

Premiers' Performance: Ball drops, Wall bounces post-election

Newfoundland and Labrador premier's post-election honeymoon shifts to buyer's remorse

May 25, 2016 – In February, Dwight Ball was riding high. Two months earlier, his Liberal Party had followed the federal sweep of the province with a red wave of its own, one that washed the Progressive Conservatives from power after 12 years. Ball's debut approval rating was 60 per cent – [the second-highest of any premier in the country](#).

Today, continued poor economic performance and [a deeply unpopular austerity budget](#) have provincial residents feeling very differently about their leader.

The latest Angus Reid Institute (ARI) analysis of quarterly survey results from more than 5,000 Canadian adults shows Ball's job approval down a staggering 43 points. Fewer than one-in-five (17%) people in Newfoundland and Labrador now approve of his job performance, making him the country's least-popular premier.

The mantle of most-popular premier remains – as it has for years – with Saskatchewan's Brad Wall. Just over a month after his Saskatchewan Party won its third-straight majority mandate [in convincing fashion](#), Wall has the approval of 66 per cent of provincial residents, up four points compared to last quarter.

Canada's second-most-popular premier also won an election in a prairie province last month, but unlike Wall, Brian Pallister's Progressive Conservatives are forming their first government in Manitoba since 1999.

Pallister's party defeated the Manitoba New Democratic Party, whose leader, former premier Greg Selinger, had been receiving poor job approval ratings from Manitobans for the last two years. Pallister debuts with the job approval of 46 per cent of Manitobans – a significant improvement on the 19 per cent approval rating Selinger posted last quarter, but not as much of a post-election bump as other new premiers have enjoyed in recent years.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Highest Approval Ratings: Wall (SK) 66%, Pallister (MB) 46%, McNeil (NS) 41%**
- **Lowest Approval Ratings: Ball (NL) 17%, Wynne (ON) 24%, Gallant (NB) 26%**

The Angus Reid Institute analyzed the results of an online survey of 5300 Canadian adults in a randomized and representative sample of [Angus Reid Forum](#) panelists from May 6-16, 2016. The data was donated by MARU/VCR&C. A probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of +/- 2%, 19 times out of 20. Detailed tables and graphs are found at the end of this release.

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For example, Newfoundland and Labrador's Ball (60%), Alberta's Rachel Notley (53%), and Nova Scotia's Stephen McNeil (66%) all posted majority approval ratings in the first quarter after their election. One possible reason for this lower level of initial support is may be Manitobans' uncertainty about the Pallister government's legislative agenda. As [a new ARI report](#) suggests, while most of the province's residents are either pleased or neutral about the election outcome, 57 per cent also feel the PCs have some plans for governing that they didn't make public during the campaign.

In Alberta, Notley seems to have stabilized since coming down from a post-election honeymoon period. The nation's only remaining NDP premier has the approval of 32 per cent of Alberta respondents, statistically unchanged from last quarter (33%).

Rounding out the western provinces, B.C. Premier Christy Clark's approval rating slides a little, at 27 per cent in this quarter. Clark has dealt with heavy criticism this quarter over her receipt of "top-up" pay from her party – a practice [opposed by most Canadians](#) and British Columbia residents. This, paired with [perceived inaction](#) on escalating housing prices in Metro Vancouver, has Clark garnering support from just one-in-four BC residents for the first time since March 2013, when her approval rating dipped to 25 per cent. Of course, Clark has weathered storms of low approval before. Her party won reelection just two months after hitting that 2013 low.

Turning to the other side of the country, Nova Scotia's Stephen McNeil sees his approval rating tick upward slightly, to 41 per cent from 36 last quarter, while New Brunswick premier Brian Gallant backslides to his 2015 summer lows (27% and 25%) with a 26 per cent approval rating.

Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard continues to hover around one-third approval, with the endorsement on job performance of 33 per cent of Quebecers. This number is the lowest Couillard has ever posted, but it's in roughly the same range he has been in since March 2015, when his approval rating was 35 per cent.

Finally, approval of Kathleen Wynne continues its steady downward trend since she won re-election in June 2014. This quarter, fewer than one-in-four Ontarians (24%) approve of her performance, down three points from last quarter. Only Ball's free fall kept Wynne from the title of Canada's least approved-of premier. Wynne, who has also been entangled in controversy over her Ontario Liberal Party's ["cash-for-access"](#) fundraisers, has dropped for a seventh consecutive reporting wave, dating back to September, 2014.

*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*

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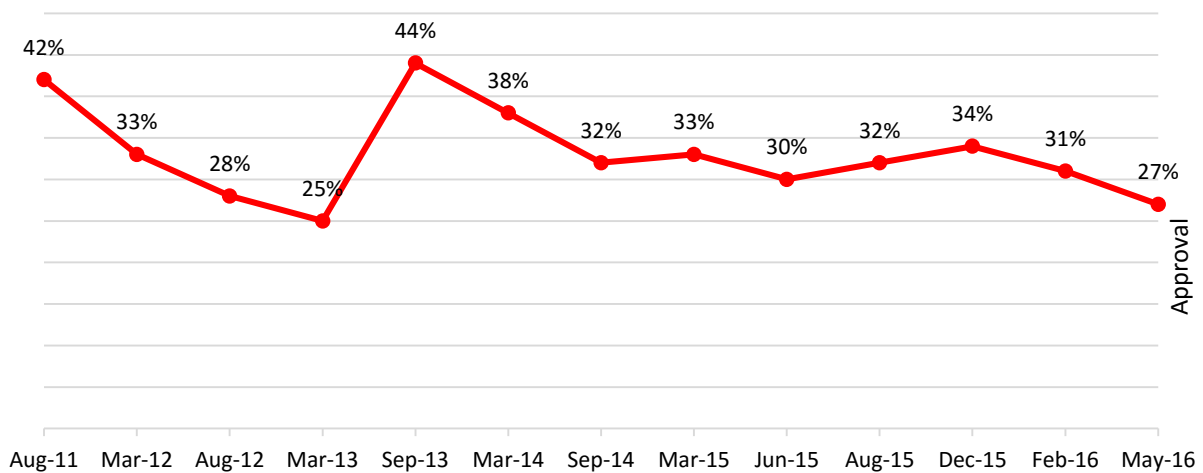
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administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.

Detailed graphs and tables are on the following pages. Note: There are no trendline graphs for premiers who are relatively new to office.

*Because its small population precludes drawing discrete samples over multiple waves, data on Prince Edward Island is not released.

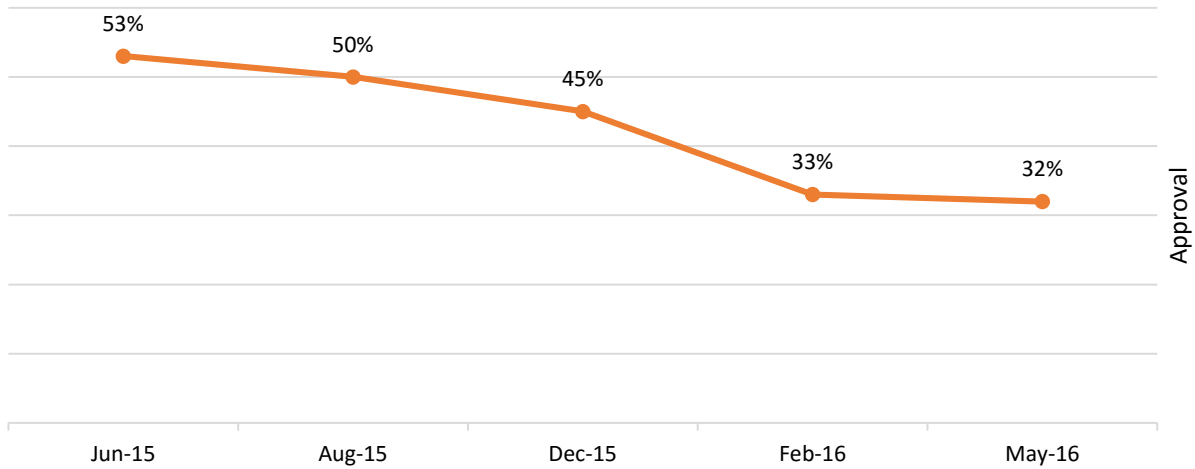
British Columbia Premier Christy Clark (Liberal)



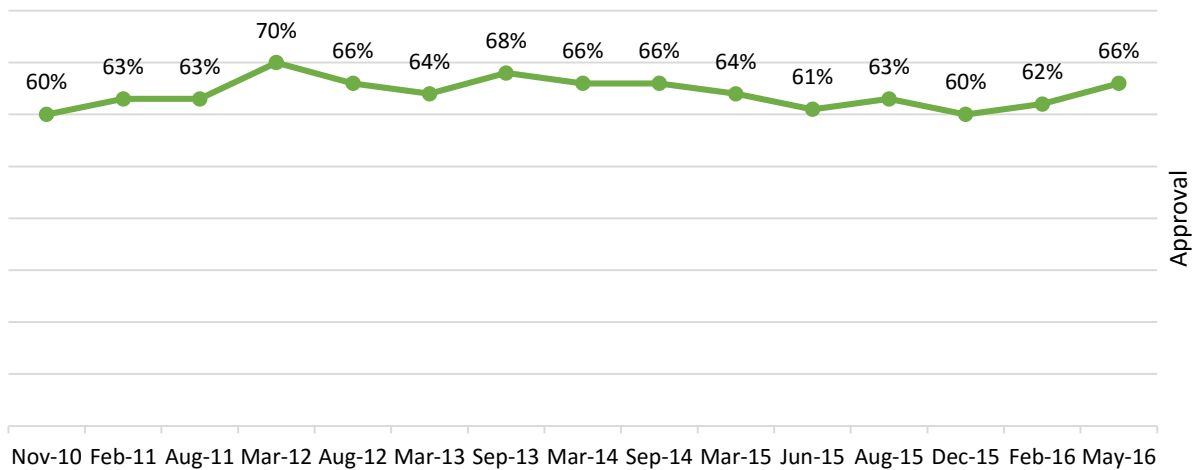
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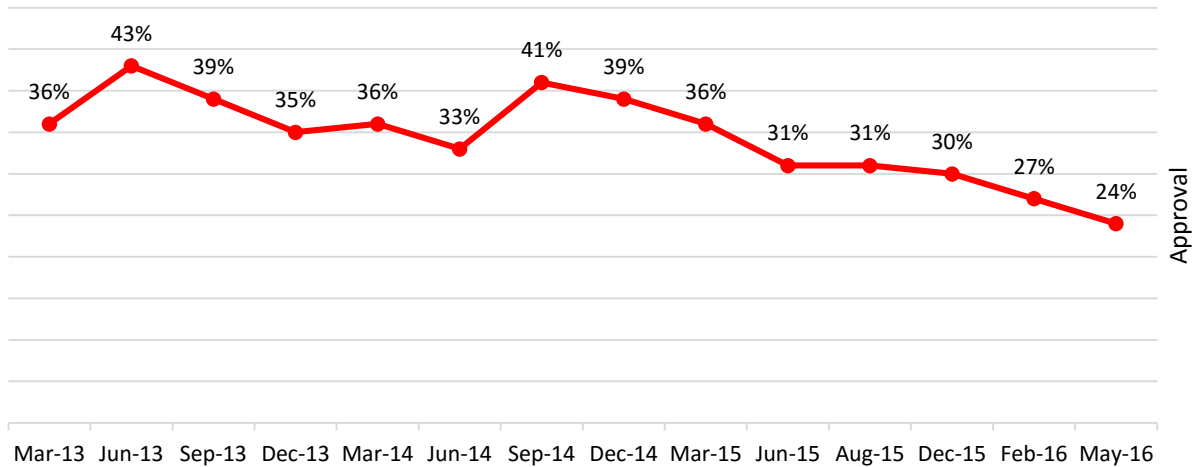
Rachel Notley (NDP)



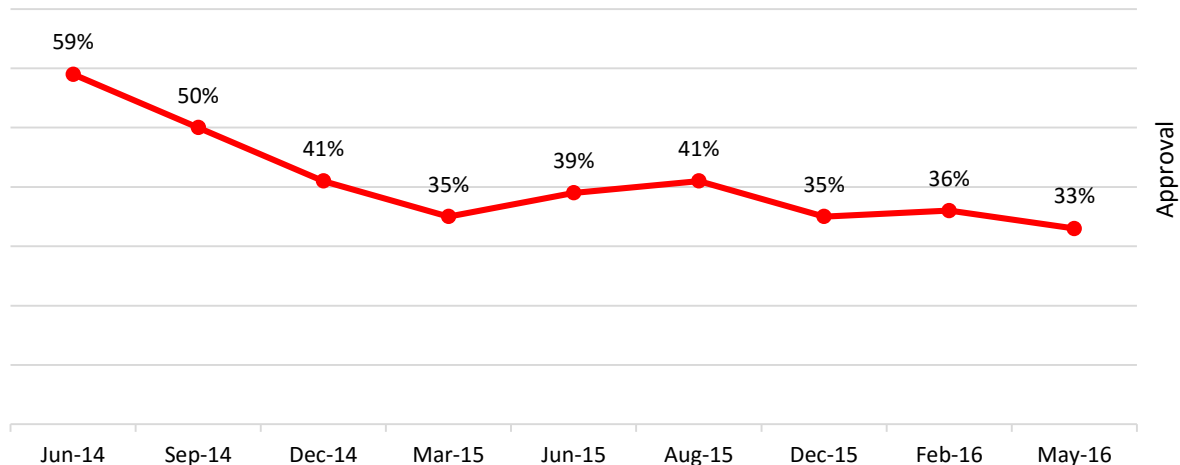
Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall (Saskatchewan Party)



Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne (Liberal)



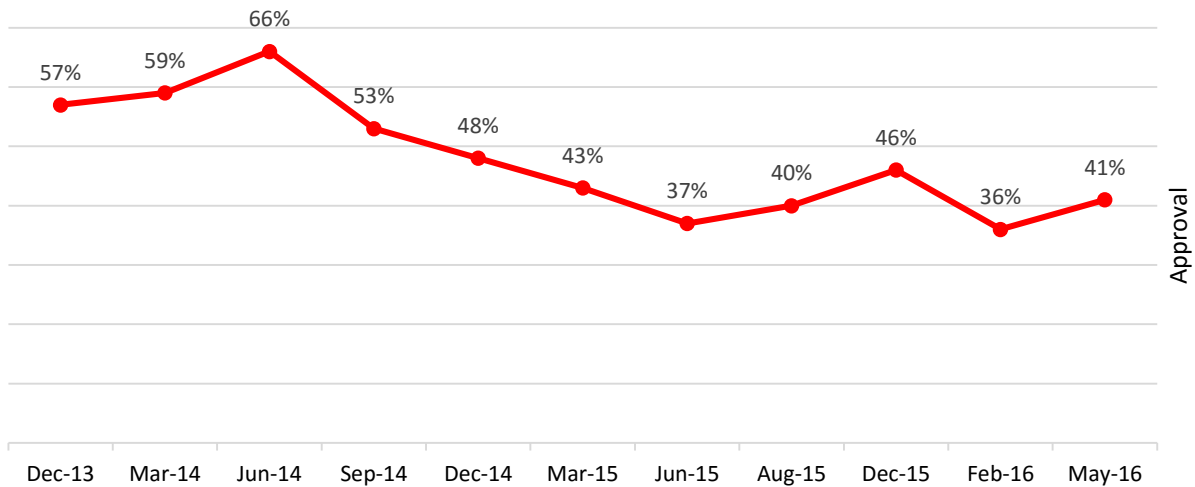
Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard (Liberal)



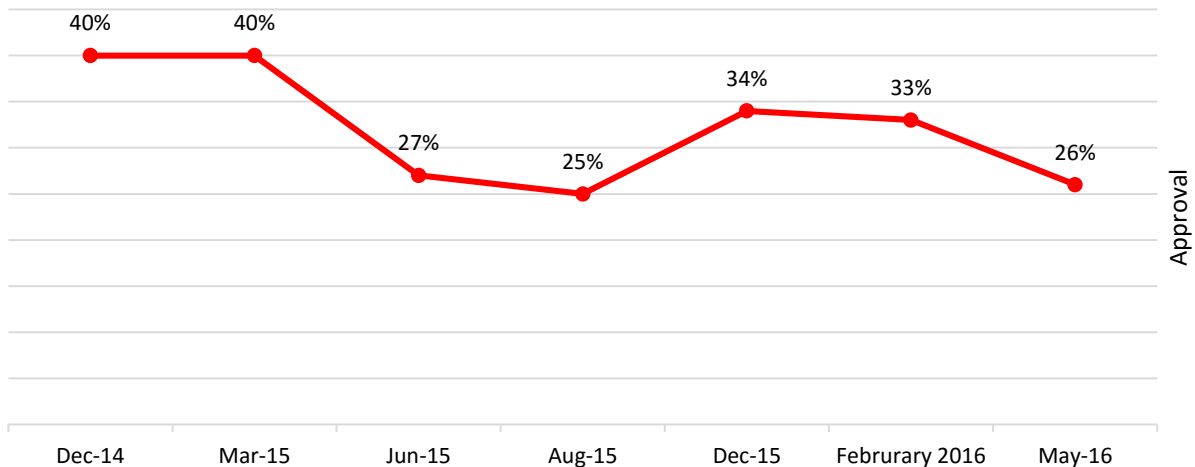
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Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil (Liberal)



New Brunswick Premier Brian Gallant (Liberal)



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Provincial Governments			
Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following Premiers?			
	Approve	Disapprove	Not Sure
Saskatchewan: Brad Wall (Saskatchewan Party) N=1056	66%	31%	3%
Manitoba: Brian Pallister (Progressive Conservative) N=748	46%	37%	17%
Nova Scotia: Stephen McNeil (Liberal) N=264	41%	50%	9%
Québec: Philippe Couillard (Liberal) N=603	33%	57%	9%
Alberta: Rachel Notley (New Democratic Party) N=601	32%	59%	8%
British Columbia: Christy Clark (Liberal) N=600	27%	65%	8%
New Brunswick: Brian Gallant (Liberal) N=263	26%	57%	17%
Ontario: Kathleen Wynne (Liberal) N=803	24%	67%	9%
Newfoundland and Labrador: Dwight Ball (Liberal) N=263	17%	77%	6%

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Provincial Governments				
Do you approve of the performance of each of the following Premiers?				
	May 2016	Feb. 2016	Dec. 2015	Sept. 2015
Saskatchewan: Brad Wall (Saskatchewan Party)	66%	62%	60%	63%
Manitoba: Brian Pallister (Progressive Conservative)	46%	N/A**	N/A	N/A
Nova Scotia: Stephen McNeil (Liberal)	41%	36%	46%	40%
Québec: Philippe Couillard (Liberal)	33%	36%	35%	41%
Alberta: Rachel Notley (New Democratic Party)	32%	33%	45%	50%
British Columbia: Christy Clark (Liberal)	27%	31%	34%	32%
New Brunswick: Brian Gallant (Liberal)	26%	33%	34%	25%
Ontario: Kathleen Wynne (Liberal)	24%	27%	30%	31%
Newfoundland and Labrador: Dwight Ball (Liberal)	17%	60%	N/A*	N/A

*Dwight Ball became Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador in the November 30, 2015 election

**Brian Pallister became Premier of Manitoba in the April 19, 2016 election

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