

## Historic vote sweeps NDP to victory in Alberta

*Issue Analysis: what was behind the first sea change in Alberta politics in 44 years?*

**Updated May 5, 2015** – Most polls [projected a historic upset](#) in the Alberta election, with a province-wide Angus Reid Institute poll illustrating some of the key features of this new political landscape.

Many pre-election polls showed the New Democratic Party in a very strong position. Indeed, the Angus Reid Institute's own findings indicated a substantial lead for the Alberta NDP, with two-in-five (41%) saying they were most likely to support the party on election day, far ahead of the Wildrose Party (28%) and the Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta (22%).

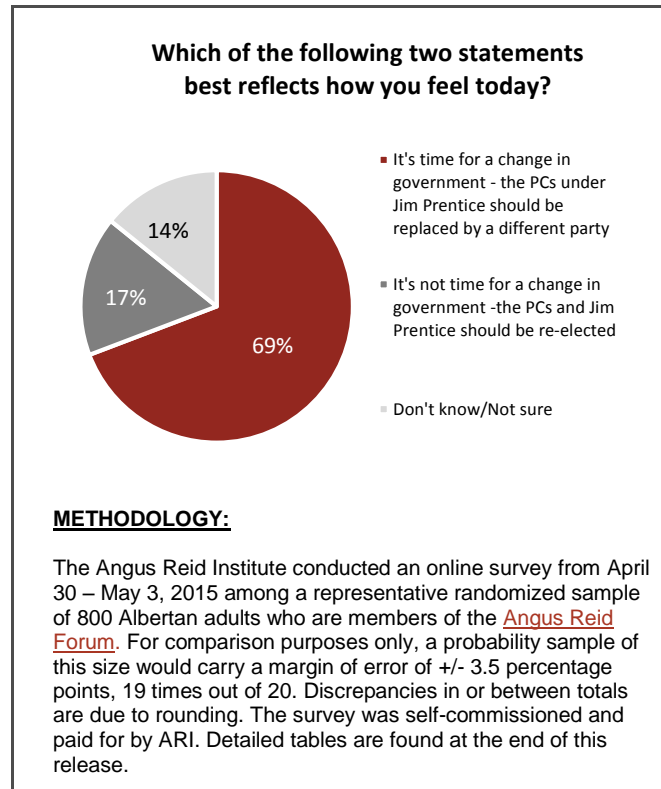
So, what's happened? The dynamic in Alberta was driven by different elements: the mood of the province, the electorate's appraisal of its leadership options and the issues resonating in this contest.

### The mood of the province

The majority of Albertans were unhappy with the direction of the province and felt that the time had come to change the party holding the levers of power. Within this atmosphere the NDP managed to impress voters the most.

Half (48%) reported an improved opinion of the party and leader since the campaign started, fully four times the one-in-ten (12%) who said they were turned off by the NDP during this campaign. By contrast, Jim Prentice and the PC campaign received a negative appraisal: 52 per cent of Albertans said their opinion had worsened during the campaign, versus only six per cent who said it had improved, a ratio of more than 8:1. Brian Jean and Wildrose received a split verdict (21% improved, 22% worse, 57% unchanged).

Fully two-in-three (69%) identified with the sentiment "it's time for a change in government – the Alberta Progressive Conservatives under Jim Prentice should be replaced by a different party".



### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

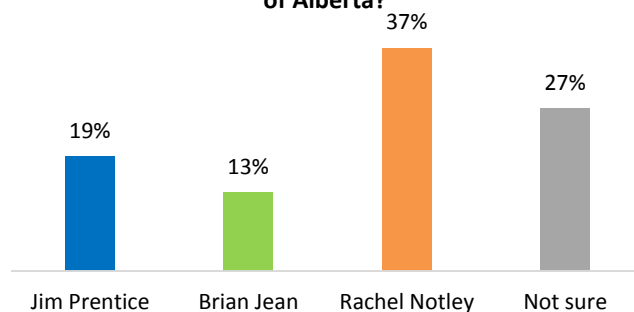
Shachi Kurl, Senior Vice President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl

## Leadership

NDP leader Rachel Notley impressed many Alberta voters and was the most popular party leader among survey respondents. Voters appeared to have soured on PC leader and Premier Jim Prentice, and held a split opinion concerning Wildrose leader Brian Jean. When asked if they would be better or worse off if a given party leader were to win the election, well over half (58%) said they would be better off with Notley, while two-in-five (38%) thought the same of Jean, and just one-in-ten (12%) of Prentice. Additional results found that:

- Six-in-ten Albertans (62%) had a favourable opinion of Notley, versus 25 per cent unfavourable. PC leader Jim Prentice received almost the inverse verdict: 63 per cent reported an unfavourable view of him, versus 27 per cent favourable. Respondents were split when it comes to Jean: 41 per cent favourable, 39 per cent unfavourable. Liberal leader David Swann also scored negative overall (See detailed tables at the end of this release).
- Notley also won hands down on “best premier” – chosen by 37 per cent of respondents overall, twice the number selecting the incumbent Prentice (19%), and nearly three times those choosing Jean (13%).

Setting aside your party preference for a moment, which of the major Alberta party leaders do you think would be the best Premier of Alberta?



## Breaking down the issues

Though Calgary mayor Naheed Nenshi referred to this Alberta election as the “[Seinfeld Campaign](#)” (one will note *Seinfeld* was famously a “show about nothing”), Albertans had little trouble identifying neither the issues that concern them, nor the parties/leaders most able to grapple with them.

The three most important:

- (1) Health Care (46%)
- (2) The Deficit and Government Spending (37%)
- (3) The Economy and Job Creation (34%)

On the first, the NDP had an overwhelming advantage (NDP 37%, Wildrose 15%, PC 9%). On deficits and government spending (specifically cutting government waste), Wildrose was seen as strongest (Wildrose 29%, NDP 22%, PC 8%).

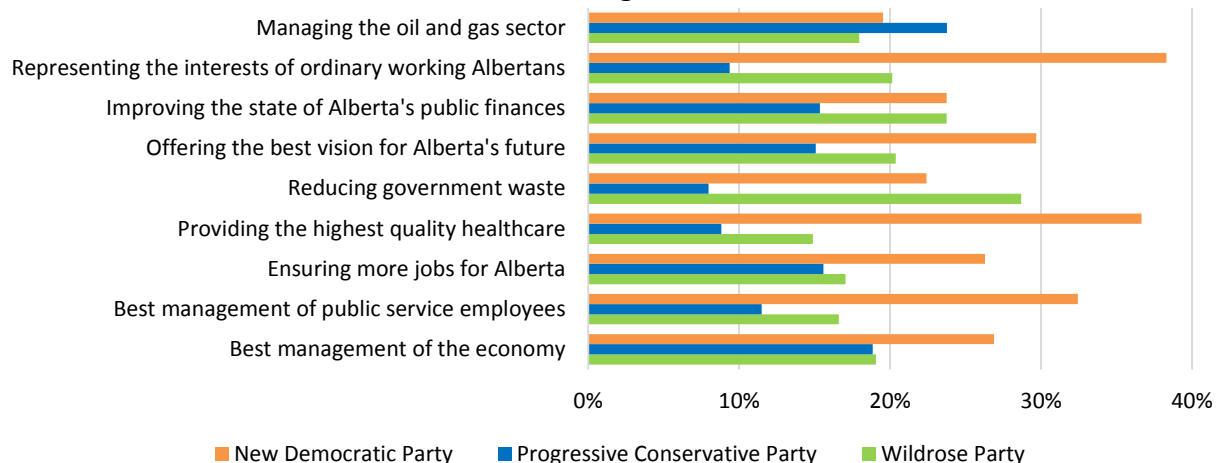
But the surprise was the third issue – the economy and job creation – where the NDP was seen as most effective player (NDP 27%, Wildrose 19%, PC 19%). The only issue on which the Alberta PC party lead was the management of the oil and gas sector (PC 24%, NDP 20%, Wildrose 18%).

---

## **MEDIA CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, Senior Vice President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl

## Who do you think offers Alberta the overall best choice in each of the following areas:



### Voter preference versus predictions

Though most polling firms pointed to a significant lead for Notley and the NDP heading into election day, Albertans themselves still predicted a PC victory.

When asked who they thought would win the election, 39 per cent of respondents chose the Conservatives, compared to 30 per cent who named the NDP and just eight per cent who chose the Wildrose. When voters considered the contest in their own riding, the Wildrose party was expected to perform much better. In this scenario, one-third (32%) chose the Conservatives to win, while one-fifth (23%) said the NDP or Wildrose (22%).

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, Senior Vice President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl

Which of the following two statements best reflects how you feel today?				
	Total (800)	Region		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)
It's time for a change in government - the Alberta Progressive Conservatives under Jim Prentice should be replaced by a different party	69%	64%	74%	70%
It's not time for a change in government -the Alberta Progressive Conservatives and Jim Prentice should be re-elected	17%	20%	15%	16%
Don't know/Not sure	14%	17%	12%	14%

Which of the following two statements best reflects how you feel today?						
	Total (800)	Gender		Age		
		Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
It's time for a change in government - the Alberta Progressive Conservatives under Jim Prentice should be replaced by a different party	69%	73%	66%	70%	74%	62%
It's not time for a change in government -the Alberta Progressive Conservatives and Jim Prentice should be re-elected	17%	15%	18%	13%	11%	28%
Don't know/Not sure	14%	12%	16%	17%	15%	10%

Overall, do you think Alberta is on the right track, or the wrong track?				
	Total (800)	Region		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)
Right track	17%	20%	16%	15%
Wrong track	58%	53%	61%	62%
Not sure	25%	27%	23%	24%

Overall, do you think Alberta is on the right track, or the wrong track?						
	Total (800)	Gender		Age		
		Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
Right track	17%	17%	17%	13%	12%	29%
Wrong track	58%	64%	53%	60%	64%	50%
Not sure	25%	19%	30%	27%	25%	21%

Since the beginning of the election campaign, would you say your opinion of each of the following has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?				
	Jim Prentice	Brian Jean	Rachel Notley	David Swann
Improved	6%	21%	48%	9%
Stayed the same	43%	57%	40%	72%
Worsened	52%	22%	12%	19%

Setting aside your party preference for a moment, which of the major Alberta party leaders do you think would be the best Premier of Alberta?				
	Total (800)	Region		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)
Jim Prentice	19%	22%	19%	17%
Brian Jean	13%	12%	7%	20%
Rachel Notley	37%	29%	52%	30%
David Swann	3%	4%	2%	4%
Not sure	27%	33%	20%	28%

**Setting aside your party preference for a moment, which of the major Alberta party leaders do you think would be the best Premier of Alberta?**

	Total (800)	Gender		Age		
		Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
Jim Prentice	19%	20%	18%	14%	15%	31%
Brian Jean	13%	17%	10%	9%	15%	16%
Rachel Notley	37%	37%	37%	35%	39%	36%
David Swann	3%	4%	3%	3%	5%	3%
Not sure	27%	21%	33%	39%	27%	14%

**Please indicate whether you have an overall favourable or unfavourable opinion of each of the following people?**

	Jim Prentice and Progressive Conservative Party	Brian Jean and the Wildrose Party	Rachel Notley and the New Democratic Party	David Swann and the Liberal Party
Favourable	27%	41%	62%	29%
Unfavourable	63%	39%	25%	48%
Not sure/Can't say	10%	20%	13%	23%

**Would you personally be better off or worse off if each of the following were to win this election?**

	Jim Prentice and Progressive Conservative Party	Brian Jean and the Wildrose Party	Rachel Notley and the New Democratic Party	David Swann and the Liberal Party
Better off	7%	21%	32%	12%
About the same	34%	28%	21%	29%
Worse off	49%	31%	30%	37%
Not sure/Can't say	11%	20%	17%	23%

**As far as you are concerned, what would you say are the most important issues in this election?  
(Choose up to three)**

	Total (800)	Region		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)
Health Care	46%	42%	54%	43%
Deficit/Debt/Government spending	37%	41%	25%	44%
The economy	34%	37%	30%	34%
Education	27%	25%	28%	27%
Taxes	27%	26%	27%	29%
Integrity/Ethics	20%	21%	22%	17%
Energy Sector/Oil Prices	11%	11%	11%	12%
Jobs/Unemployment	18%	20%	18%	16%
Leadership/Politics	12%	9%	14%	13%
Environment	10%	11%	10%	9%
Infrastructure/Roads and bridges	7%	6%	11%	5%
Social services - welfare, daycare, public housing	6%	7%	5%	6%
Community issues - safety, recreation, traffic	3%	2%	3%	3%
Other Issue	2%	2%	1%	4%

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, Senior Vice President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl

**As far as you are concerned, what would you say are the most important issues in this election?  
(Choose up to three)**

	Total (800)	Gender		Age		
		Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
Health Care	46%	38%	55%	36%	47%	56%
The economy	34%	34%	33%	35%	34%	30%
Deficit/Debt/Government spending	37%	39%	35%	37%	39%	33%
Taxes	27%	30%	24%	33%	23%	25%
Education	27%	20%	33%	35%	24%	21%
Integrity/Ethics	20%	21%	19%	15%	21%	24%
Jobs/Unemployment	18%	14%	22%	24%	15%	15%
Leadership/Politics	12%	16%	9%	9%	12%	16%
Energy Sector/Oil Prices	11%	12%	11%	13%	10%	12%
Environment	10%	10%	10%	16%	8%	5%
Infrastructure/Roads and bridges	7%	9%	6%	3%	7%	12%
Social services - welfare, daycare, public housing	6%	5%	7%	7%	4%	8%
Community issues - safety, recreation, traffic	3%	2%	3%	4%	2%	2%
Other Issue	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, Senior Vice President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl



Who do you think offers Alberta the overall best choice in each of the following areas: Providing the best overall management of the Alberta economy									
	Total (800)	Region			Gender		Age		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)	Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
Wildrose Party of Alberta	19%	18%	11%	27%	24%	14%	10%	24%	22%
Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta	19%	21%	17%	18%	20%	18%	13%	15%	30%
Alberta's New Democratic Party	27%	18%	40%	23%	27%	27%	32%	26%	22%
Liberal Party of Alberta	5%	6%	4%	6%	6%	4%	7%	5%	3%
All the same	5%	5%	6%	4%	5%	5%	3%	5%	7%
None of the above	7%	8%	7%	5%	9%	4%	7%	8%	4%
Don't know/Can't say	19%	23%	15%	17%	9%	28%	27%	17%	11%

Who do you think offers Alberta the overall best choice in each of the following areas: Providing the best overall management of Alberta public service employees									
	Total (800)	Region			Gender		Age		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)	Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
Wildrose Party of Alberta	17%	16%	10%	23%	21%	12%	10%	17%	23%
Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta	11%	10%	11%	13%	12%	11%	6%	10%	19%
Alberta's New Democratic Party	32%	26%	43%	29%	35%	30%	36%	33%	27%
Liberal Party of Alberta	5%	9%	4%	4%	6%	4%	9%	4%	2%
All the same	7%	6%	8%	6%	6%	8%	5%	8%	8%
None of the above	7%	9%	6%	5%	9%	5%	8%	7%	4%
Don't know/Can't say	21%	24%	18%	21%	11%	30%	25%	20%	17%

Who do you think offers Alberta the overall best choice in each of the following areas: Ensuring more jobs for Alberta									
	Total (800)	Region			Gender		Age		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)	Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
Wildrose Party of Alberta	17%	18%	10%	23%	20%	14%	10%	22%	19%
Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta	16%	15%	14%	18%	16%	15%	12%	12%	25%
Alberta's New Democratic Party	26%	22%	38%	20%	29%	24%	31%	24%	25%
Liberal Party of Alberta	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%	10%	5%	3%
All the same	9%	9%	9%	8%	8%	9%	4%	11%	11%
None of the above	6%	9%	5%	5%	8%	5%	6%	8%	5%
Don't know/Can't say	20%	22%	19%	20%	12%	29%	27%	20%	13%

Who do you think offers Alberta the overall best choice in each of the following areas: Providing the highest quality healthcare									
	Total (800)	Region			Gender		Age		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)	Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
Wildrose Party of Alberta	15%	13%	10%	21%	16%	14%	10%	18%	17%
Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta	9%	10%	10%	7%	9%	9%	4%	6%	17%
Alberta's New Democratic Party	37%	32%	46%	32%	41%	33%	40%	37%	32%
Liberal Party of Alberta	7%	11%	4%	7%	9%	6%	12%	5%	5%
All the same	6%	3%	6%	7%	5%	6%	4%	6%	7%
None of the above	7%	8%	7%	6%	9%	5%	6%	10%	4%
Don't know/Can't say	20%	22%	16%	21%	11%	28%	24%	18%	17%

Who do you think offers Alberta the overall best choice in each of the following areas: Reducing government waste									
	Total (800)	Region			Gender		Age		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)	Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
Wildrose Party of Alberta	29%	28%	19%	38%	37%	20%	22%	33%	30%
Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta	8%	9%	9%	6%	8%	8%	4%	6%	15%
Alberta's New Democratic Party	22%	18%	35%	15%	22%	23%	26%	20%	22%
Liberal Party of Alberta	3%	5%	3%	2%	4%	3%	4%	4%	3%
All the same	7%	6%	7%	9%	6%	9%	4%	8%	10%
None of the above	10%	12%	9%	8%	12%	7%	10%	12%	6%
Don't know/Can't say	21%	23%	17%	22%	11%	30%	30%	18%	14%

Who do you think offers Alberta the overall best choice in each of the following areas: Offering the best vision for Alberta's future									
	Total (800)	Region			Gender		Age		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)	Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
Wildrose Party of Alberta	20%	17%	12%	31%	24%	17%	14%	23%	24%
Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta	15%	17%	15%	14%	13%	17%	8%	10%	29%
Alberta's New Democratic Party	30%	25%	44%	21%	30%	29%	37%	29%	23%
Liberal Party of Alberta	4%	5%	2%	4%	5%	3%	5%	4%	2%
All the same	5%	5%	6%	4%	6%	4%	3%	6%	5%
None of the above	7%	8%	6%	7%	9%	5%	8%	8%	5%
Don't know/Can't say	19%	23%	15%	20%	12%	26%	25%	20%	12%

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, Senior Vice President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl

Who do you think offers Alberta the overall best choice in each of the following areas: Improving the state of Alberta's public finances									
	Total (800)	Region			Gender		Age		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)	Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
Wildrose Party of Alberta	24%	23%	15%	32%	31%	16%	18%	28%	25%
Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta	15%	16%	16%	14%	16%	15%	9%	12%	27%
Alberta's New Democratic Party	24%	18%	34%	20%	25%	22%	30%	22%	19%
Liberal Party of Alberta	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	8%	3%	3%
All the same	6%	7%	7%	3%	5%	7%	3%	7%	7%
None of the above	7%	10%	6%	5%	8%	6%	7%	9%	4%
Don't know/Can't say	20%	21%	18%	21%	10%	30%	26%	19%	14%

Who do you think offers Alberta the overall best choice in each of the following areas: Representing the interests of ordinary working Albertans									
	Total (800)	Region			Gender		Age		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)	Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
Wildrose Party of Alberta	20%	16%	13%	31%	24%	16%	14%	23%	23%
Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta	9%	11%	9%	8%	9%	9%	5%	7%	18%
Alberta's New Democratic Party	38%	34%	51%	31%	42%	35%	40%	38%	37%
Liberal Party of Alberta	4%	6%	2%	3%	4%	3%	5%	3%	2%
All the same	6%	4%	8%	6%	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%
None of the above	6%	10%	5%	4%	7%	5%	7%	6%	4%
Don't know/Can't say	17%	19%	13%	17%	8%	25%	24%	16%	9%

Who do you think offers Alberta the overall best choice in each of the following areas: Managing Alberta's oil and gas sector									
	Total (800)	Region			Gender		Age		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)	Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
Wildrose Party of Alberta	18%	18%	9%	26%	25%	11%	13%	21%	19%
Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta	24%	30%	21%	20%	24%	24%	22%	19%	32%
Alberta's New Democratic Party	20%	10%	33%	16%	21%	18%	22%	19%	17%
Liberal Party of Alberta	4%	6%	3%	3%	4%	4%	6%	4%	3%
All the same	7%	7%	7%	7%	5%	9%	3%	9%	9%
None of the above	5%	5%	6%	5%	8%	3%	5%	7%	4%
Don't know/Can't say	22%	24%	20%	23%	13%	31%	29%	21%	15%

Regardless of who you might be supporting, who do you think will win this election and form the next government of Alberta?				
	Total (800)	Region		
		Calgary (259)	Edmonton (279)	Other AB (262)
Wildrose Party of Alberta	8%	8%	6%	9%
Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta/PC's	39%	42%	37%	38%
Alberta's New Democratic Party/NDP	30%	25%	37%	29%
Liberal Party of Alberta	1%	0%	2%	0%
Not sure	23%	25%	19%	24%

Regardless of who you might be supporting, who do you think will win this election and form the next government of Alberta?						
	Total (800)	Gender		Age		
		Men (398)	Women (402)	18 – 34 (261)	35 – 54 (306)	55+ (233)
Wildrose Party of Alberta	8%	9%	6%	7%	8%	8%
Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta/PC's	39%	42%	36%	35%	38%	44%
Alberta's New Democratic Party/NDP	30%	31%	29%	35%	32%	23%
Liberal Party of Alberta	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Not sure	23%	17%	28%	23%	21%	25%

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, Senior Vice President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl