

Six-in-ten say United Conservative Party will be good for Alberta, but half fear it will be ‘too right-wing’

Seven-in-ten say Notley government is ‘out of touch’ with what Albertans really want

October 12, 2017 – With the unification of the former Wildrose and Progressive Conservative parties culminating Oct. 28 with the election of a new leader of the United Conservative Party (UCP), Premier Rachel Notley will know her challenger for the 2019 election.

Whether it turns out to be Brian Jean, Jason Kenney, or a surprise choice other than those two front-runners, the new leader will find himself on a relatively promising path to the Premier’s office, according to a new Angus Reid Institute analysis of quarterly polling data.

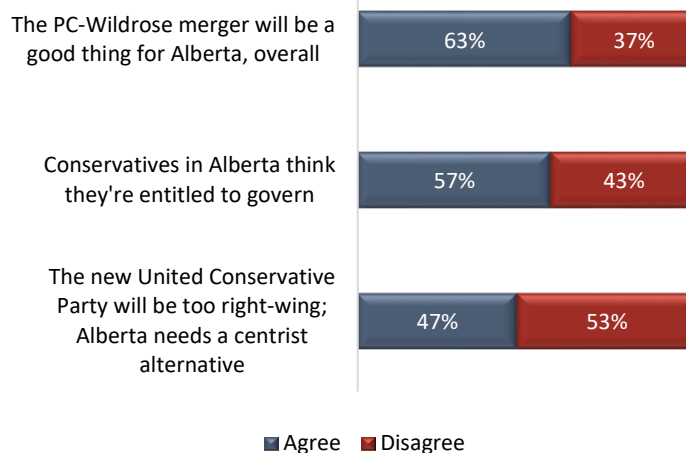
Both Jean and Kenney are viewed more favourably than the current premier, and an overwhelming number of Albertans (70%) see Notley as “out of touch” with what Albertans really want from their provincial leadership.

Related: [Premiers’ Performance: As Horgan enters office on a high, Wall is set to depart on top](#)

More Key Findings:

- Fewer than three-in-ten Albertans (29%) approve of Notley; both former PC leader Jason Kenney (38%) and former Wildrose leader Brian Jean (48%) surpass her on this marker
- Asked which of the front-runners they would prefer to see leading the United Conservative Party into the 2019 election, 33 per cent of Albertans choose Jean, while 22 per cent would prefer Kenney. The rest opt for neither of the two (22%) or express no preference (23%)
- Just under half of Alberta’s residents (47%) express concern that the UCP will be too right-wing, and would like to see a centrist alternative emerge

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute analyzed the results of an online survey conducted from September 5 – 19, 2017, among a representative randomized sample of 606 Alberta residents who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). The survey data were donated by MARU/Matchbox. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

CONTACT:

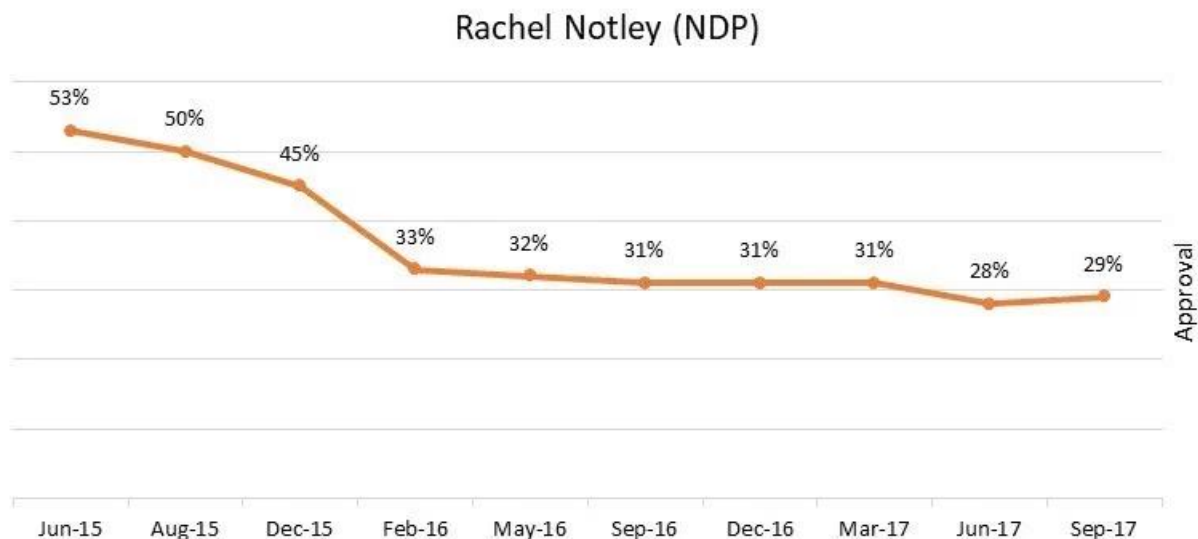
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The political landscape: Most say UCP will be good for Alberta

For several quarters, Alberta Premier Rachel Notley has held the approval of roughly three-in-ten residents of her province. While hardly the worst approval rating among sitting premiers, Notley's approval numbers – and their trajectory since she took office – are likely not encouraging to New Democratic Party strategists in the province:



This quarter's sounding contains another finding Notley's backers are likely to find discouraging: seven-in-ten Albertans (70%) agree with the statement "Premier Rachel Notley's government is out of touch with what Albertans really want." Fully half (50%) "strongly agree."

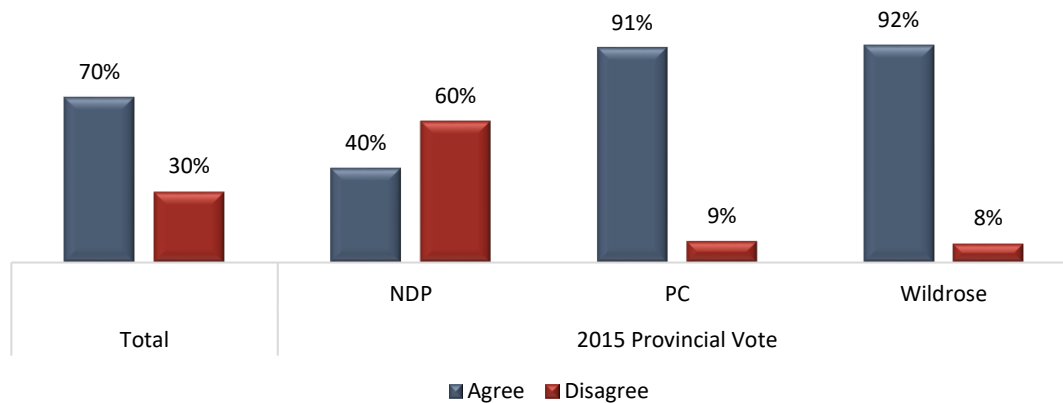
This is the majority view across all major demographic groups within the province, though those with university degrees are more divided on this statement than any other group (53% agree; see summary tables for greater detail).

More than nine-in-ten who voted for the Progressive Conservatives or the Wildrose Party in 2015 agree with this statement, but so do four-in-ten past New Democrat voters, as seen in the following graph:

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"Premier Rachel Notley's government is out of touch with what Albertans really want"

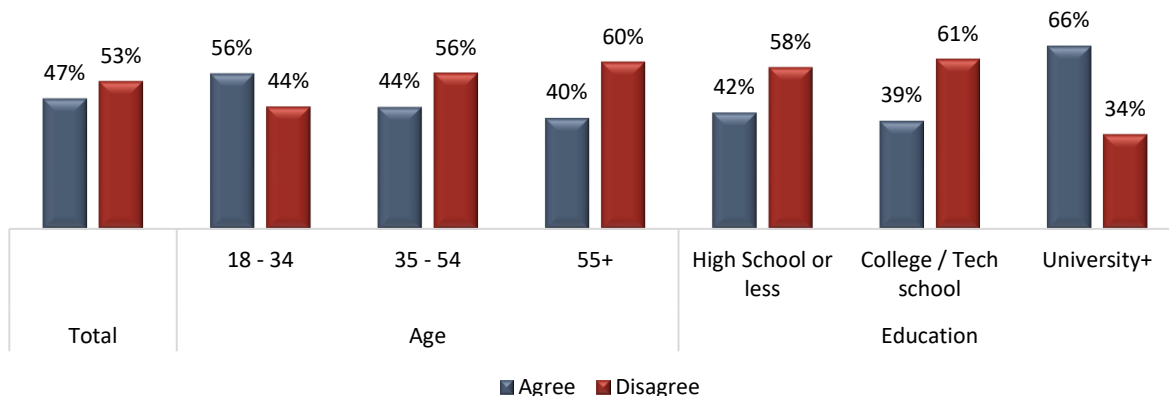


This disenchantment with the Notley government seems set to supply a significant tailwind for whomever becomes the first permanent leader of the new United Conservative Party. That said, Albertans have reservations about what this new political movement will represent.

While almost two-in-three (63%) say the PC-Wildrose merger will be good for the province overall, most Albertans (57%) also say conservatives in the province think they are “entitled to govern,” and nearly half (47%) feel that the UCP will be “too right-wing,” as seen in the first graph of this report.

Among younger Albertans (those ages 18 – 34), the belief that the UCP will be too right-wing – and that Alberta needs centrist alternative – reaches a full majority (56%). On this issue, education is an even bigger driver of opinion on this question than age:

"The new United Conservative Party will be too right-wing; Alberta needs a centrist alternative"



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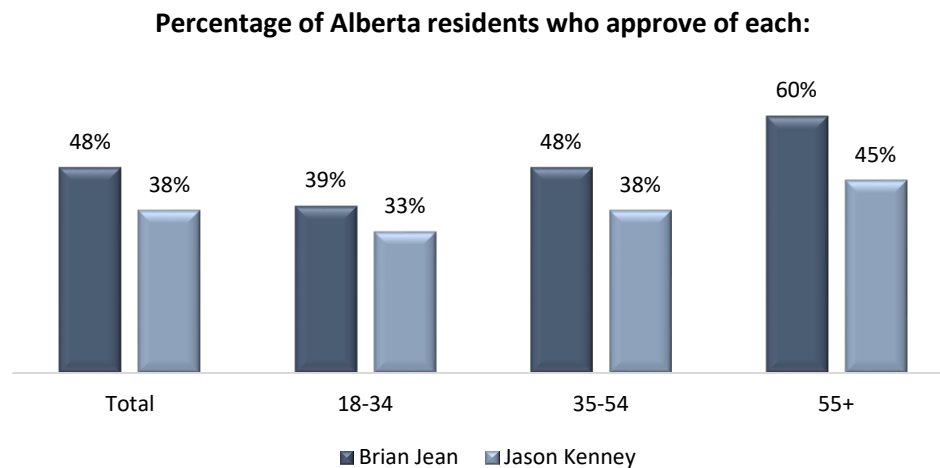
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Former Wildrose leader more popular with Albertans

In 2015, Rachel Notley's New Democratic Party stunned many by claiming a majority, ending 44 consecutive years of Progressive Conservative provincial government. For many – including Kenney, who left federal politics to run for the PC leadership last year – the NDP victory amounted to an “[accidental government](#),” a product of vote-splitting among right-of-centre parties.

Kenney's run for PC leader came with a promise to “unite the right,” and – with large majorities of both the Wildrose and the Progressive Conservatives voting to unify over the summer – he has done just that.

Regardless of who wins, this data suggests former Wildrose leader Brian Jean – not Kenney – has greater approval among Albertans. Almost half say they approve of Jean (48%), while Kenney's approval rating is 10 points lower (38%). Approval for each rises with each generation:



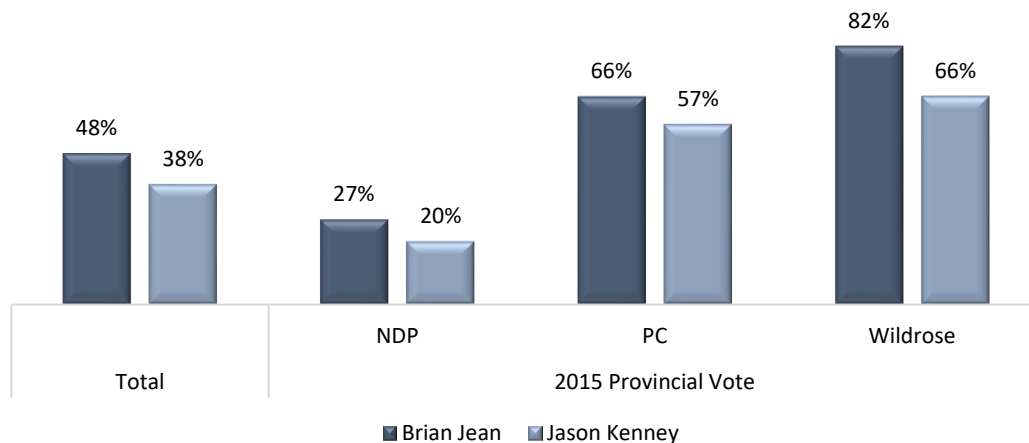
Key to the disparity between the two former leaders' approval ratings is the opinion of former partisans.

Curiously, those who voted for the Progressive Conservatives in the 2015 election are more likely to approve of Jean than their own former leader Kenney, and those who voted for the Wildrose Party two years ago have more favourable views of each man than their PC counterparts:

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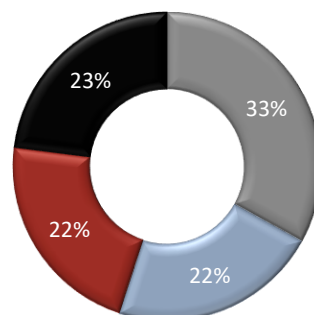
Based on whatever you've seen or heard, do you approve or disapprove of each of the following? (Those saying 'approve' shown)



Though other candidates have participated in the UCP leadership race, Kenney and Jean are seen as strong favourites. In an effort to gauge the approval of the two men head-to-head, the survey did not ask about Calgary lawyer Doug Schweitzer or former Wildrose Party president Jeff Callaway, who has since withdrawn from the race and endorsed Kenney.

On the question of which candidate they would prefer to see win the leadership contest, Albertans prefer Jean by 11 points – though it's notable that 45 per cent of provincial residents either opt for "neither of them" or offer no preference.

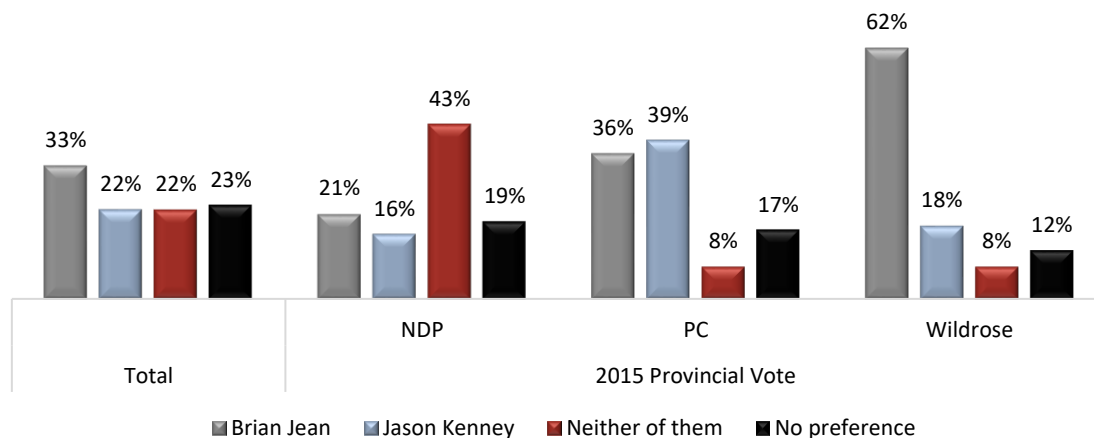
Regardless of your own political leanings, which of the two main candidates would you prefer to see win the leadership contest?



Legend: ■ Brian Jean ■ Jason Kenney ■ Neither of them ■ No preference

Again, past partisanship helps to tell the story. While past 2015 Wildrose voters surveyed overwhelmingly prefer Jean, past PC voters are divided, with Kenney holding only a three-percentage point lead in approval over his former federal Conservative caucus-mate.

Regardless of your own political leanings, which of the two main candidates would you prefer to see win the leadership contest?



It's worth noting, of course, that these findings are not meant to represent the support each candidate enjoys among the UCP party members who will vote in the election. Rather, it canvasses the mood of the entire province with regard to the leadership race.

*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.*

Summary tables follow.

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following people?			
	Premier and Liberal New Democratic Party leader Rachel Notley	Former Progressive Conservative leader Jason Kenney	Former Wildrose Party leader Brian Jean
Strongly approve	10%	14%	24%
Moderately approve	19%	24%	25%
Moderately disapprove	16%	13%	12%
Strongly disapprove	48%	20%	14%
Not sure	7%	29%	26%

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?				
	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
Premier Rachel Notley's government is out of touch with what Albertans really want	50%	20%	14%	15%
The PC-Wildrose merger will be a good thing for Alberta, overall	29%	34%	21%	16%
Conservatives in Alberta think they're entitled to govern	27%	30%	25%	19%
The new United Conservative Party will be too right-wing; Alberta needs a centrist alternative	19%	28%	27%	26%

“Premier Rachel Notley’s government is out of touch with what Albertans really want”						
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (606)	Gender		Education		
		Men (284)	Women (322)	High School or less (272)	College / Tech school (223)	University+ (111)
Strongly agree	50%	51%	50%	56%	55%	32%
Moderately agree	20%	18%	23%	21%	18%	21%
Moderately disagree	14%	15%	13%	13%	16%	14%
Strongly disagree	15%	17%	14%	9%	11%	33%

“Premier Rachel Notley’s government is out of touch with what Albertans really want”				
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (606)	2015 Provincial Vote		
		NDP (171)	PC (165)	Wildrose (133)
Strongly agree	50%	27%	72%	82%
Moderately agree	20%	13%	19%	10%
Moderately disagree	14%	24%	7%	4%
Strongly disagree	15%	36%	2%	4%

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“The new United Conservative Party will be too right-wing; Alberta needs a centrist alternative”						
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (606)	Gender		Age		
		Men (284)	Women (322)	18 – 34 (118)	35-54 (253)	55+ (235)
Strongly agree	19%	18%	19%	20%	17%	19%
Moderately agree	28%	24%	33%	36%	26%	22%
Moderately disagree	27%	25%	30%	27%	30%	23%
Strongly disagree	26%	34%	18%	17%	26%	37%

“The new United Conservative Party will be too right-wing; Alberta needs a centrist alternative”				
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (606)	Education		
		High School or less (272)	College / Tech school (223)	University+ (111)
Strongly agree	19%	13%	15%	34%
Moderately agree	28%	29%	24%	32%
Moderately disagree	27%	29%	31%	17%
Strongly disagree	26%	29%	29%	16%

Based on whatever you've seen or heard, do you approve or disapprove of each of the following?				
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (606)	2015 Provincial Vote		
		NDP (171)	PC (165)	Wildrose (133)
Former Wildrose Party leader Brian Jean				
Strongly approve	24%	15%	28%	52%
Moderately approve	25%	12%	38%	30%
Moderately disapprove	12%	20%	9%	7%
Strongly disapprove	14%	31%	7%	5%
Not sure	26%	23%	19%	7%
Former Progressive Conservative Party leader Jason Kenney				
Strongly approve	14%	9%	28%	15%
Moderately approve	24%	11%	29%	50%
Moderately disapprove	13%	14%	17%	11%
Strongly disapprove	20%	43%	5%	12%
Not sure	29%	23%	20%	12%

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Based on whatever you've seen or heard, do you approve or disapprove of each of the following?				
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (606)	Age		
		18 – 34 (118)	35-54 (253)	55+ (235)
Former Wildrose Party leader Brian Jean				
Strongly approve	24%	21%	22%	29%
Moderately approve	25%	18%	26%	31%
Moderately disapprove	12%	8%	15%	12%
Strongly disapprove	14%	14%	15%	12%
Not sure	26%	39%	22%	16%
Former Progressive Conservative Party leader Jason Kenney				
Strongly approve	14%	9%	15%	20%
Moderately approve	24%	25%	23%	24%
Moderately disapprove	13%	4%	16%	18%
Strongly disapprove	20%	16%	23%	21%
Not sure	29%	47%	22%	16%

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The United Conservative Party will choose a permanent leader in October. Regardless of your own political leanings, which of the two main candidates would you prefer to see win the leadership contest?				
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (606)	2015 Provincial Vote		
		NDP (171)	PC (165)	Wildrose (133)
Former Wildrose Party leader Brian Jean	33%	21%	36%	62%
Former Progressive Conservative leader Jason Kenney	22%	16%	39%	18%
Neither of them	22%	43%	8%	8%
No preference	23%	19%	17%	12%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following people? (Premier and New Democratic Party leader Rachel Notley)			
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (606)	Gender	
		Men (284)	Women (322)
Strongly approve	10%	13%	7%
Moderately approve	19%	17%	21%
Moderately disapprove	16%	15%	18%
Strongly disapprove	48%	52%	44%
Not sure	7%	3%	10%

Based on whatever you've seen or heard, do you approve or disapprove of each of the following?			
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (606)	Gender	
		Men (284)	Women (322)
Former Wildrose Party leader Brian Jean			
Strongly approve	24%	24%	23%
Moderately approve	25%	26%	24%
Moderately disapprove	12%	14%	9%
Strongly disapprove	14%	18%	9%
Not sure	26%	17%	35%
Former Progressive Conservative Party leader Jason Kenney			
Strongly approve	14%	16%	12%
Moderately approve	24%	25%	23%
Moderately disapprove	13%	14%	12%
Strongly disapprove	20%	25%	15%
Not sure	29%	20%	38%

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