

A Tale of Two Voters: Shifting dynamics tighten BC Election race in its final days

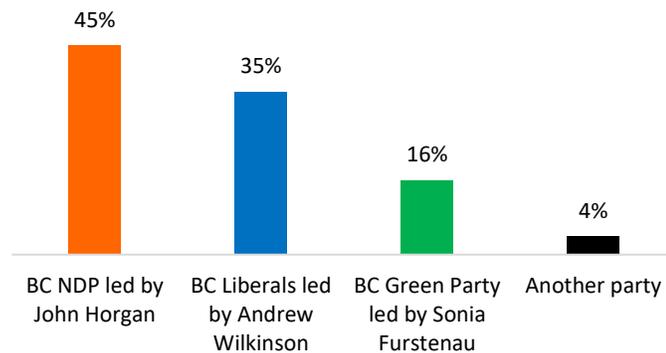
While early voters heavily favour NDP, those yet to vote split almost evenly between two main parties

October 20, 2020 – As British Columbia's three main political parties vie to lock in the support of voters who have yet to cast ballots in one of the most unusual election campaigns in this province's history, the latest data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute show the gap between the BC NDP and the BC Liberals narrowing slightly.

New Democrats may continue to hold a comfortable lead but have shed a handful of points to the BC Liberals and BC Greens since last week as those yet to vote think more seriously about their choices.

The results suggest that those who have already voted – a group more heavily concentrated in Metro Vancouver and on Vancouver Island – overwhelmingly supported the NDP. By contrast, among those yet to vote – more likely to be found in Northern and Interior BC and the Fraser Valley – the race is much more competitive, with voters almost evenly divided between the NDP and Liberals.

**Vote Intention in British Columbia
(leaning, decided, and advanced voters,
n=1,155)**



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from October 16 – 19, 2020 among a representative randomized sample of 1,201 British Columbia adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. 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.

A consistent theme running through the campaign has been a relative ambivalence towards the parties and their leaders. Indeed, while just under half (46%) of voters say they are motivated by a party and what it stands for, the other half (54%) are determined to block a party they don't like instead. Among those who say they will vote for the BC Liberals this sentiment rises to seven-in-ten (71%).

More Key Findings:

- Overall vote intention shows the BC NDP holding a notable, but shrunken lead over previous waves of polling. Since last week, support for the party has dropped four points (45% now versus 49% last week), while the BC Liberals have picked up two points (35% versus 33%). The Greens are also up two points to 16 per cent.
- In terms of preferred election outcome, voters are split between wanting an NDP majority (35%) an NDP minority (23%) and a Liberal majority (22%).

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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.

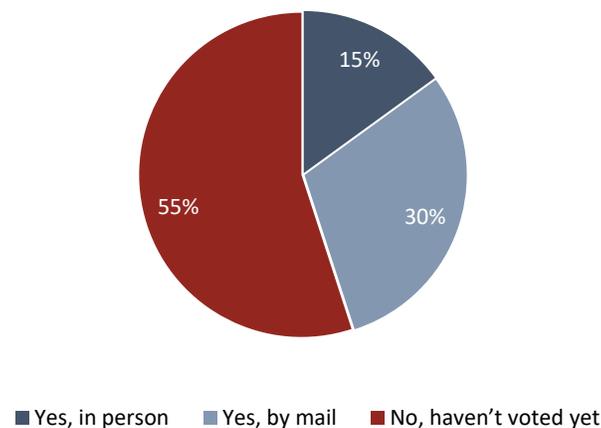
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A Tale of Two Voters: race tightens among those yet to vote

Given the unique circumstances of voting during a pandemic, Elections BC has offered an unprecedented array of voting options to encourage British Columbians to safely exercise their franchise. More than 700,000 mail-in ballots packages have been requested by voters. So far, 383,477 people have already availed themselves of advance, in-person voting as of October 18, while more will do so on or before the official election date of October 24. Indeed, near half of respondents tell the Angus Reid Institute they have already cast a ballot:

Have you voted in this election yet, either in person or by mail?
(All respondents, n=1,201)

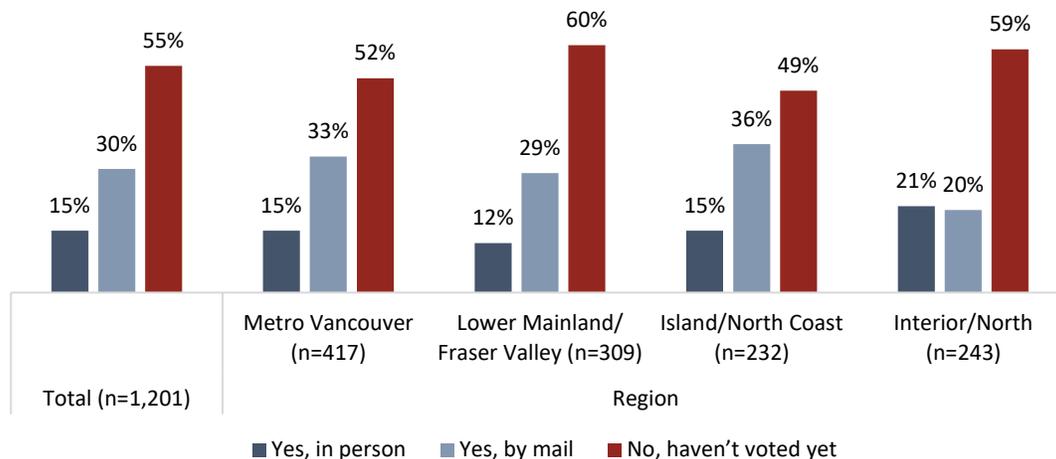


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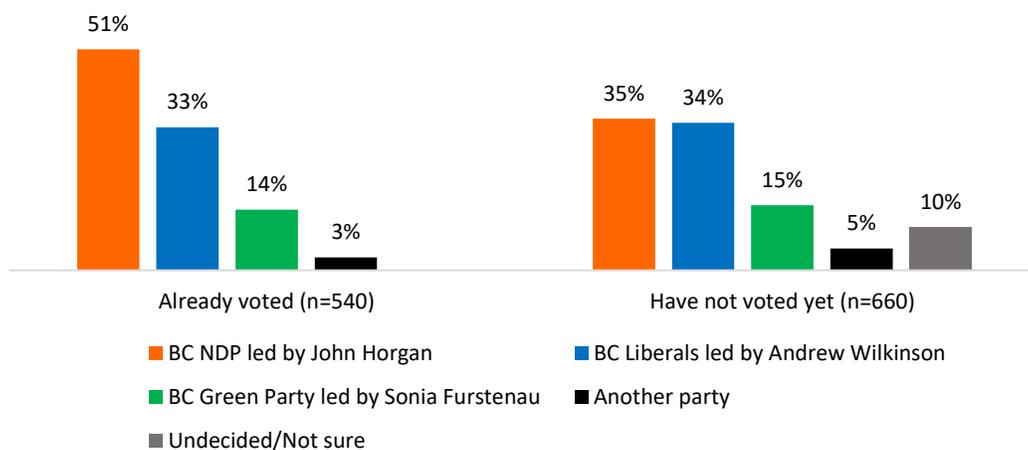
The percentage of British Columbians that have already voted varies significantly by age, with younger residents less likely to have already voted ([see detailed tables](#)). Advanced voting participation also differs by region, with those on Vancouver Island and in Metro Vancouver most likely to have voted already by either mail-in or advanced ballot while those living outside BC’s urban core are least likely to have voted so far:

Have you yourself voted in this election yet, either in person or by mail?



Given the [comparative strength](#) of the NDP’s support in Metro Vancouver and on Vancouver Island, it is perhaps not surprising that the “Already Voted”—predominantly from those aforementioned regions—favour the New Democrats. This contrasts significantly against the “Yet to Vote”. Indeed, among the Already Voted, the BC NDP hold a considerable advantage. Among the Yet to Vote, the race is much closer:

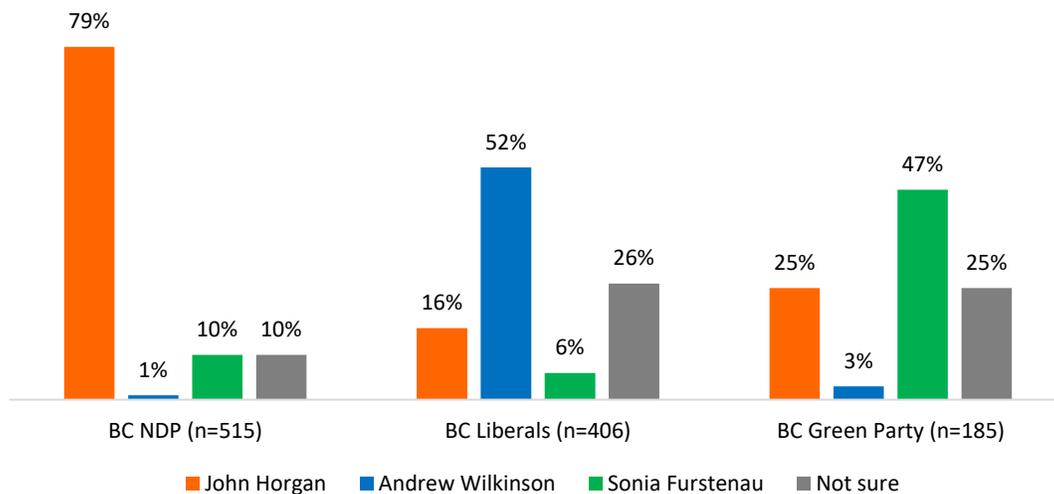
**Vote Intention in British Columbia
Advanced voters vs. have not voted yet**



Leadership

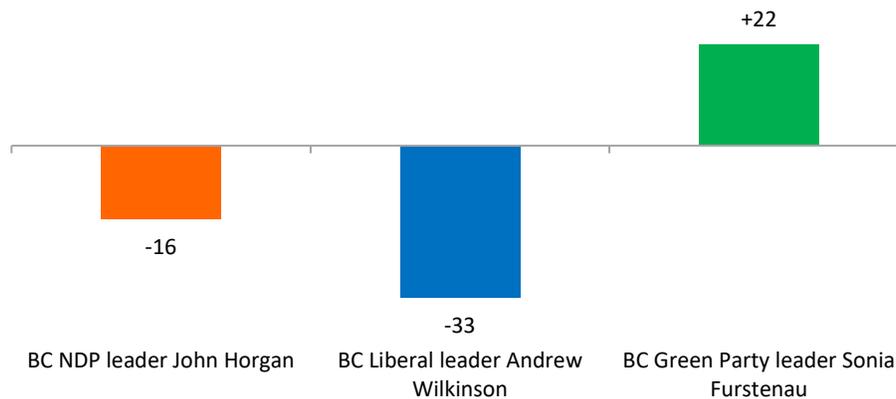
How do voters arrive at their decision? To a lesser extent, it is based on perceptions of the three main party leaders. Asked who would be the best premier for the province, just under half (45%) choose NDP leader John Horgan, while fewer than half as many choose BC Liberal leader Andrew Wilkinson. Horgan is chosen as best by 79 per cent of his voters, while half of BC Liberal voters (52%) say the same of Wilkinson. Just under half of Green voters favour Sonia Furstenau, as seen in the graph below:

Which of these party leaders do you think would be the best Premier of BC? (By party voted/intending to vote for)



In terms of momentum, BC Green Party leader Sonia Furstenau has improved the most in the eyes of British Columbians since the start of the campaign. She is the only party leader for whom positive public opinion has increased rather than declined during the campaign period. Notably, Liberal leader Andrew Wilkinson’s net momentum has crashed since the writ was dropped:

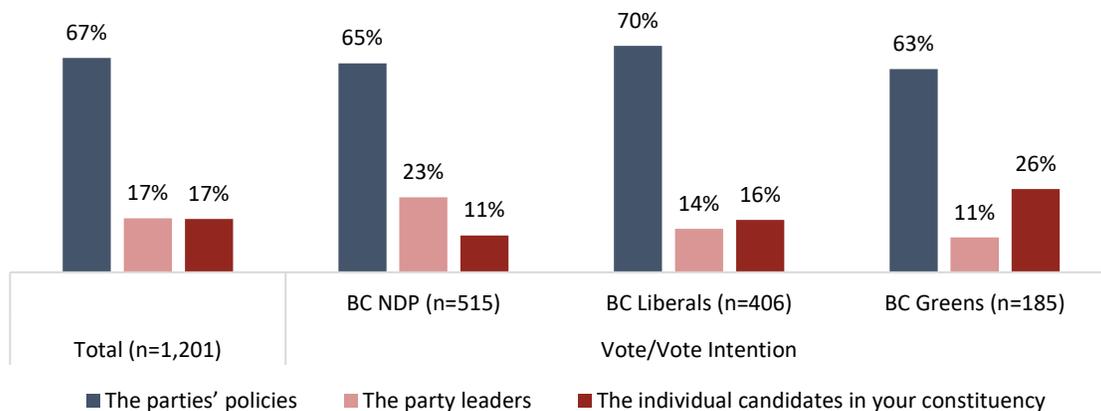
Net momentum score, in percentage points
Opinion of the leader has improved minus worsened since
the election campaign began



Vote Dynamics: What's motivating voters?

When it comes to their primary voting motivations, British Columbians care less about leadership than issues. Two-thirds (67%) say this is an election where policy is the driving force behind their vote, while fewer than one-in-five say they will be voting based on the candidate in their constituency (17%) or that they will be voting based on the party leader (17%):

Which of the following was/is most important to you in deciding how you
voted/will vote?
(All respondents)



While the party campaigns were non-traditional, featuring little door knocking and a lot of virtual rallies, most British Columbians were able to follow the campaign relatively closely – more than three-quarters did ([see detailed tables](#)).

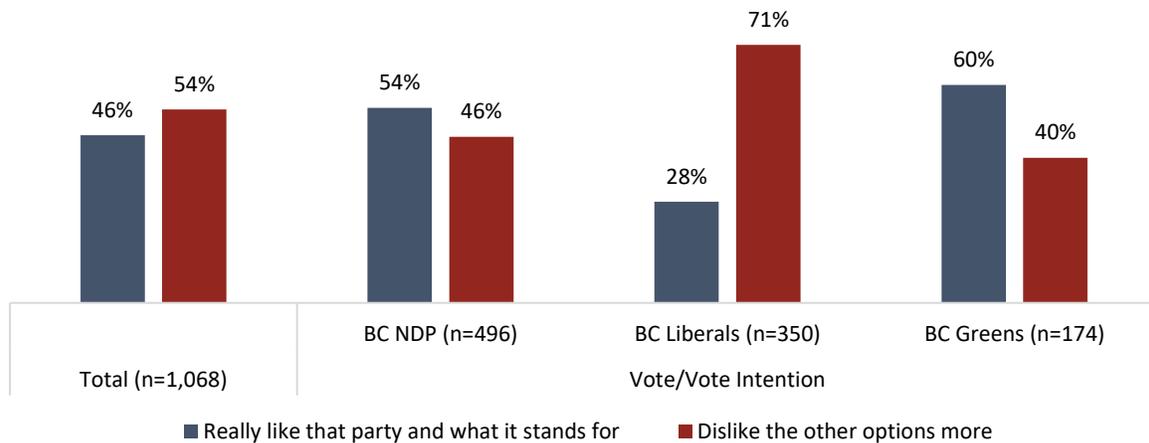
But policy aside, this is an election that is defined by voters appearing to play defence as much as offence. Indeed, just over half (54%) say they will be voting *against* a party they dislike rather than voting

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for one they truly support. BC Liberal voters are far more likely to say this, with 71 per cent voting against a party rather than for their own choice:

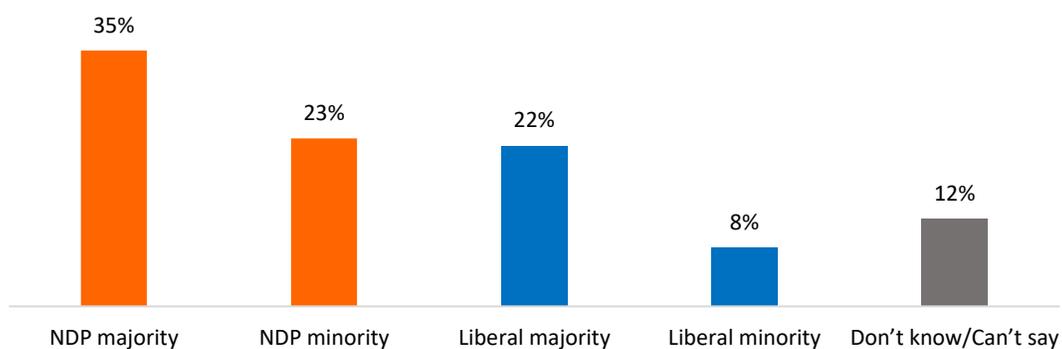
And thinking of the party you supported or are currently supporting, would you say you:
(Among those who have party preference, including already voted)



Preferred Election Outcome

Asked what their preference would ultimately be for the form of government after the votes are tallied, one-in-three say an NDP majority would be best. Just under one-quarter say they would prefer either an NDP minority (23%) or a Liberal majority (22%).

All things considered, which of these election outcomes would you most prefer to see after all the votes are counted?
(All respondents, n=1,201)

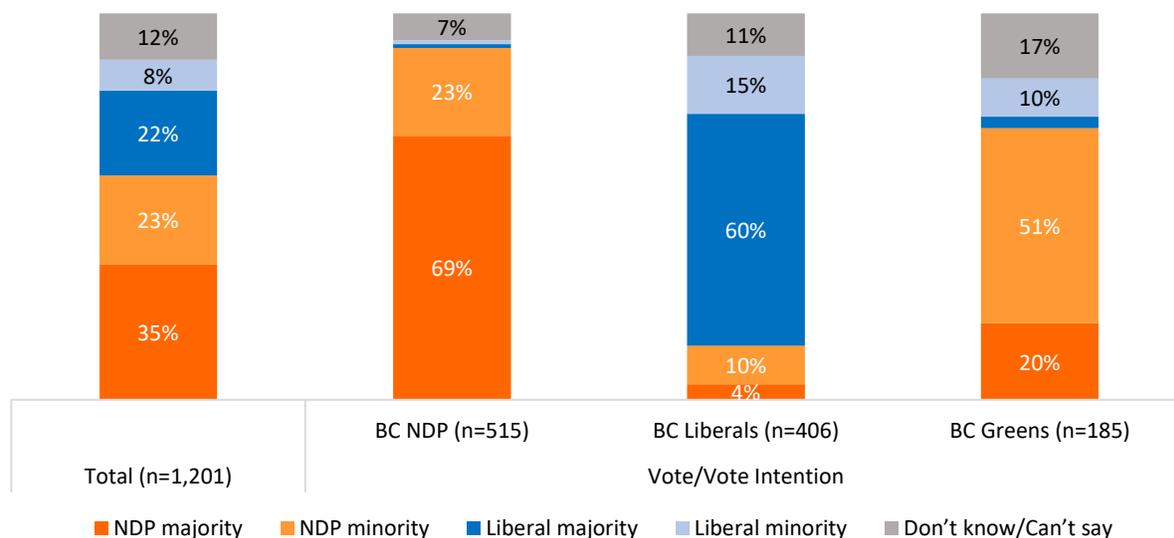


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Notably, just 69 per cent of NDP voters want a majority for their party choice, while only 60 per cent of BC Liberal voters want a majority for that party.

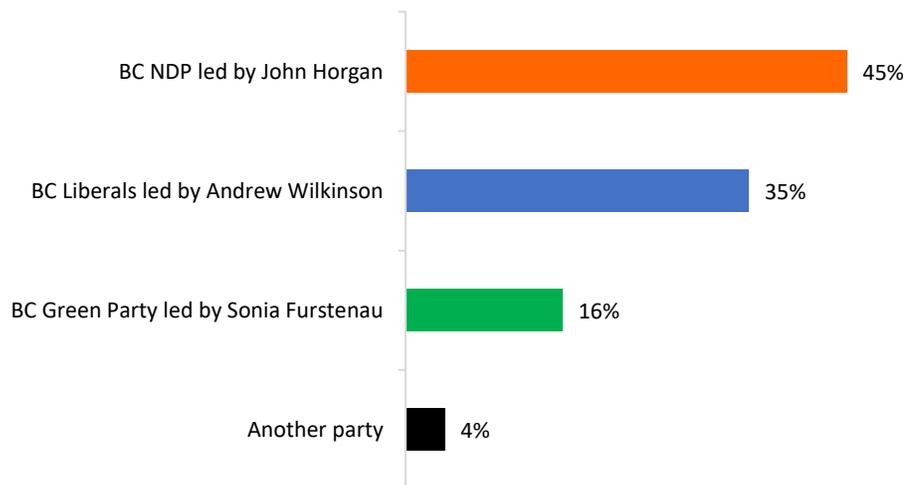
All things considered, which of these election outcomes would you most prefer to see after all the votes are counted?



Vote Intention

These dynamics result in overall vote intention for the NDP at 45 per cent, with the BC liberals 10 points behind, and the Green Party of BC at 16 per cent:

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(Leaning, decided, and advanced voters, n=1,155)**



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There is significant variation across the province. The NDP fare best in the urban core of Metro Vancouver, garnering support from 54 per cent of voters. In the Interior, by contrast, the BC Liberals hold an 18-point advantage. The BC Green Party performs best on Vancouver Island and the North Coast, where its voter support rises to 25 per cent:

B.C. Vote Intention, including leaners/already voted, decided voters only:					
	Total (n=1,155)	Region			
		Metro Vancouver (n=399)	Lower Mainland/ Fraser Valley (n=298)	Island/ North Coast (n=230)	Interior/North (n=234)
BC NDP led by John Horgan	45%	54%	43%	49%	30%
BC Liberals led by Andrew Wilkinson	35%	31%	38%	22%	48%
BC Green Party led by Sonia Furstenau	16%	13%	14%	25%	15%
Another party	4%	2%	5%	4%	8%

Demographic differences stand out as well. Women of all ages prefer the BC NDP to the alternatives, while men over the age of 34 lean slightly toward the BC Liberals. Green Party support is relatively constant across demographics:

B.C. Vote Intention, including leaners/already voted, decided voters only:							
	Total (n=1,155)	Age and Gender					
		Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=132)	35-54 (n=186)	55+ (n=250)	18-34 (n=131)	35-54 (n=194)	55+ (n=263)
BC NDP led by John Horgan	45%	52%	37%	38%	59%	46%	45%
BC Liberals led by Andrew Wilkinson	35%	26%	41%	44%	22%	32%	36%
BC Green Party led by Sonia Furstenau	16%	18%	15%	14%	16%	18%	16%
Another party	4%	5%	6%	5%	3%	3%	3%

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

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