

Provincial Spotlight: A cross-country breakdown of what issues matter most and government performance ratings

Health care the top provincial issue for six of the nine provinces canvassed

March 13, 2020 – A planned meeting between the Prime Minister and First Ministers from around the country has been cancelled, following news that the Justin Trudeau would be self-quarantining after his wife Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau [began to exhibit flu-like symptoms](#).

And while Canadian leaders will need to wait to discuss key issues with the federal government, new polling from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute confirms that against the backdrop of the COVID-19 outbreak, health care dominates as a provincial priority for across most of the country.

Indeed, Canadians in six provinces name health care as their top provincial issue. That said, they do not rate their own government's performance on health care delivery equally.

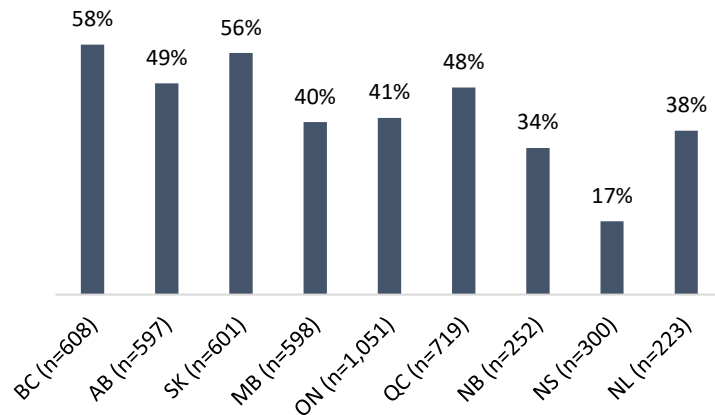
While majorities in BC and Saskatchewan each say their own provincial governments are doing a "good job" on health care delivery, (58% and 56% respectively), on the other end of the spectrum, just 17 per cent of Nova Scotians say the same.

This tracking survey canvassed more than 5,000 Canadians on – among several items - their provincial priorities, perceptions of service delivery on seven key aspects of provincial governance, and in Canada's four most populous provinces, vote intention.

About ARI

*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.*

Percentage saying their provincial government has done a good job on health care delivery



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from February 24 – 28, 2020 among a representative randomized sample of 5,043 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). Regional sample sizes are found at the end of this report. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

*Because its small population precludes drawing discrete samples over multiple waves, data for Prince Edward Island is not included in this release.

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

INDEX:

Part One: Provincial Roundup

- **Universal priorities - health care and the economy**
- **Economic outlook of provincial residents**
- **Top issues and assessments of governments**
 - **British Columbia**
 - **Alberta**
 - **Saskatchewan**
 - **Manitoba**
 - **Ontario**
 - **Quebec**
 - **New Brunswick**
 - **Nova Scotia**
 - **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Part Two: Vote intention

- **NDP holds advantage in BC**
- **UCP falters in Alberta**
- **Fractured opposition boosts Ford's Conservatives in Ontario**
- **CAQ Comfortable in Quebec**

Part One: Provincial Roundup

Universal priorities - health care and the economy

Provincial priorities tend to vary widely from one region of the country to the next. That said, there are two clear issues that emerge in Canadians minds regardless of where they live: health care and the economy. Health care is the top provincial issue for six of the nine provinces canvassed, while the economy is second for four of them. Top issues will be discussed in greater detail in the individual provincial sections of this report.

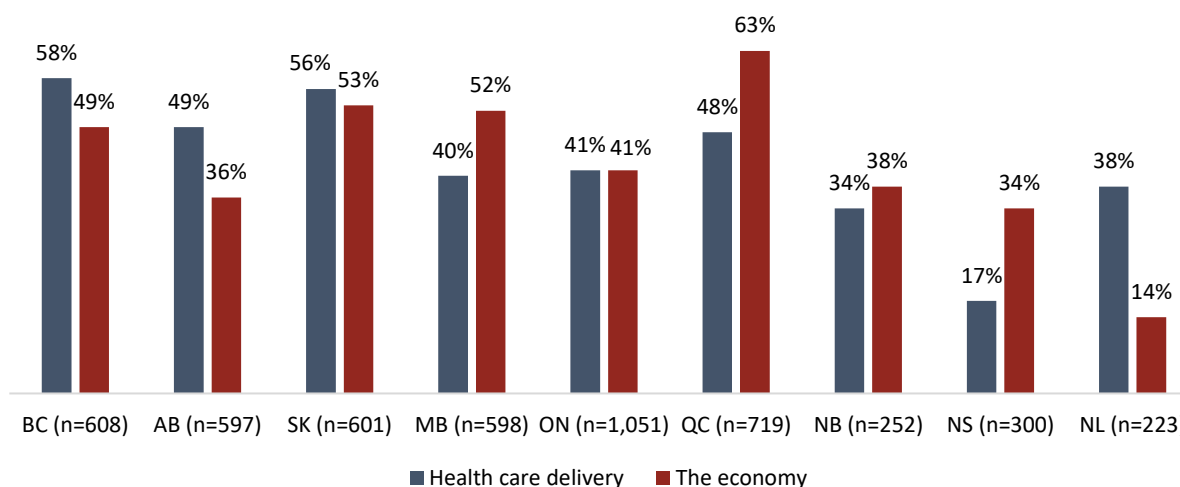
CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Top issued by province – each respondent allowed up to three choices from list								
BC (608)	AB (597)	SK (601)	MB (598)	ON (1,051)	QC (719)	NB (252)	NS (300)	NL (223)
Housing 44%	Energy/ pipelines 44%	Health care 35%	Health care 49%	Health care 44%	Health care 51%	Health care 55%	Health care 74%	The deficit 46%
Climate change 30%	Economy 43%	Economy 32%	Crime 34%	Education 39%	Education 37%	Economy 23%	Taxes 22%	Economy 37%

On those two key components of provincial government responsibility, there are considerable differences in ratings across the country. Residents in B.C., Saskatchewan and Quebec are most positive about their government’s work on each, while perceived performance is worse in Atlantic Canada:

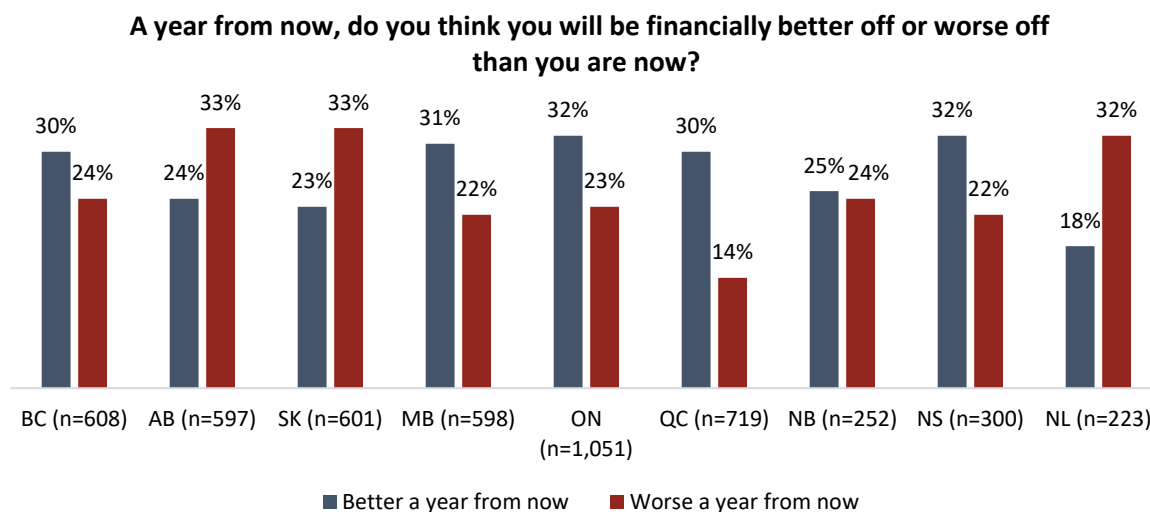
Percentage saying their provincial government has done a good job on health care delivery and the economy



Economic outlook of provincial residents

Across the country, approximately half of residents do not anticipate any change to their financial wellbeing over the next year. That said, residents in some provinces are more positive than others. Economic pessimism is highest in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador, with one-in-three residents in each saying they anticipate being worse off by this time next year. In British Columbia,

Ontario, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Quebec, residents are more positive. To view and compare optimism trends amongst provinces since 2016, [click here](#):



Top issues and assessments of governments

The Angus Reid Institute asked Canadians which issues they consider paramount for their own province right now, and for their assessments of a number of different elements of provincial government performance. Responses follow, moving west to east across the country. Note that any issue chosen as important by at least 20 per cent of residents was considered a top issue. For the full list, [please view detailed tables here](#).

Because its small population precludes drawing discrete samples over multiple waves, data for Prince Edward Island is not included.

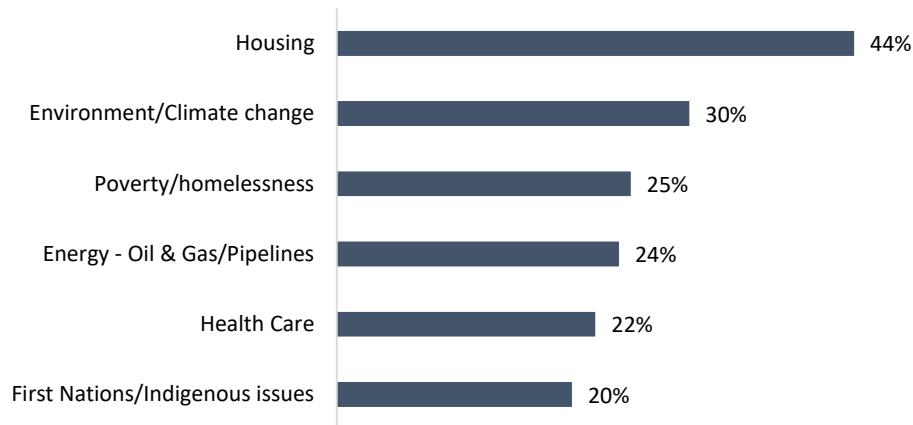
British Columbia

The top concern facing British Columbians continues to be housing affordability. More than two-in-five residents (44%) put this at the top of their list, ahead of climate change, the next highest priority. Recent tensions over the Coastal Gaslink natural gas pipeline are reflected in a number of top issues named by those in B.C.:

CONTACT:

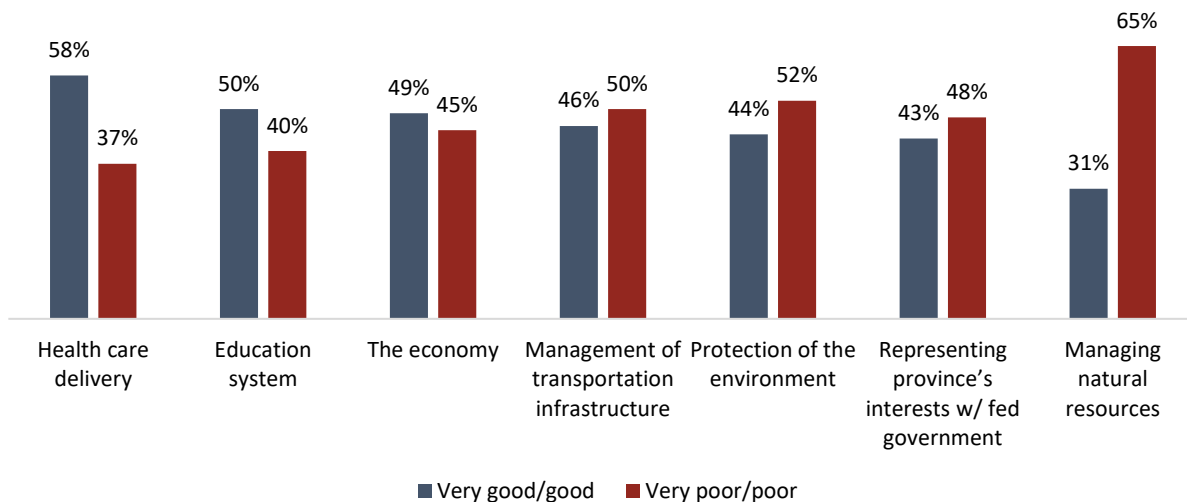
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

**Top issues in BC (n=608)
(Issues chosen by 20% or more respondents shown)**



The BC NDP garners more positive than negative ratings for its delivery of health care services, as well as its handling of education in the province. Residents are divided over how well the Premier John Horgan’s minority government has done running the economy. The largest critique of the government is its handling of the natural resources file, where two-thirds (65%) say it has done poorly:

Do you think the current government of B.C. is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas?



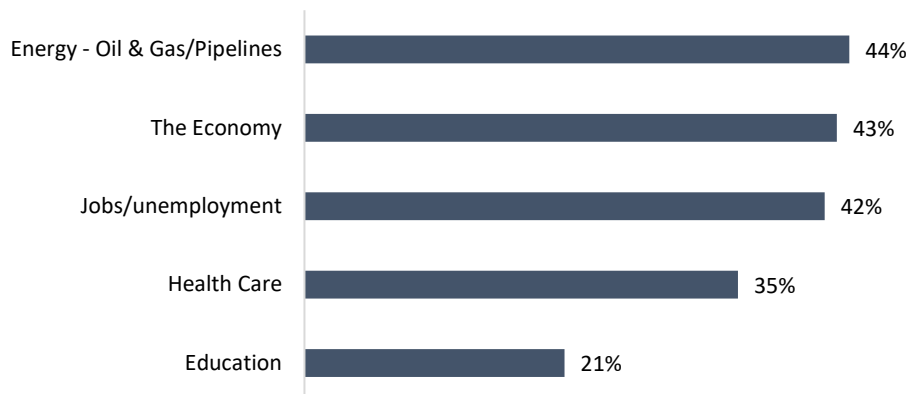
Alberta

For Albertans, the top concerns are economic in nature: oil and gas (44%), the economy generally (43%) and jobs and unemployment (42%). Premier Jason Kenney recently lamented [continuing difficulties](#) (including frustrations with the impact of the coronavirus on global markets) around jumpstarting the province’s oil and gas sector.

CONTACT:

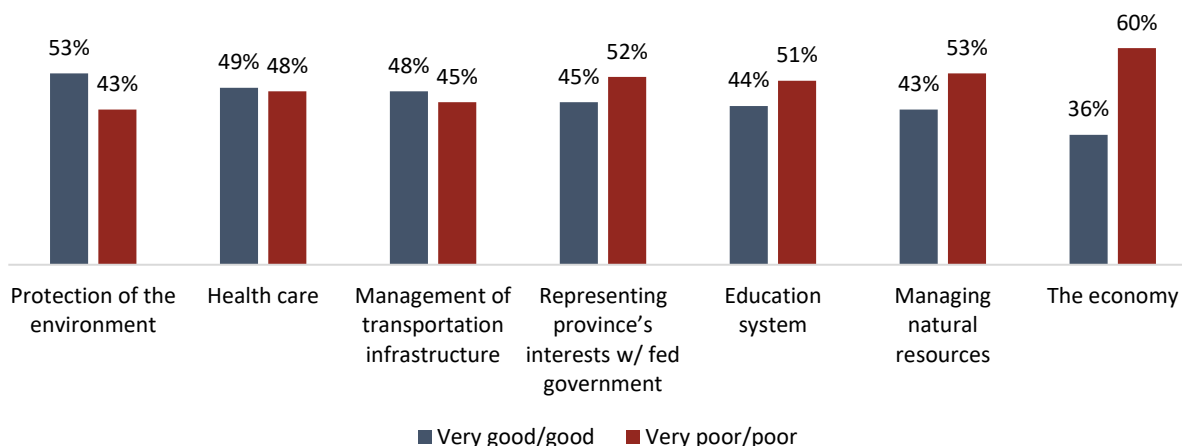
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

**Top issues in Alberta (n=597)
(Issues chosen by 20% or more respondents shown)**



Kenney's government is judged more positively than negatively on environmental protection and gets mixed reviews on health care delivery and represent the province's interests in Ottawa. It receives majority negative marks on managing of natural resources and the economy:

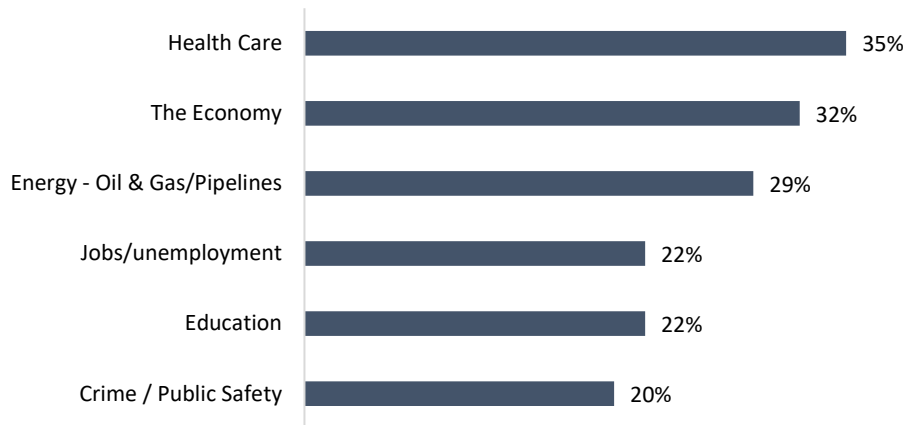
Do you think the current government of Alberta is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas?



Saskatchewan

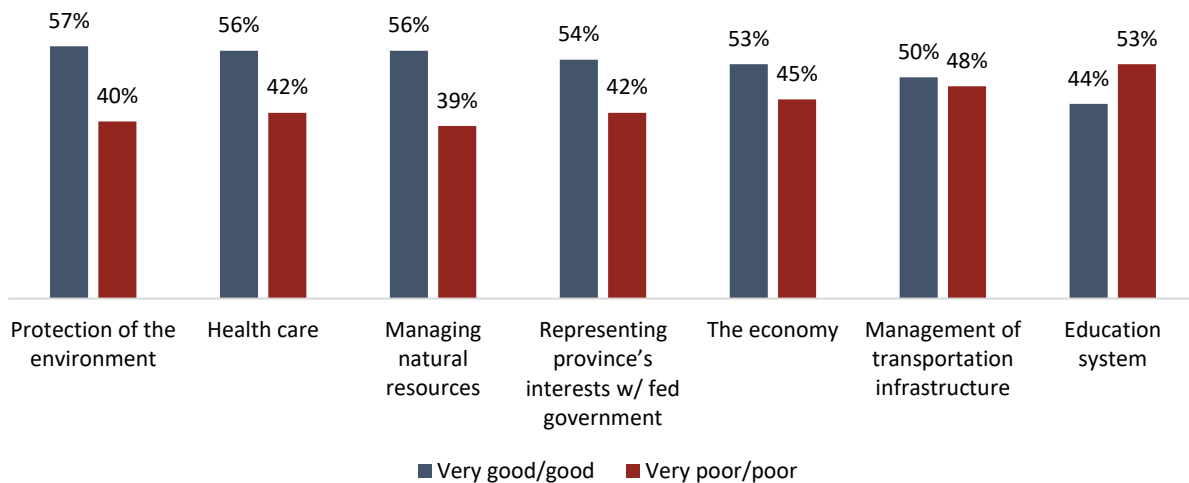
In Saskatchewan, there is the least amount of consensus over top issues. Health care and the economy are chosen as top two by about one-in-three residents. Oil and gas rounds out the top three, chosen by 29 per cent:

**Top issues in Saskatchewan (n=601)
(Issues chosen by 20% or more respondents shown)**



A majority of residents say that Premier Scott Moe’s team have handled the province’s health care delivery, economy and relationship with the federal government well. The overall assessment of provincial government performance is more positive in Saskatchewan than any other province. That said, residents lean toward saying the government has done a poor job on education:

Do you think the current government of Saskatchewan is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas?



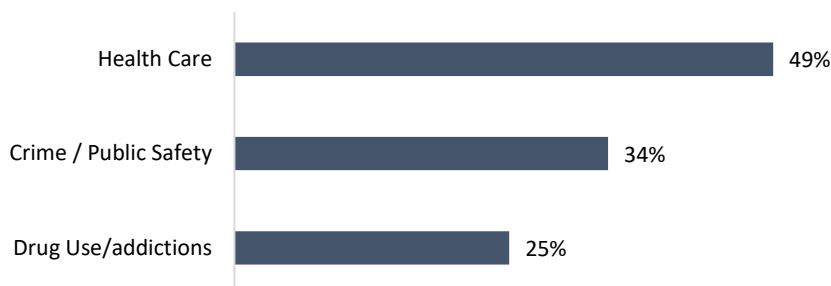
Manitoba

Health care is by far the top issue in Manitoba. Half of residents choose this, well ahead of crime and public safety, the second most chosen issue. The government has initiated its five-year plan to overhaul health care in the province, the first phase of which received considerable criticism after it led to the closure of emergency rooms in Winnipeg.

CONTACT:

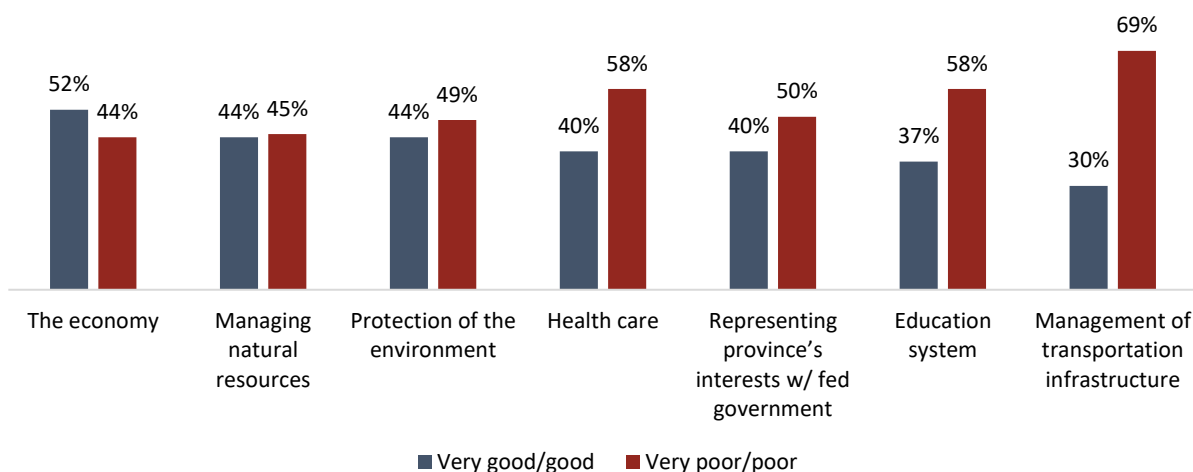
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

**Top issues in Manitoba (n=598)
(Issues chosen by 20% or more respondents shown)**



Nearly six-in-ten residents say the Pallister government has done a poor job in handling both health care and education. Assessments of the transportation file are even worse. On the positive side, half (52%) say the government has done a good job in managing the provincial economy, which grew by 3.0 per cent in 2019:

Do you think the current government of Manitoba is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas?



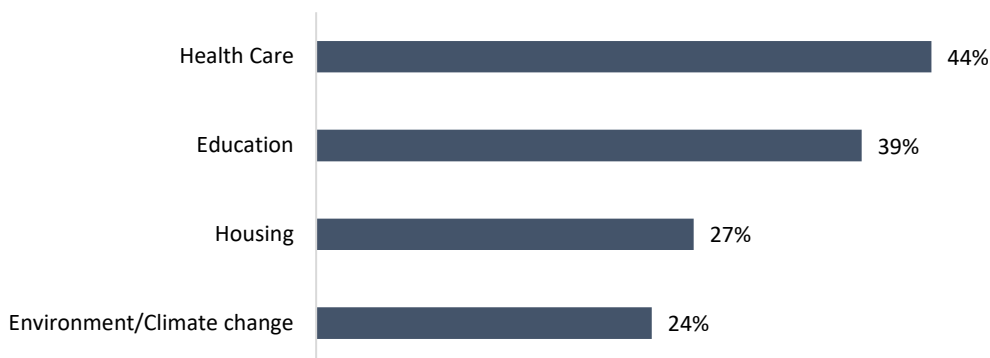
Ontario

The top issue for Canada's most populous province is health care (44%) followed closely by education (39%). In late 2019 the government announced it would increase health and education spending after months of criticism over cuts the government had made to program spending. More recently the government backed away from a plan to increase class sizes and implement mandatory e-learning for high school students.

CONTACT:

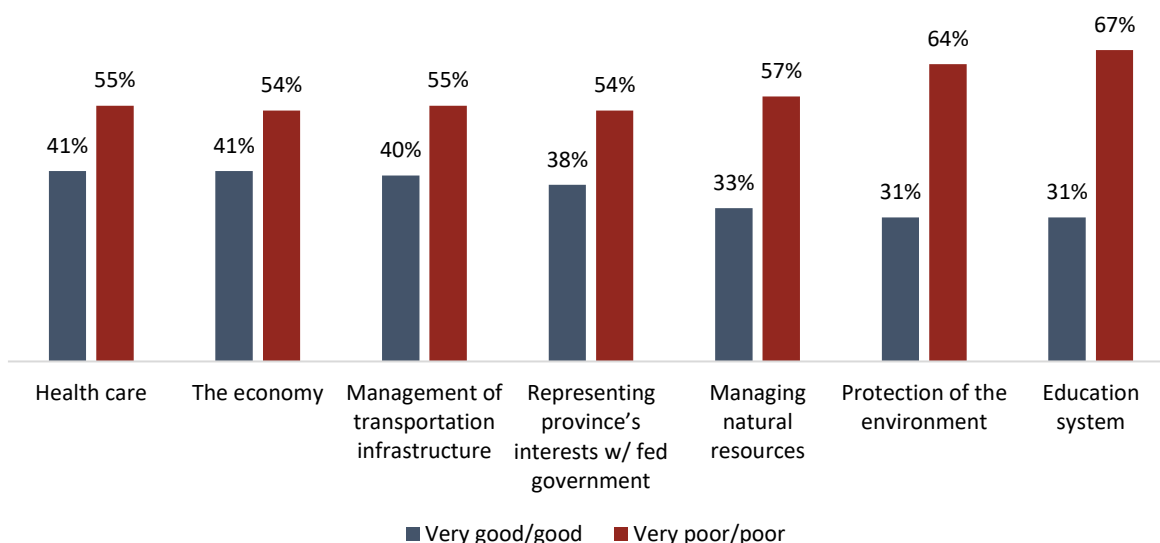
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

**Top issues in Ontario (n=1,051)
(Issues chosen by 20% or more respondents shown)**



The government under Premier Doug Ford receives more negative than positive assessments on each of the seven areas of public administration that the Angus Reid Institute asked about. The PCPO government performs best on health care, where just 41 per cent of residents say it has done a good job, and worst on education:

Do you think the current government of Ontario is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas?



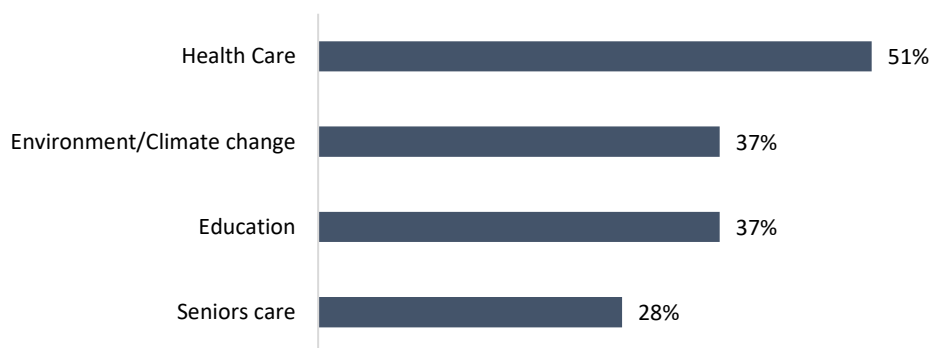
Quebec

Quebecers, too, are more concerned about health care than any other provincial issue. Half of residents say this is among their top issues, with climate change and education next on the list. The CAQ has [recently invested](#) hundreds of millions of dollars into health care, but an aging population continues to [challenge the health care system](#). Senior care is also chosen as a top issue.

CONTACT:

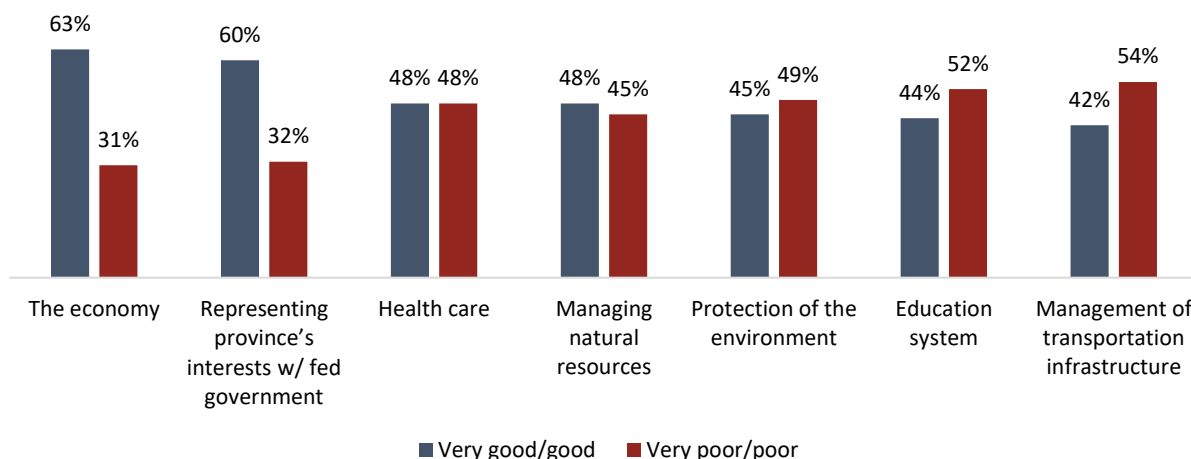
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Top issues in Quebec (n=719)
Respondents allowed three choices from list, issues chosen by 20% or more shown



Quebec residents are divided about how well the government is handling health care at the 18-month mark of its term but are overwhelmingly positive about how the CAQ has handled the economy and has represented the province's interests in working with the federal government. Quebec has enjoyed [back to back](#) billion-dollar surpluses in 2018 and 2019:

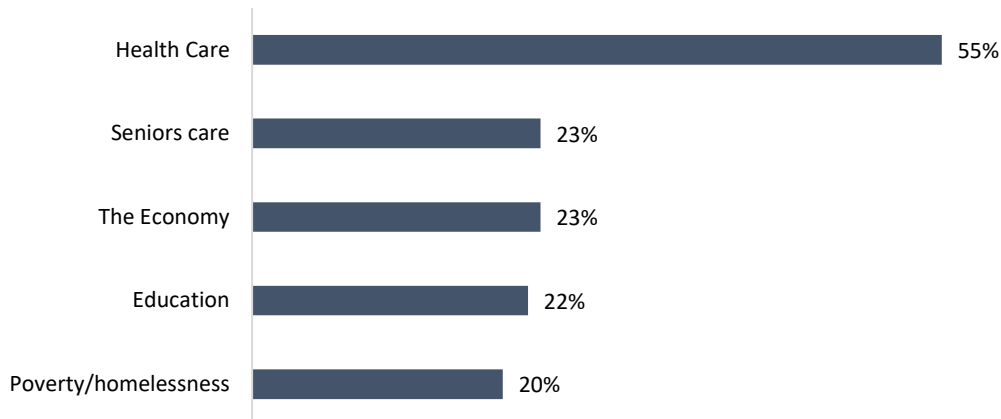
Do you think the current government of Quebec is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas?



New Brunswick

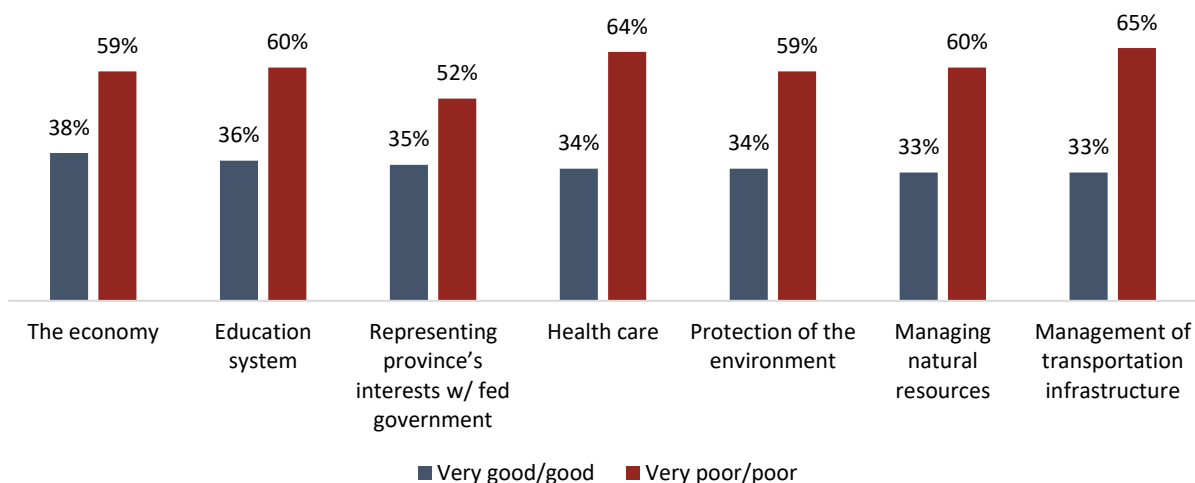
By an overwhelming margin, health care is the highest priority for residents of New Brunswick. Premier Blaine Higgs stated recently that the health care model in the province is “[not working](#)” and that changes must be made. Opposition has been growing, however, to reforms including a [recently reversed](#) plan to close a number of emergency rooms. Senior care is also prioritized by one-quarter of residents (23%):

**Top issues in New Brunswick (n=252)
Respondents allowed three choices from list, issues chosen by 20%
or more shown**



The Higgs government receives among the worst ratings in terms of performance on a number of different files of any provincial government. On each of the seven areas canvassed, from health care, to the economy, to education, a majority of residents say they are doing a poor job:

**Do you think the current government of New Brunswick is doing a good job or a
poor job in each of the following areas?**



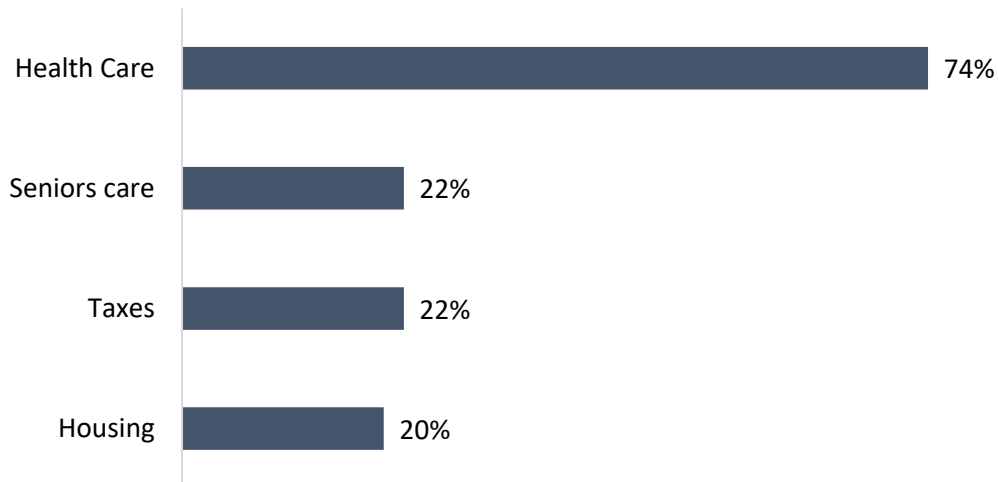
Nova Scotia

The top issue for residents in Nova Scotia is health care, and it's not close. Three-quarters say so, which is more than triple the number who choose any other issue. Doctor shortages in Atlantic Canada [go back decades](#) and while the number of Nova Scotians waiting for a doctor dropped by [3.7 per cent last year](#), 47,000 residents are waiting for a family practitioner.

CONTACT:

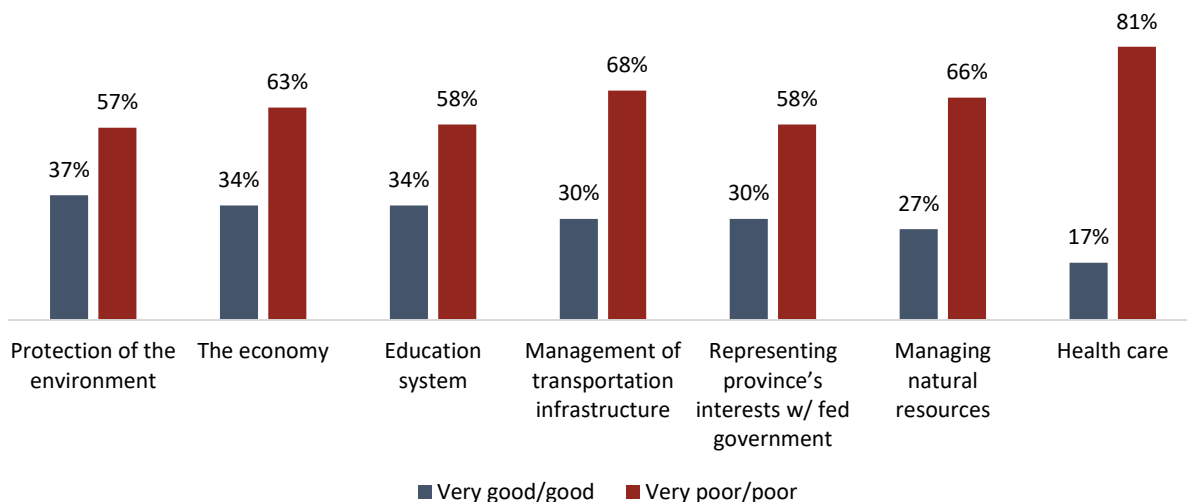
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

**Top issues in Nova Scotia
(Issues chosen by 20% or more respondents shown)**



Nova Scotians are the most critical of their provincial government. At least 57 per cent of residents say the government has done a poor job on each of the areas they were asked to assess, and this rises to 81 per cent when they consider the performance of Premier Stephen McNeil's government on health care:

Do you think the current government of Nova Scotia is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas?



Newfoundland and Labrador

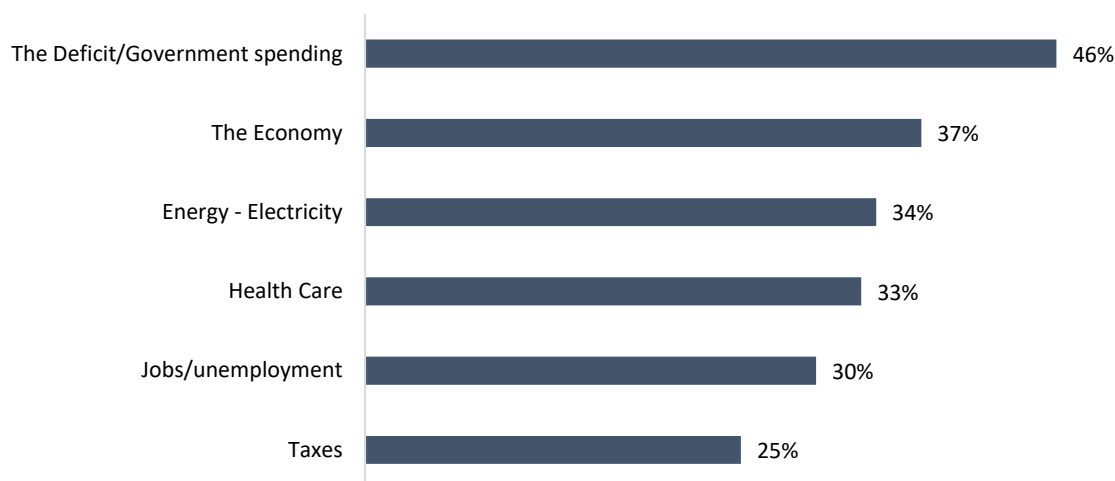
Economic issues are at the core of citizen concerns in Newfoundland and Labrador. The deficit is chosen as top issue by nearly half of residents, while the economy is second. The province's net debt rose to \$13.95 billion after the government announced the deficit for 2019/20 had risen to \$943 million. The

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

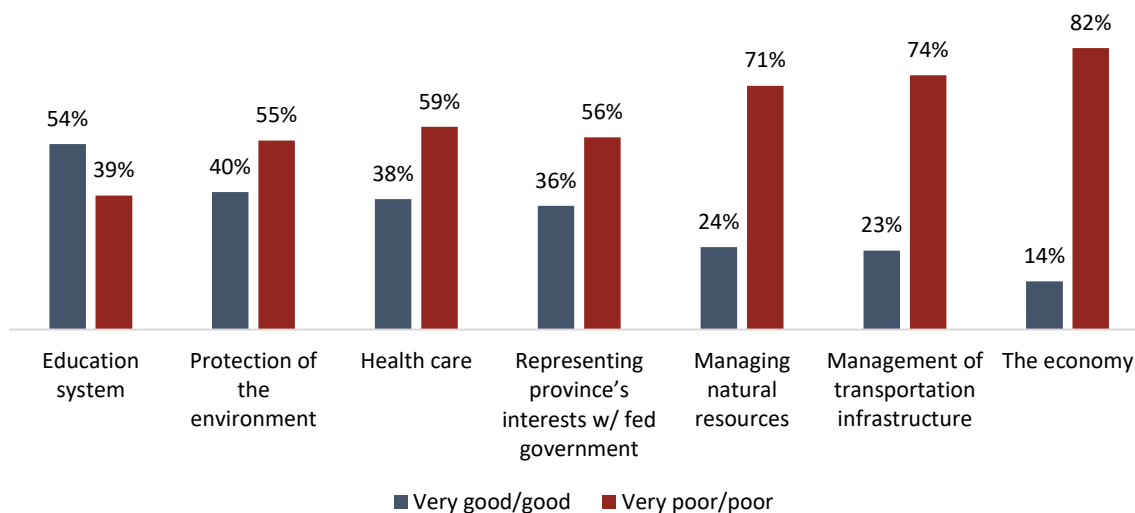
province's unemployment continues to be the highest among the provinces leading three-in-ten (30%) to choose it as a top concern.

Top issues in Newfoundland and Labrador (n=223)
Respondents allowed three choices from list, issues chosen by 20% or more shown



Outgoing Premier Dwight Ball's government is seen to be doing a good job on education but gets a negative assessment in all other areas canvassed. This includes the most negative provincial assessment of economic performance: four-in-five residents say it has done a bad job:

Do you think the current government of Newfoundland and Labrador is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas?



CONTACT:

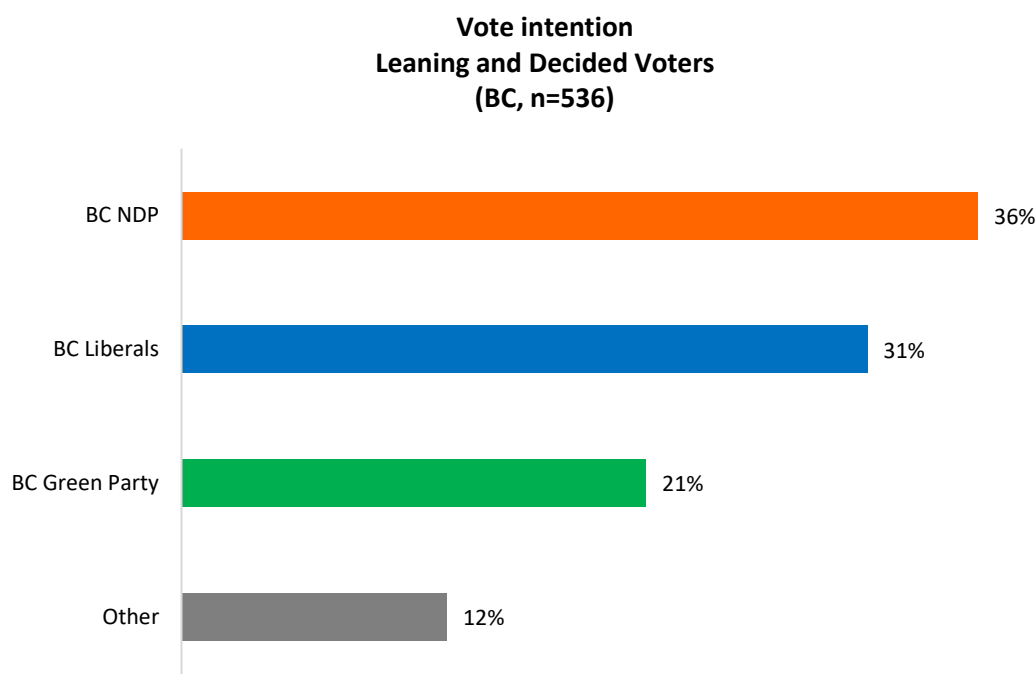
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Part Two: Vote Intention

These are provincial vote intention numbers, west to east, for Canada's four most populous provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec.

NDP holds advantage in BC

The BC NDP government has been in power in a Confidence and Supply Agreement with the provincial Green Party since June of 2017. The unemployment rate as of January 2020 was 4.5 per cent, lowest among the provinces. Despite the [10-point drop](#) in John Horgan's approval recently, his government still leads by a slight margin in vote intention. Asked who they would vote for in an election held tomorrow, 36 per cent say they would support the NDP, while 31 per cent say they would support the BC Liberals. The Green Party garners support from one-in-five (21%):



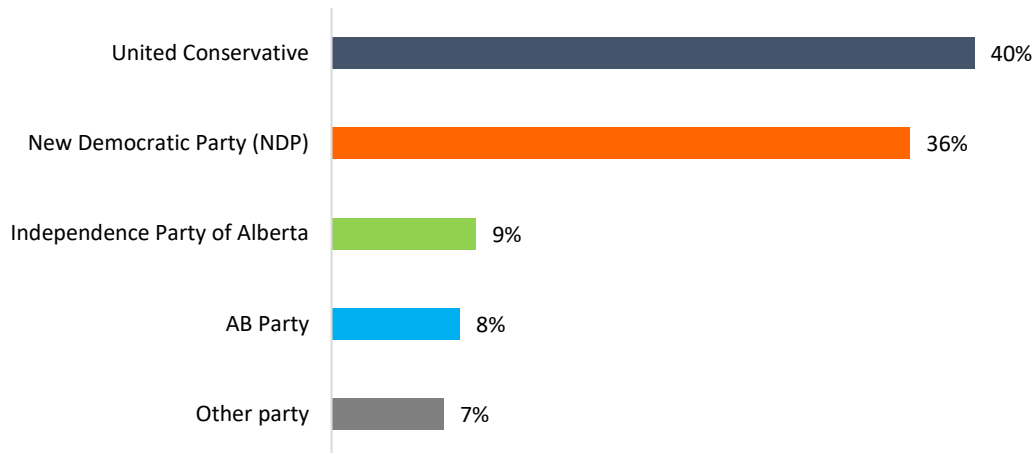
UCP falters in Alberta

The United Conservative Party has held a majority government since winning the election in April 2018. The unemployment rate as of January 2020 was 7.3 per cent, highest among provinces outside of Atlantic Canada. Jason Kenney's approval has been deteriorating since the election less than a year ago, down [from 61 per cent to 47 per cent](#), and it his party's lead on vote intention is also softening. The UCP won 55 per cent of the vote at the time but currently holds the vote intention of just 40 per cent of residents. An election is, however, unlikely in the near future.

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

**Vote intention
Leaning and Decided Voters
(AB, n=555)**

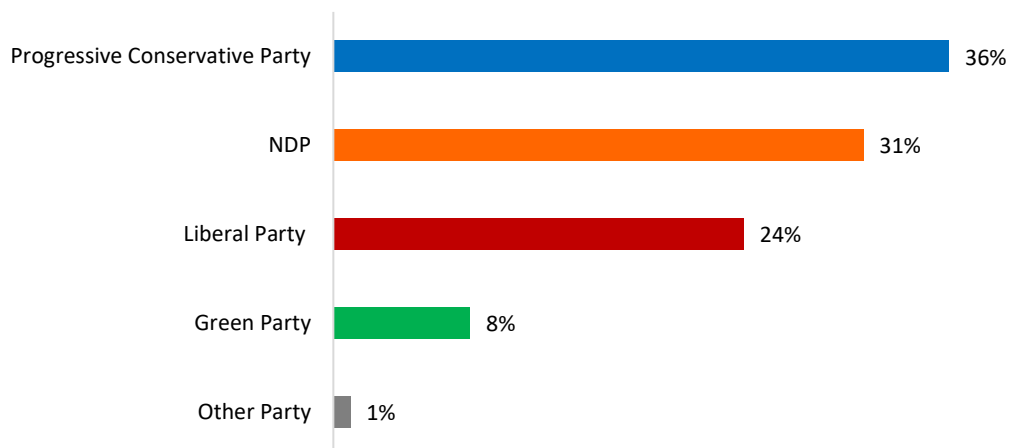


Fractured opposition boosts Ford's Conservatives in Ontario

The Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario has held a majority government since winning the election in June 2018. The unemployment rate as of January 2020 was 5.2 per cent, fourth lowest among the provinces.

The good news for the Ford government is that despite its poor marks from the Ontario population on the various elements of service delivery discussed earlier in this release, a fractured opposition means that it still holds an advantage in vote intent. One-third (36%) say that they would support the PCPO compared to 31 per cent for the NDP and 24 per cent for the Ontario Liberal Party.

**Vote Intention
Leaning and Decided Voters
(ON, n= 921)**



CONTACT:

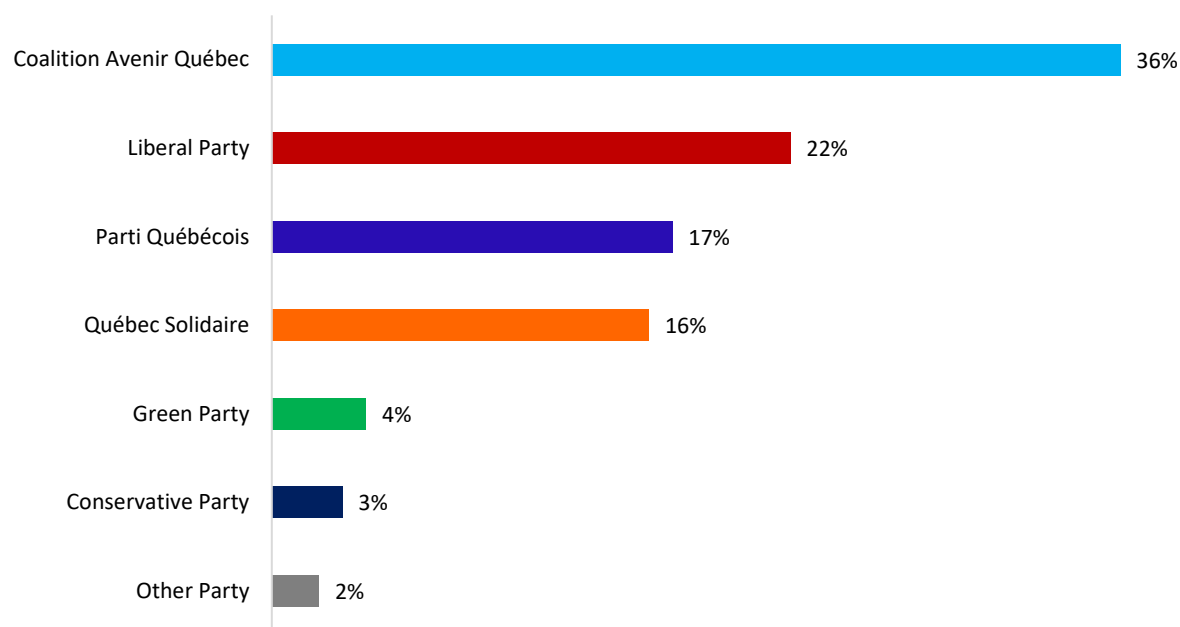
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

CAQ Comfortable in Quebec

The Coalition Avenir Québec has held a majority government since winning the election in October 2018. The unemployment rate as of January 2020 was 5.1 per cent, tied for second lowest among the provinces.

The vote intention picture is largely unchanged from the 2018 result that delivered the CAQ a majority. After receiving 37 per cent of the vote in that election the CAQ is now supported by 36 per cent. Meanwhile, support for the Liberal Party is down from the 25 per cent it received in 2018 to 22 per cent now. The Parti Québécois and Québec solidaire are both also competitive, receiving the vote intention of just under one-in-five residents:

Vote Intention Leaning and Decided Voters (QC, n= 638)



Margins of error								
BC (608)	AB (597)	SK (601)	MB (598)	ON (1,051)	QC (719)	NB (252)	NS (300)	NL (223)
+/- 4.0%	+/- 4.0%	+/- 4.0%	+/- 4.0%	+/- 3.0%	+/- 3.7%	+/- 6.2%	+/- 5.7%	+/- 6.6%

For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

For vote intention data, [click here](#).

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org