

Premiers' Performance: A Holly Jolly Christmas for Legault and Moe

Horgan, Ford, earn the approval of pluralities in their respective provinces

December 20, 2018 – Quebec and Saskatchewan Premiers Francois Legault and Scott Moe have each received an early Christmas present in the form of majority job approval ratings from their respective electorates.

Legault, whose Coalition Avenir Quebec formed a majority government this past October, ends 2018 with the not-uncommon bump afforded provincial leaders early in their mandates. Six-in-ten (59%) Quebecers approve of his efforts as premier. Statistically, the same number (57%) feel the same way in Saskatchewan about *their* premier Scott Moe, on the job for almost a year.

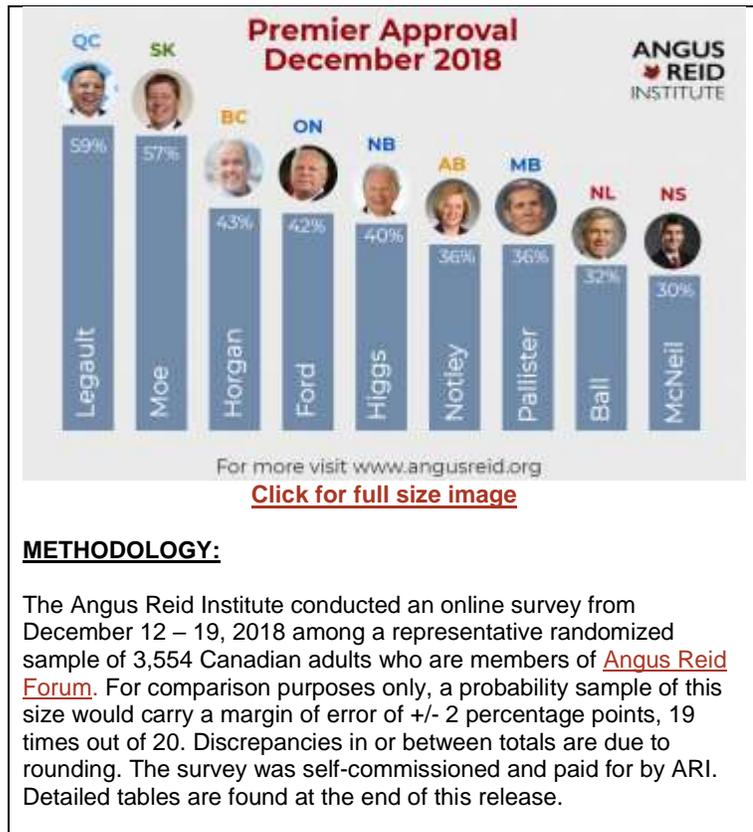
This quarterly survey of Canadians about their premiers finds the middle of the pack holding their own, relatively speaking, while the least approved-of provincial leaders in the country are at or just above the 30 per cent mark.

Majority approval in Saskatchewan and Quebec

In the early months of the CAQ government, it appears that Quebec residents are happy enough with Legault, whose party became the first since 1966 other than the Quebec Liberals or Parti Quebecois to hold power in that province. In a brief pre-Christmas sitting, the legislature introduced plans to [reduce immigration](#) and [raise the legal age](#) for marijuana consumption to 21. Legault also defended his plan to [ban religious symbols](#) in the workplace. As noted, 59 per cent of residents say they approve of Legault entering 2019.

[Related - Religious symbols in the workplace: opinion nuanced in and outside Quebec](#)

The only other Canadian premier with a majority approval rating is Saskatchewan's Scott Moe (57%). Moe has been an influential voice among a group of premiers pressing the Prime Minister on [some the year's most defining issues](#) – including carbon taxation, oil prices and pipelines amid a growing dissatisfaction with Ottawa among many in Western Canada. Moe's high approval, relative to other premiers, follows that of his predecessor, Brad Wall.



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from December 12 – 19, 2018 among a representative randomized sample of 3,554 Canadian 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 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.

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Ontario and B.C.

After winning a [dramatic and tumultuous](#) leadership race for the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario last spring, Doug Ford went on in June to win a majority government in Canada's most populous province. Ford has allied himself with other conservative leaders in the country and taken a place as one of the principle figures in the push back against the Trudeau government's carbon pricing plan. But there has been internal controversy: Ford enters 2019 facing [an inquiry over conflict of interest](#) concerns after a family friend was appointed new Ontario Provincial Police Commissioner, strong opposition to his government's changes to the provincial sex education curriculum, and the fallout from news of the impending GM [plant closure](#) in Oshawa. He closes out 2018 with the approval of 42 per cent of his province.

British Columbia Premier John Horgan's year has largely consisted of unyielding interprovincial political tension with Alberta over the TransMountain pipeline expansion project, and tumult over his minority NDP government's referendum on proportional representation. The latter – part of the grand political bargain made with the BC Green party in order to secure the "[supply and confidence](#)" agreement New Democrats needed to take power in the BC Legislature. 2018 was also the year that saw the [go-ahead](#) for a \$40 billion investment in a liquefied natural gas project in northern British Columbia. Horgan's job performance approval has softened since the 2017 election, but he but he still holds the approval of 43 per cent.

Atlantic Canada

In New Brunswick, for the first time in nearly 100 years (1920), an election resulted in a minority government. Incumbent Brian Gallant's Liberal Party won six per cent more votes, but the Conservative Party won more seats. Gallant's government was defeated in a vote of non-confidence, and Blaine Higgs' Conservatives formed a new minority government in the legislature. Like Horgan, he faces the challenge of governing with a majority predicated on the [co-operation of a third party](#). He ends the year with approval of 40 per cent of people in New Brunswick.

Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Dwight Ball [headed to China](#) in November in search of improved trade relations, with a focus on the province's iron ore exports. At the same time, his government [introduced its carbon pricing plan](#) to meet federal standards. Ball's approval now hovers around the one-third mark (32%).

Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil ends the year as he started it, with the approval of three-in-ten residents (30%). Some of the most high profile criticism of McNeil has come from the province's teachers union. The union solicited [its own survey](#) of Nova Scotia residents, finding that only 17 per cent believe the provincial government has done a good job managing the public school system.

Alberta and Manitoba

A pair of premiers representing parties traditionally on the opposite end of the political spectrum find themselves with some things in common this quarter. Both Alberta Premier Rachel Ntley and Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister withdrew their support of the federal government's carbon pricing plan this year. Pallister, in particular, says the federal government is [too restrictive](#) and not cooperating with Manitoba's own plan to reduce emissions.

Both premiers find their approval levels at 36 per cent.

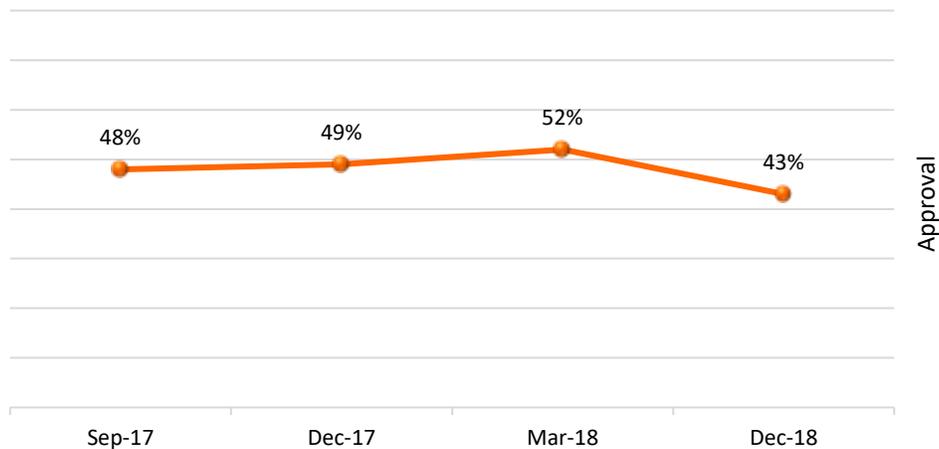
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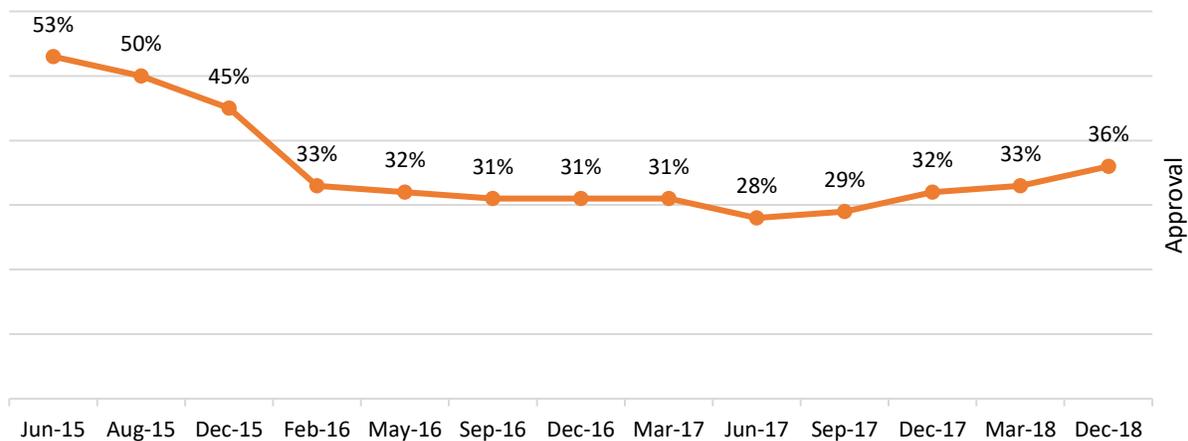
But for Notley the stakes are far higher for her government's survival. With an expected election in Alberta this spring, Notley and the NDP find themselves squeezed on one side by a delayed completion of the pipeline, despite assurances from the federal government, and on the other by the criticism of United Conservative Party leader Jason Kenney, who says the premier has not done enough to defend the interests of Albertans.

With just under two years until the next election in Manitoba, Pallister is under arguably less pressure.

John Horgan (NDP)



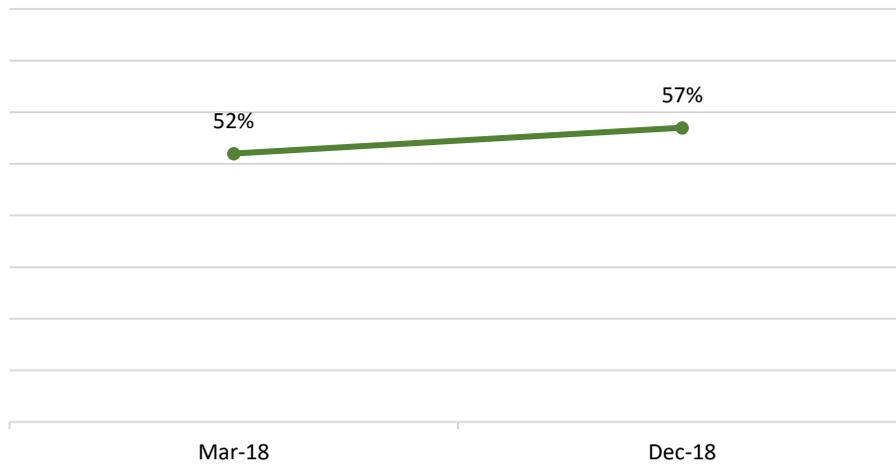
Rachel Notley (NDP)



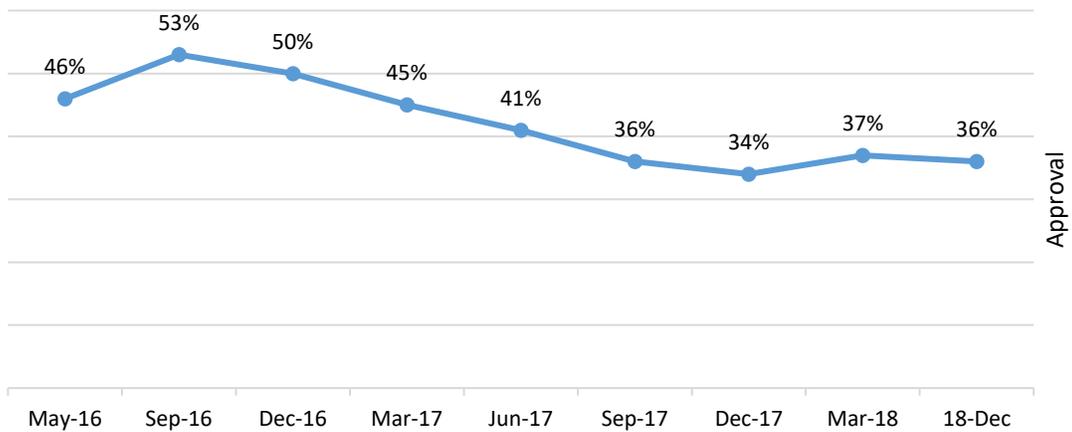
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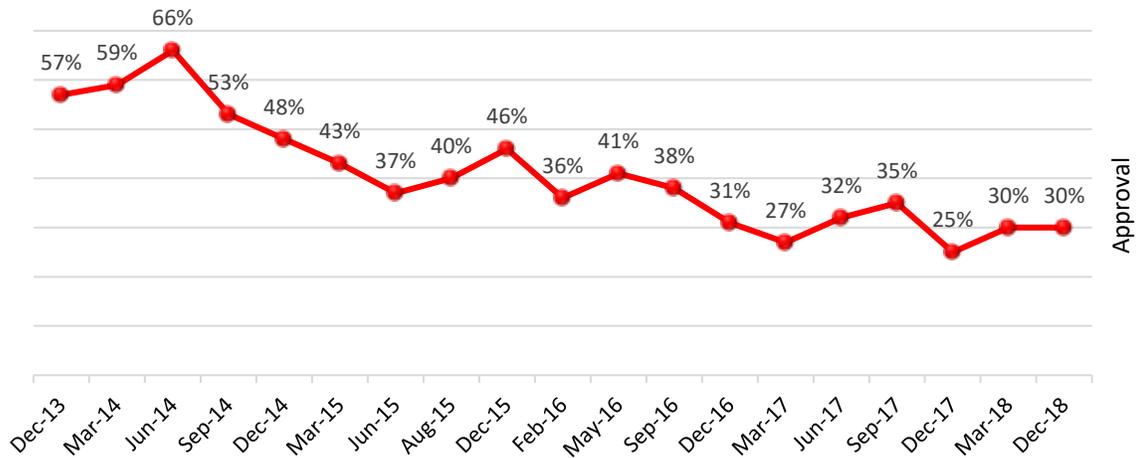
Scott Moe (Saskatchewan Party)



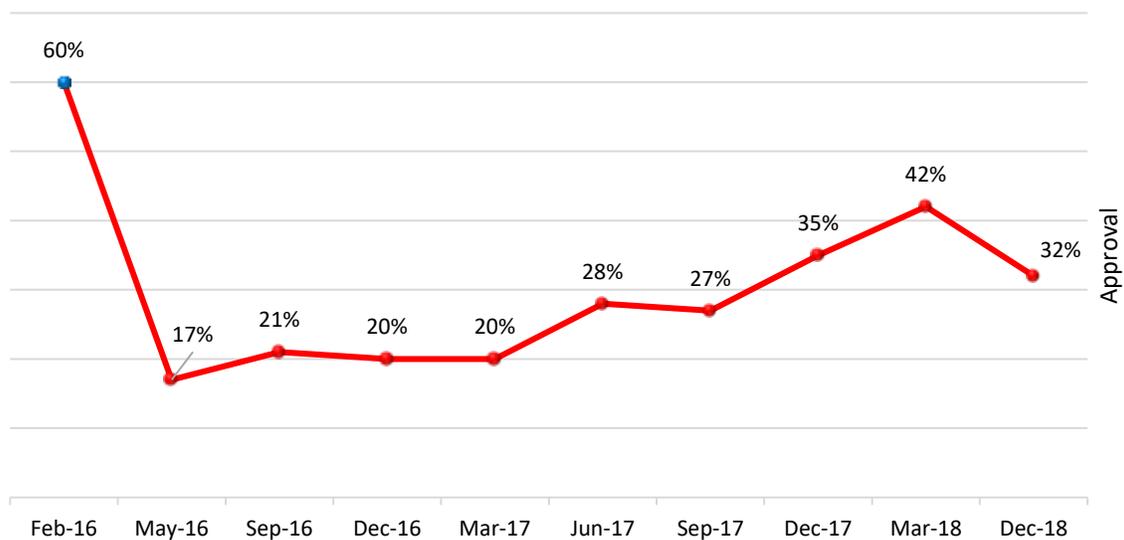
Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister (Progressive Conservative)



Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil (Liberal)



Dwight Ball (Liberal)



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.

Approve or Disapprove of the following:			
	Approve	Disapprove	Not sure/Can't say
Saskatchewan: Scott Moe (Saskatchewan Party)	57%	29%	18%
British Columbia: John Horgan (New Democratic Party)	43%	36%	21%
Manitoba: Brian Pallister (Progressive Conservative)	36%	50%	15%
New Brunswick: Blaine Higgs (Progressive Conservative)	40%	34%	26%
Quebec: Francois Legault (Coalition Avenir)	59%	23%	18%
Nova Scotia: Stephen McNeil (Liberal Party)	30%	56%	14%
Alberta: Rachel Notley (New Democratic Party)	36%	59%	5%
Newfoundland and Labrador: Dwight Ball (Liberal Party)	32%	51%	17%
Ontario: Doug Ford (Progressive Conservative)	42%	49%	9%

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Approval of the following:				
	September 2017	December 2017	March 2018	December 2018
Saskatchewan: Scott Moe (Saskatchewan Party)	-	-	52%	57%
British Columbia: John Horgan (New Democratic Party)	48%	49%	52%	43%
Manitoba: Brian Pallister (Progressive Conservative)	36%	34%	37%	36%
New Brunswick: Blaine Higgs (Progressive Conservative)	-	-	-	40%
Quebec: Francois Legault (Coalition Avenir)	-	-	-	59%
Nova Scotia: Stephen McNeil (Liberal Party)	35%	25%	30%	30%
Alberta: Rachel Notley (New Democratic Party)	58%	32%	33%	36%
Newfoundland and Labrador: Dwight Ball (Liberal Party)	27%	35%	42%	32%
Ontario: Doug Ford (Progressive Conservative)	-	-	-	42%

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