

Premiers' Performance: As Horgan enters office on a high, Wall is set to depart on top

For a second straight quarter, no premier holds majority approval of their residents

September 26, 2017 – Two months after announcing his resignation as Saskatchewan Premier, and retirement from politics, the latest analysis of quarterly polling data by the Angus Reid Institute finds approval of his job approval up four points. As the old depart, and the new arrive, his level of approval is matched by BC premier John Horgan, who was sworn in late-July after striking a deal with BC Green Party to resolve a hung parliament and defeat incumbent Liberal Premier Christy Clark. Horgan's approval as leader of BC is measured for the first time this quarter.

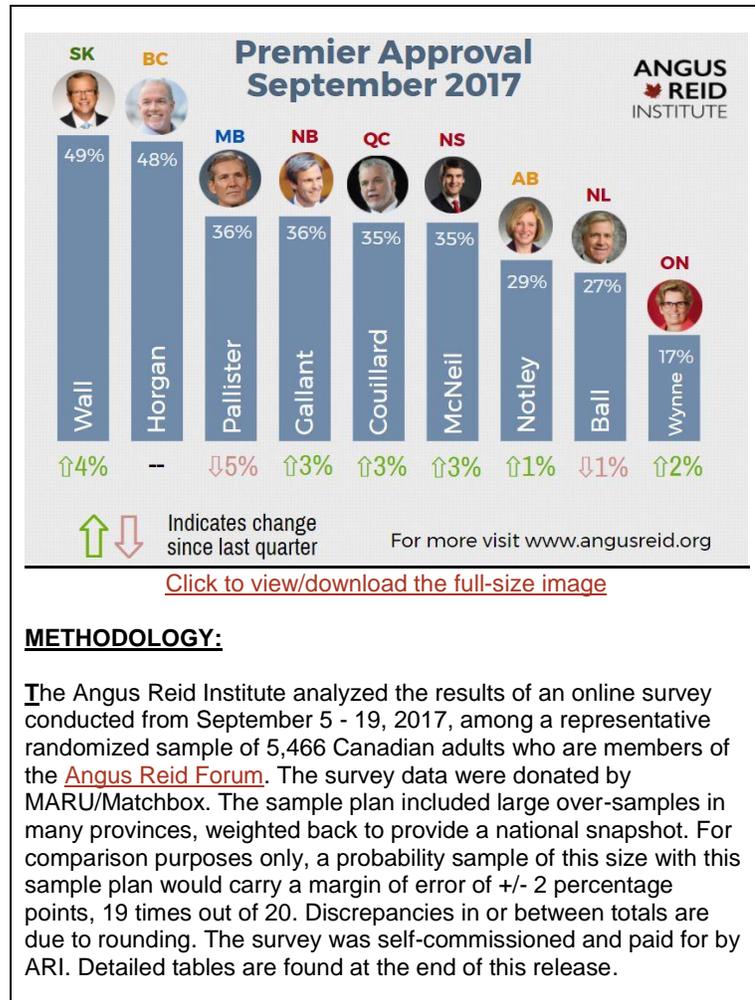
Notably however, neither Wall nor Horgan hold majority support for the job they're doing in their respective provinces, nor do any of their provincial counterparts across the country.

On the other end of the spectrum is Ontario's Kathleen Wynne, who faces an election in less than ten months but is approved of by fewer than one-in-five (17%) Ontario residents.

Here's what else you need to know this quarter.

Two on top

Two months onto the job, BC New Democrat Premier John Horgan faces no shortage of significant issues. The [worst wildfire season](#) in more than half a century has ravaged portions British Columbia, an ongoing [opioid crisis](#) demands attention, and high profile energy projects – including Kinder Morgan and the Site-C dam, await government action. While his plate is full, just under half of the province appears to be on board with the job he's doing – at least so far. He holds the approval of 48 per cent of BC residents – a number 6 percentage points higher than any rating registered for Christy Clark over her term. 37 per



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cent say they disapprove of the new premier, led by residents over 55 (47%). That said, countless waves of analysis reveal a trend of newly sworn or recently re-elected leaders enjoying higher approval at the beginning of their mandates, only to see it slip away: just look to the premiers in the middle of the pack this quarter. Time will only tell how long Horgan's honeymoon period with British Columbians will last.

Meantime, the Angus Reid Institute has prepared a deeper look at some of the main issues gripping BC today, and where public opinion stands in relation to them:

[Related: BC residents call on new provincial govt to deliver electoral reform, energy projects](#)

As one provincial leader takes office, another announces his departure. Saskatchewan's long serving premier - Brad Wall – [tendered his resignation](#) in August, likely to leave the office early in 2018, once his party has determined who will fill his shoes. They are arguably big shoes to fill. For now, he holds the approval of half of Saskatchewan residents (49%), which represents a four-point jump from last quarter, an all-time low. Wall [peaked at 71 per cent](#) in the fall of 2011, and held an approval rating higher than six-in-ten for six straight years. For a look at how Wall will be remembered by Saskatchewan residents, follow the link below.

[Related: Most say departing Saskatchewan Premier will be remembered fondly](#)

Middle of the Pack

Four premiers hold the approval of roughly one-third of their province.

Manitoba's Brian Pallister has seen a sustained decline in approval since this time last year. The last three months have seen Standard & Poor downgrade the province's credit rating for the [second year in a row](#), suggesting Manitoba will not be able to prevent deficits over the coming years. The summer also bore witness to continued controversy over the premier's [time in Costa Rica](#), this time centring on the use of his wife's cell phone and email for government business. Pallister's approval rating drops to 36 per cent this quarter, down five points from June and 17 points since last September.

Brian Gallant sees a three-point rise in approval, also at 36 per cent. The New Brunswick premier made two trips to Washington this quarter to meet with the Trump administration's NAFTA negotiating team. New Brunswick's primary concern in renegotiations is related to anti-dumping and countervailing duties, which [affects softwood lumber exports](#) in the province. New Brunswick has been exempt from tariffs on softwood since 1982, but was recently levied an additional 6.9 per cent by the U.S. Commerce department, while Nova Scotia, P.E.I. and Newfoundland and Labrador were exempted. A decision will not be announced until Mid-November.

Over the same period of time, Quebec's Phillippe Couillard inched up three points to 35 per cent approval as his province dealt with a surge of asylum claims. More than 7,000 people have walked across the border into Quebec since July 1, creating difficulty for the province in coping with the needs of newcomers. Couillard [stated recently](#) that it is "unfortunate that vulnerable persons have allowed themselves to be convinced that their admission as refugees to Canada and with us in Quebec would be simple, even automatic", in what many observers [saw as a jab](#) at the Prime Minister's comments about openness.

[Related: Half of Canadians say their country is 'too generous' toward illegal border crossers](#)

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Nova Scotian Premier Stephen McNeil remains in the good graces of roughly one-in-three residents (35%). His government continues spar with pubic sector unions, after submitting Bill 148, the Public Services Sustainability Act, for constitutional review. Unions say they were not included in these discussions and the decision which would set a [wage rate pattern](#) for more than 75,000 union employees.

Rounding out the Bottom

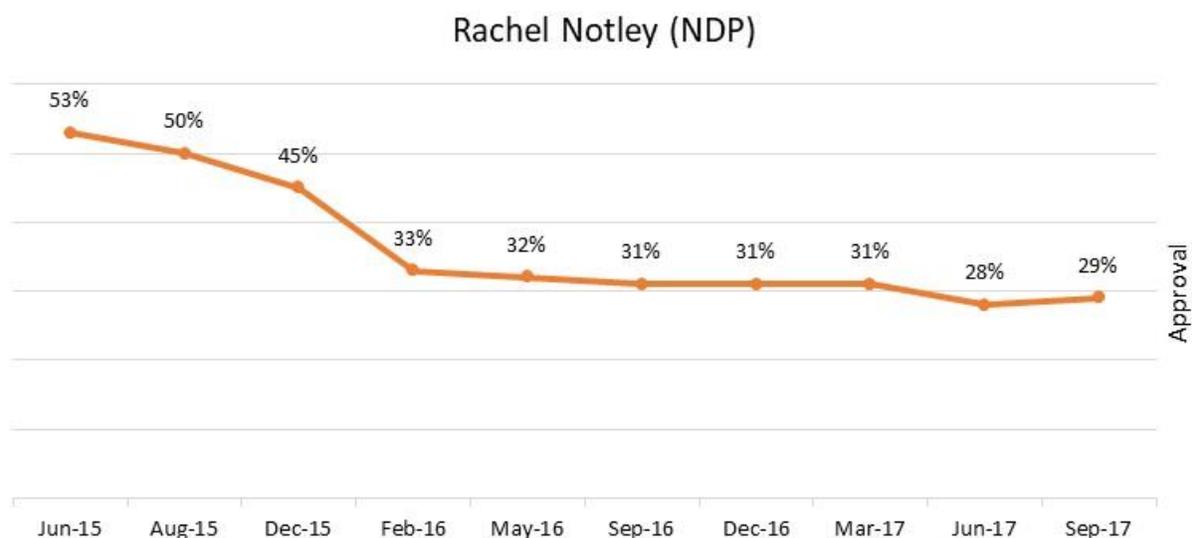
Rachel Notley's approval rating bumps up one point to 29 per cent. Her approval has remained largely unchanged for seven quarters. Provincial politics are heating up in Alberta as the United Conservative Party (UCP) prepares to choose its leader – and Notley's primary challenger in the 2019 election.

Related: United Right: Who will be the UCP's Stephen Harper?

Dwight Ball decided to shake up his cabinet in late-July. His Finance Minister resigned after just 19 months on the job, facing "[frustration and anger](#)" from constituents over the government's [unpopular austerity measures](#). His personal approval rating drops one point to 27 per cent.

In Canada's most populous province, the government released it's plans to create a cannabis control board and open 60 stores to distribute legal marijuana once federal legislation to legalise the substance takes effect in April of 2018. Ontario's Premier Kathleen Wynne, who faces re-election next June, rises for the second quarter to a still-meagre 17 per cent approval rating. During the data collection period, September 5 – 19, Wynne [took the stand](#) in a bribery trial against two members of her Ontario Liberal party.

Tracking Graphs follow:

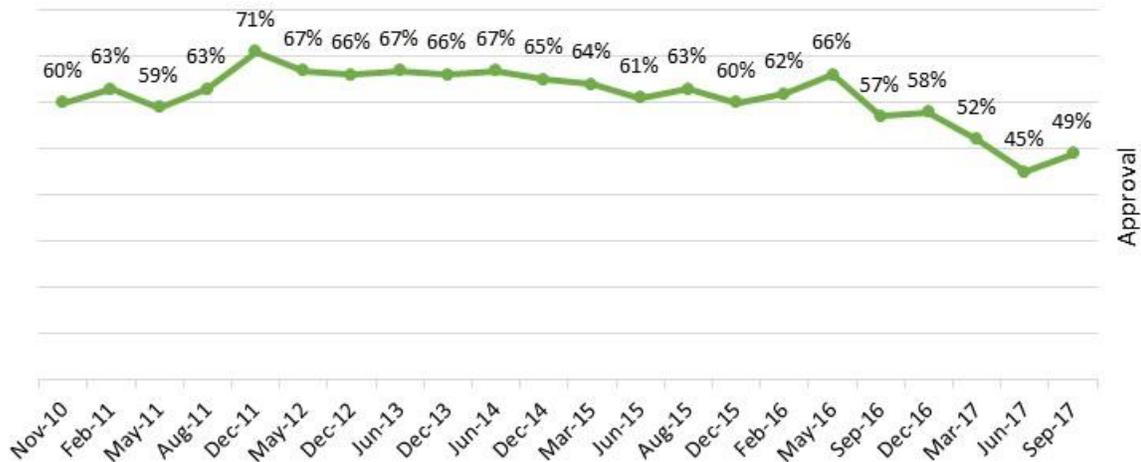


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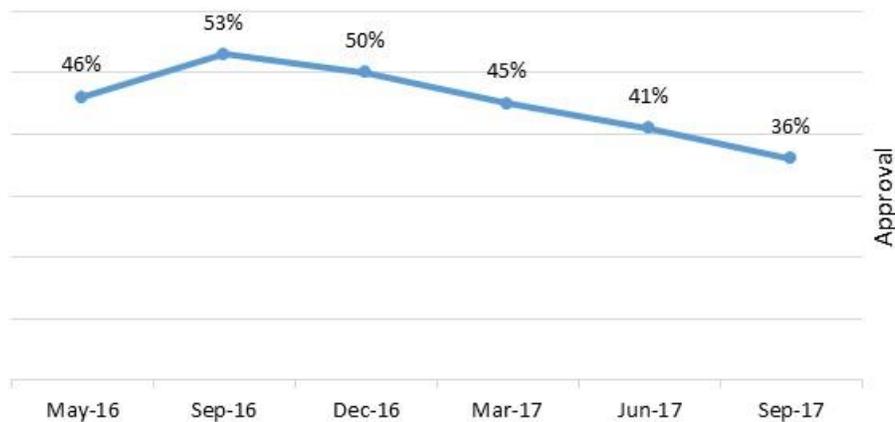
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Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall (Saskatchewan Party)



Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister (Progressive Conservative)

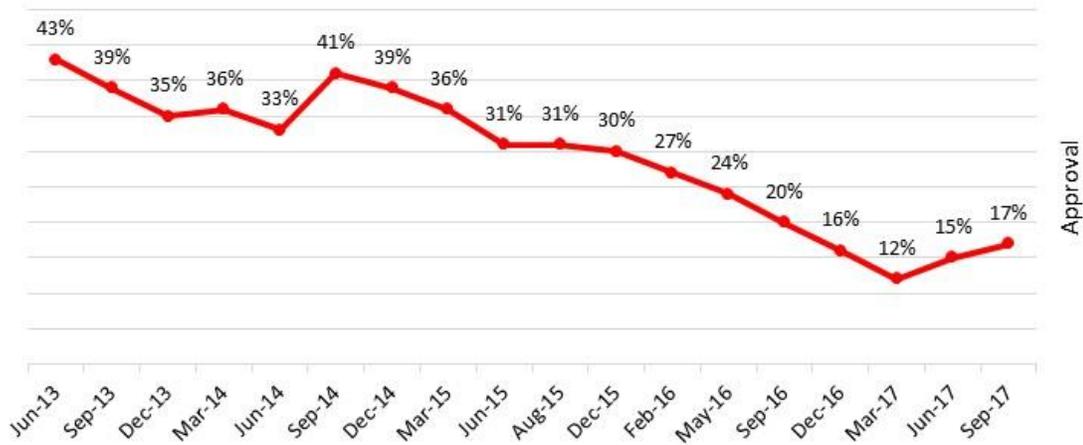


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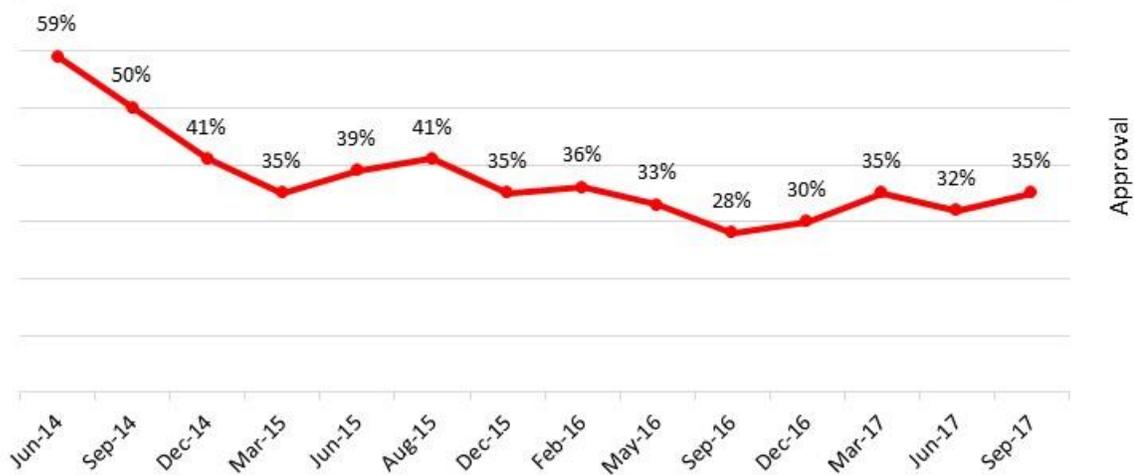
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Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne (Liberal)



Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard (Liberal)

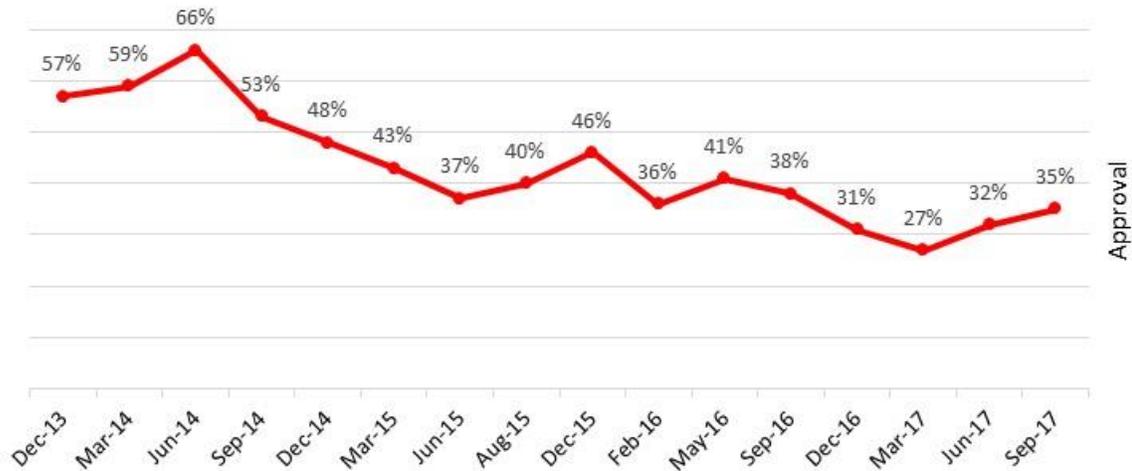


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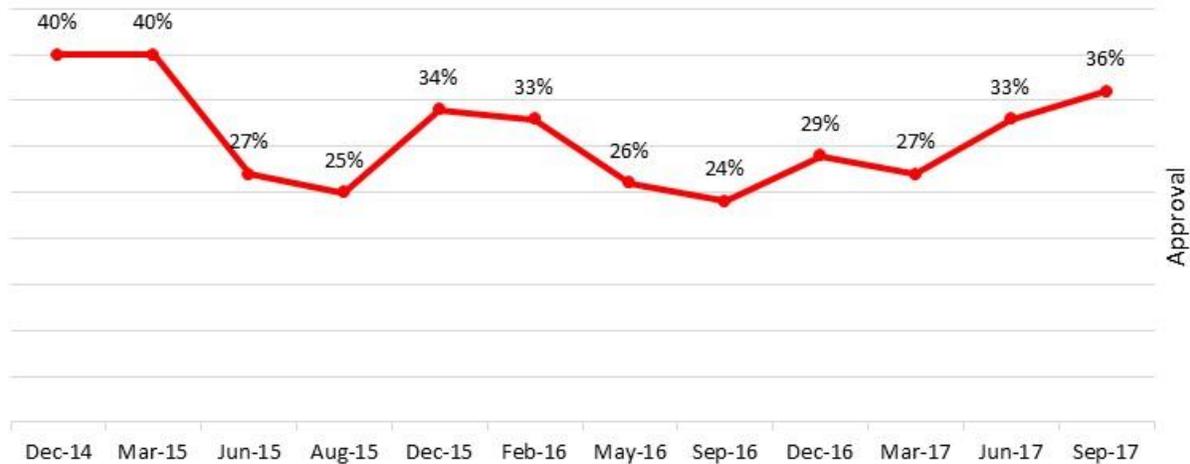
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Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil (Liberal)



New Brunswick Premier Brian Gallant (Liberal)

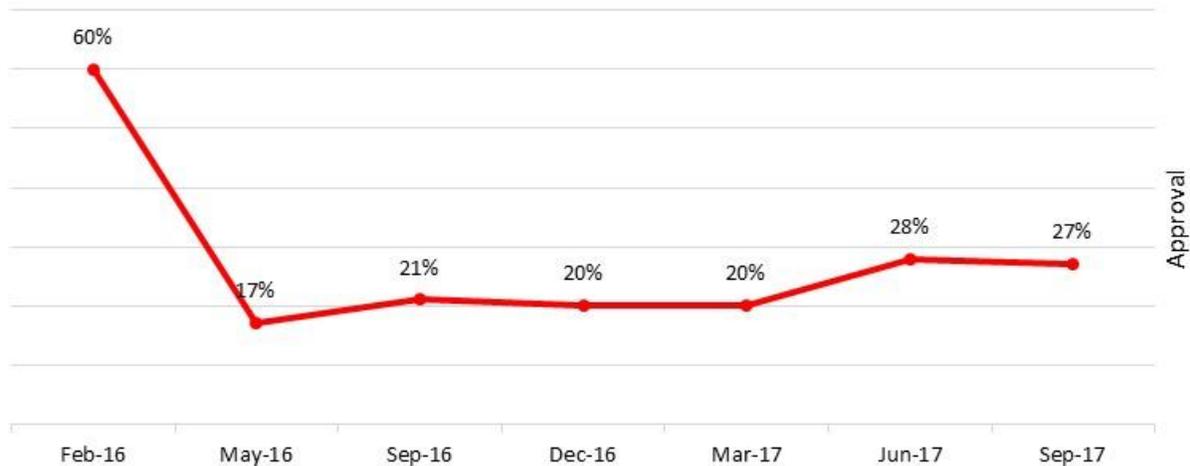


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Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Dwight Ball (Liberal Party)



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 foundation 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.

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following Premiers?

	September 2017	June 2017	March 2017	Dec. 2016
Saskatchewan: Brad Wall (Saskatchewan Party)	49%	45%	52%	58%
British Columbia: John Horgan (New Democratic Party)	48%	-	-	-
Manitoba: Brian Pallister (Progressive Conservative)	36%	41%	45%	50%

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New Brunswick: Brian Gallant (Liberal)	36%	33%	27%	29%
Québec: Philippe Couillard (Liberal)	35%	32%	35%	30%
Nova Scotia: Stephen McNeil (Liberal)	35%	32%	27%	31%
Alberta: Rachel Notley (New Democratic Party)	29%	28%	31%	31%
Newfoundland and Labrador: Dwight Ball (Liberal)	28%	28%	20%	20%
Ontario: Kathleen Wynne (Liberal)	17%	15%	12%	16%

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