9%	12.4%	36.9%	19	22.5



Methodology:

This study was conducted using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology, which allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator.

In an effort to reduce the coverage bias of landline only RDD, we created a dual landline/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with a landline and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and landline only households. This methodology is not to be confused with the increasing proliferation of non-probability opt-in online panels which have recently been incorrectly reported in major national media with inappropriate margin of error estimates.

The field dates for this survey are April 3-10, 2013. In total, a random sample of 917 British Columbia residents aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-3.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as sex, age, education and region). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the sample's composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.