

Alberta Election: UCP holds commanding lead as campaign begins

NDP competitive in Edmonton, but well behind elsewhere in the province

March 22, 2019 – The provincial election campaign in Alberta begins with the New Democratic Party trailing the opposition United Conservative Party by a wide margin, according to new public opinion polling data analyzed by the non-profit Angus Reid Institute and donated by [Angus Reid Global Public Affairs](#).

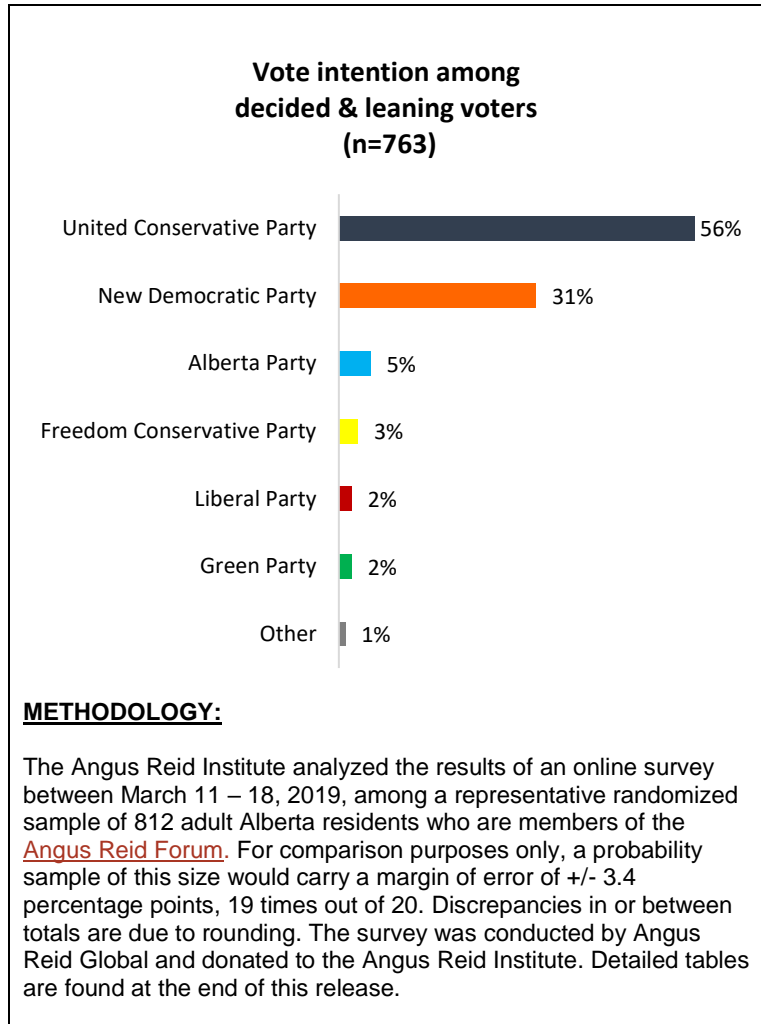
During the period of fielding, respondents were asked how they would vote if the election were held tomorrow. Their answer: the UCP capturing a majority of the decided and leaning vote (56%), with the NDP receiving 31 per cent.

However, the parties find themselves in a statistical tie in Edmonton, where the NDP garners 45 per cent of vote intention and the UCP 44 per cent. The New Democrats also lead among younger Albertans (46% versus 38% for the UCP among 18-34-year-olds), while the United Conservatives lead in every other region and demographic.

Underlying these trends is a deep dissatisfaction with the Notley government's performance over the past four years, particularly on economic issues such as management of the oil and gas industry.

More Key Findings:

- Six-in-ten Albertans (60%) are dissatisfied with the current provincial government overall, including 43 per cent who say they are "very dissatisfied"
- Slight majorities feel the Notley government has done a good job on issues related to health care (54%), and education (52%), while larger majorities say the government has done poorly on the economy (66% say this) and managing natural resources (64%)



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- Notley's government is seen to be doing worst on the issues Albertans rank as most important to them. Half (49%) rank energy, oil and gas, and pipelines as a top issue facing the province, and another four-in-ten (41%) choose "the economy." By contrast, health care is a top issue for fewer than one-in-four Albertans (24%)

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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Part 1: The provincial landscape

Energy, jobs, economy top issues list

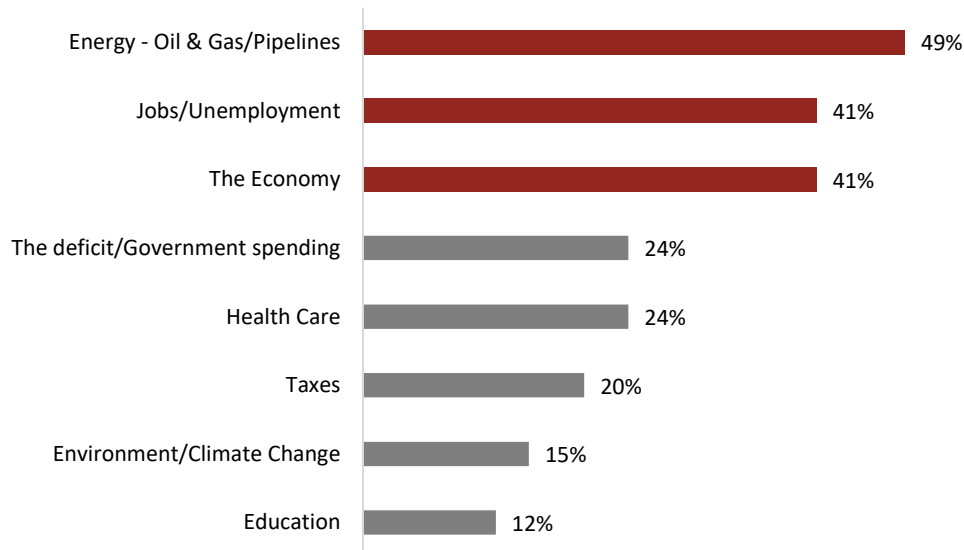
With a provincial election now less than a month away, Albertans express significant concern about economic issues. Indeed, [recent national ARI polling](#) found Alberta and its neighbour Saskatchewan to be the most anxious regions of the country when it comes to pocketbook issues.

Most pressing for Albertans is the energy sector. This concern is, perhaps, unsurprising in a province that collects [billions of dollars in royalties](#) on oil and gas projects annually and where [one-in-17 workers is employed in the resource sector](#):

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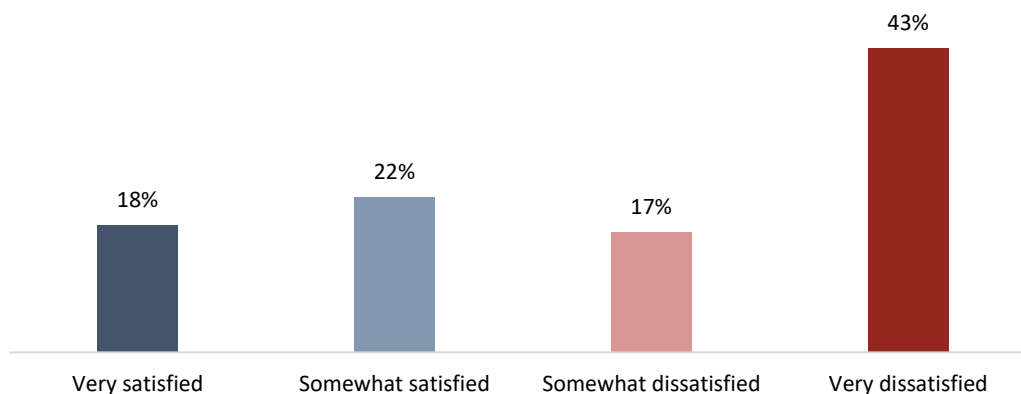
**Please rank the top 3 issues facing Alberta that you care about most
(percentage ranked first, second, or third; issues chosen by more
than 10 per cent shown)
(All Respondents)**



Mixed reviews for Notley government's performance

Overall, Albertans tend to be dissatisfied with the government they elected four years ago. Some six-in-ten (60%) say this, including the significant 43 per cent who are very dissatisfied:

**All things considered, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the
performance of the current government of Alberta?
(All Respondents)**

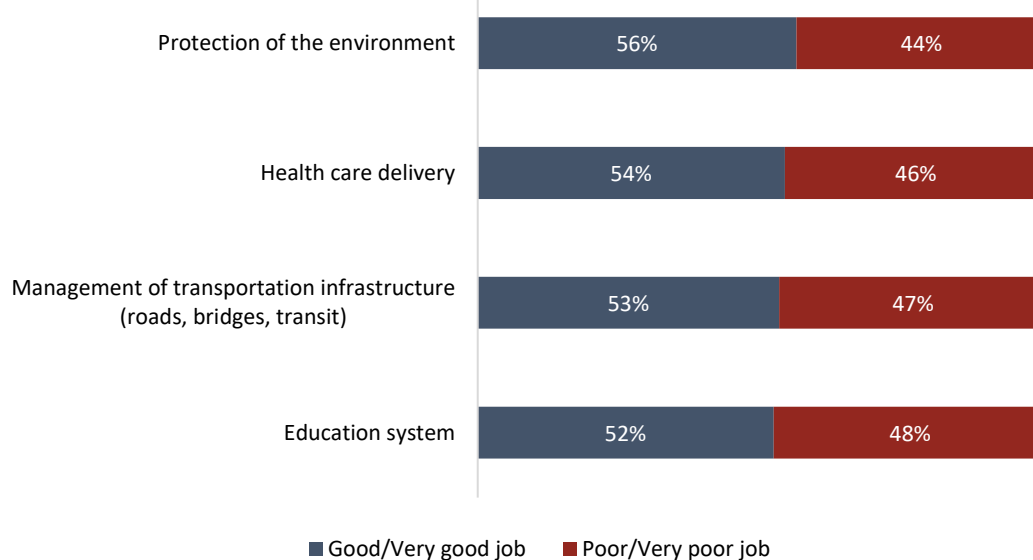


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This dissatisfaction is not evenly distributed across issues, however. More than half say the government has done a good job on protecting the environment (56%), on health care (54%), infrastructure (53%), and education (52%).

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



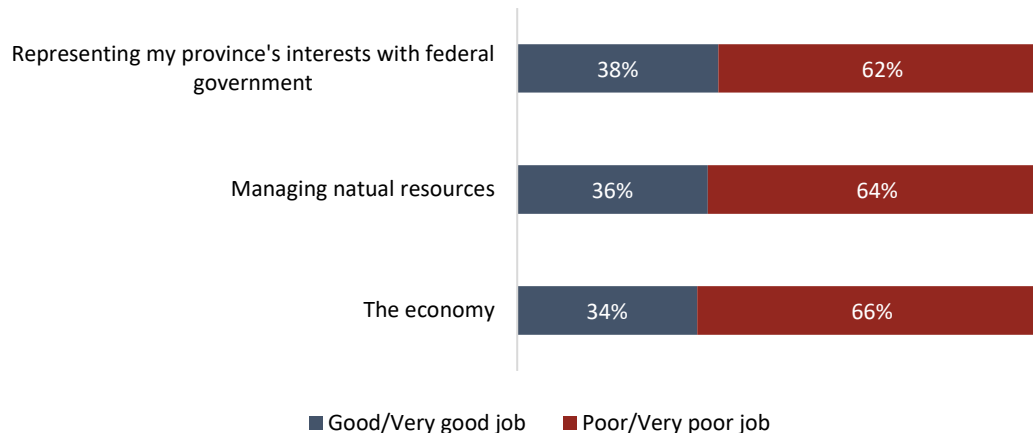
On economic issues – to which voters assign greater importance – the NDP is largely panned. Two-thirds of Albertans (66%) say the Notley government has done a poor job on the economy, and nearly as many say it has done poorly in its management of natural resources.

This latter finding may reflect dissatisfaction with the lack of new oil pipeline capacity being built in the province today, something nearly nine-in-ten Albertans described as a “crisis” when the Angus Reid Institute asked in January.

[Related – Six-in-ten Canadians say lack of pipeline capacity represents a crisis in this country](#)

Albertans also feel Notley’s government has done a poor job representing the province’s interests in negotiations with the federal government (62% say this).

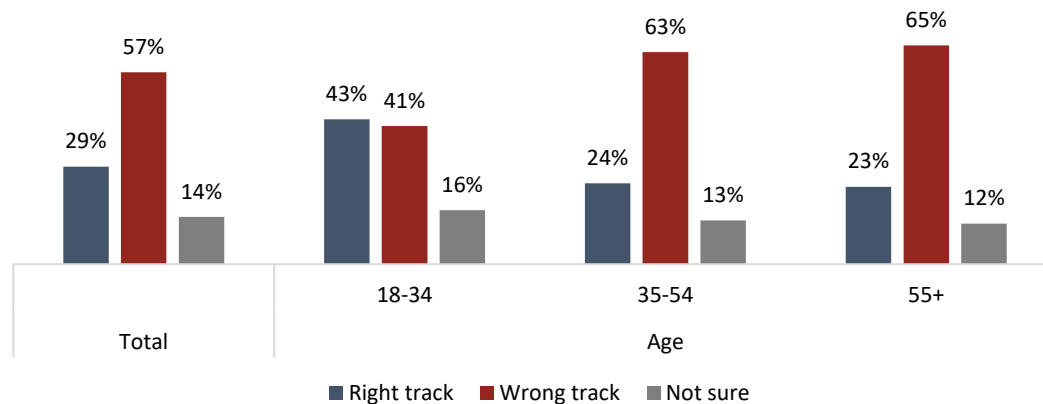
**Do you think the current government of Alberta is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas?
(All Respondents)**



Most say province is on wrong track

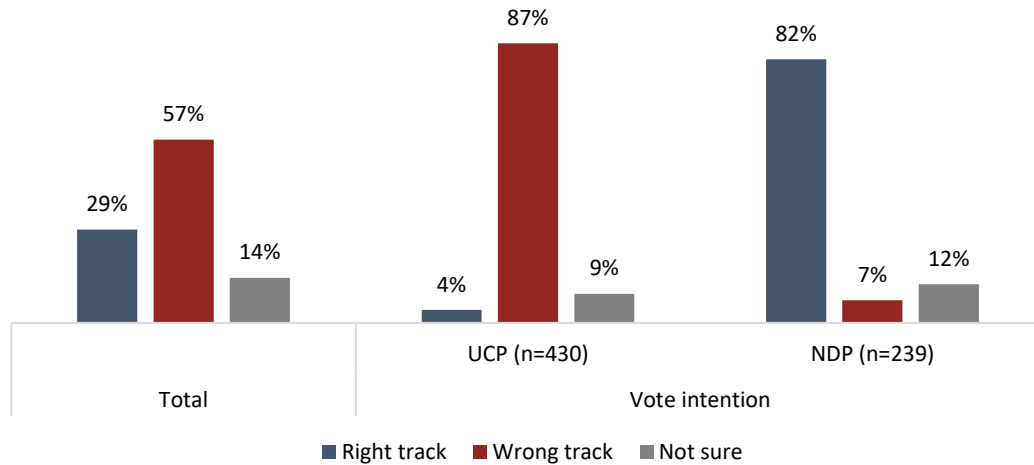
Perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of Albertans feel their province is on the wrong track. Views on this question vary significantly by age, with younger Albertans (those ages 18-34) more evenly divided, while older respondents are nearly three times more likely to say the province is on the wrong track than the right one:

**Overall, do you think Alberta is on the right track, or the wrong track?
(All Respondents)**



In general, those who intend to vote for the NDP – as many Albertans under age 35 do – are inclined to feel the province is on the right track, while those who prefer the UCP feel the province is on the wrong track:

Overall, do you think Alberta is on the right track, or the wrong track?

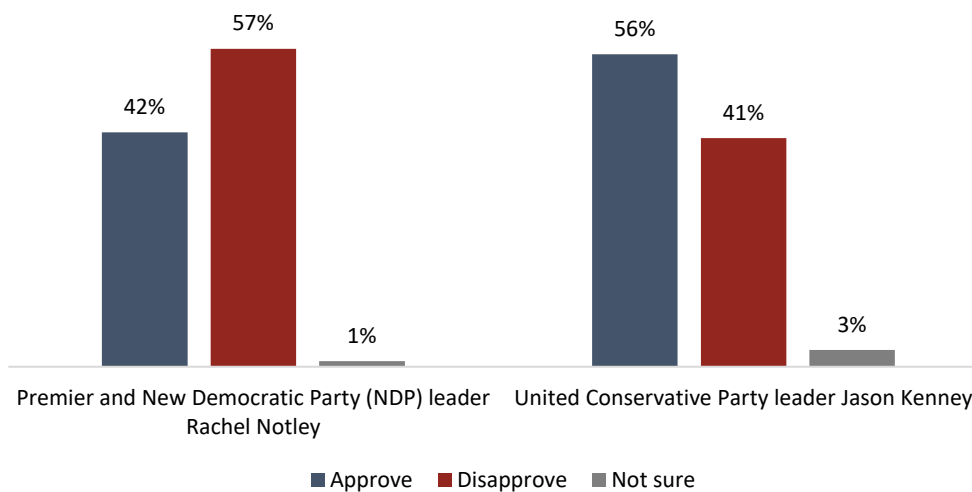


Part 2: Leadership

Kenney leads on issues, approval

The UCP's commanding lead on vote intention translates into higher approval for UCP leader Jason Kenney than for Premier Rachel Notley. That said, Notley's 42 per cent approval rating outpaces the proportion of Albertans who say they intend to vote for her party, while Kenney's approval rating mirrors his party's total support:

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of ...



Demographically, Notley's and Kenney's approval scores are mirror images of each other. Two-thirds of men (65%) disapprove of the premier, and the same number (65%) approve of the opposition leader.

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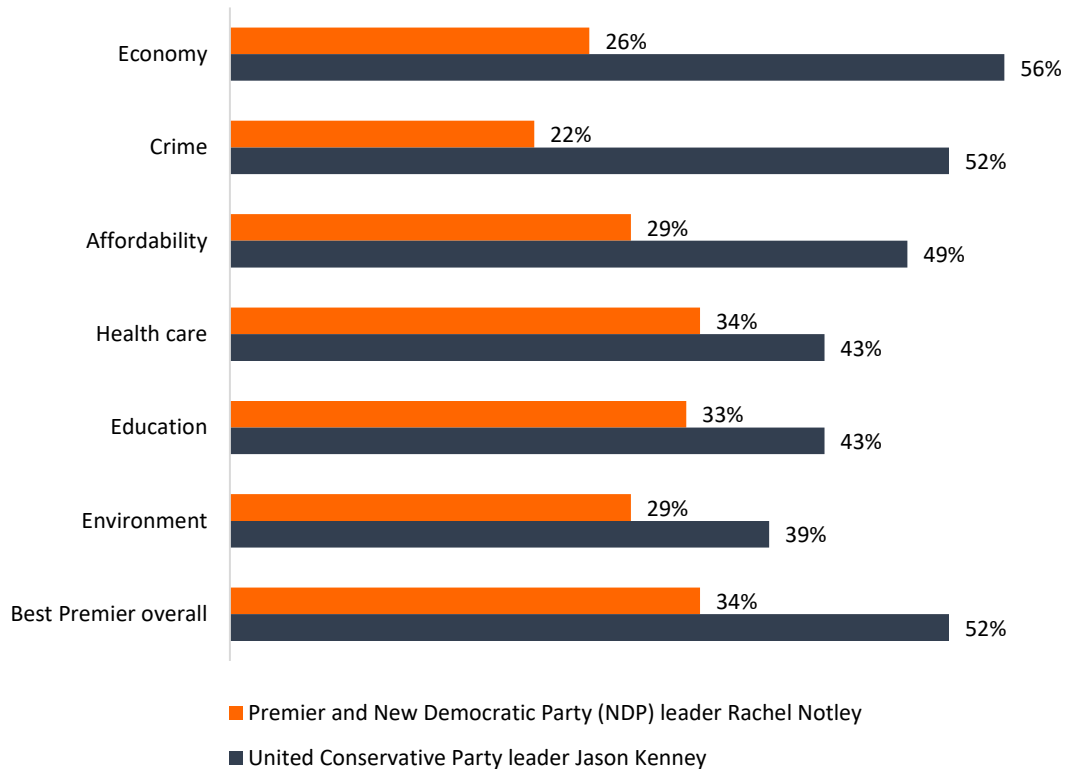
Women, meanwhile, are divided on both leaders, with 50 per cent approving of Notley and 47 per cent approving of Kenney.

Younger respondents mostly approve of Notley (61%) and disapprove of Kenney (57%), while those ages 35 and older reverse the trend:

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of ...						
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (812)	Gender		Age		
		Men (401)	Women (408)	18-34 (259)	35-54 (295)	55+ (259)
Premier and New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Rachel Notley						
Approve	42%	34%	50%	61%	33%	33%
Disapprove	57%	65%	48%	38%	65%	66%
United Conservative Party leader Jason Kenney						
Approve	56%	65%	47%	39%	63%	65%
Disapprove	41%	35%	47%	57%	35%	31%

Kenney's overall lead on approval also extends to other questions about the party leaders. Kenney is seen as best premier of Alberta (52% choose him, compared to 34% for Notley), and best to deal with each of six specific topic areas canvassed in this survey:

Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with ...

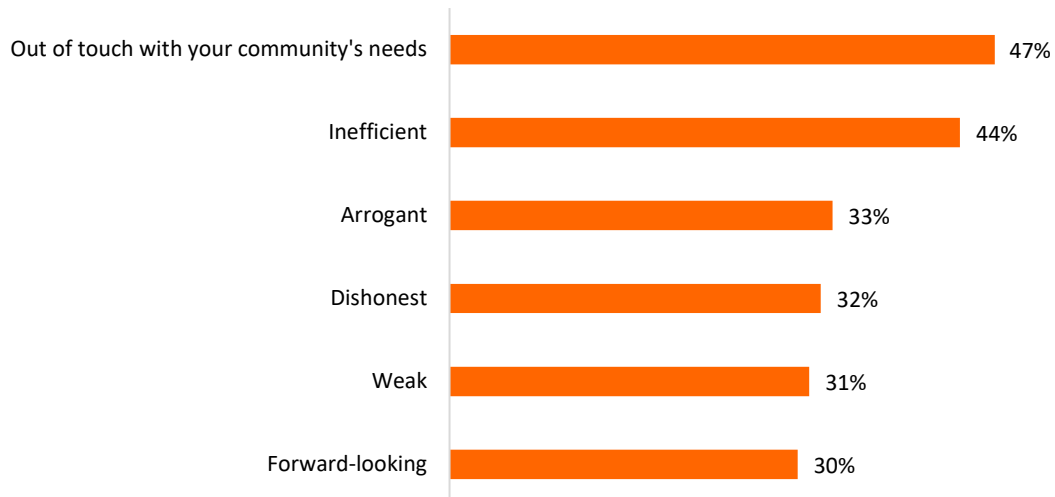


Both Notley and Kenney seen as ‘arrogant’

The leaders of each party have begun their campaigns with diverging messages. Notley has focused in recent days on the [numerous scandals](#) surrounding the UCP, while Kenney has attempted to maintain a focus on economic issues and what he calls the “[job-killing policies](#)” of the government.

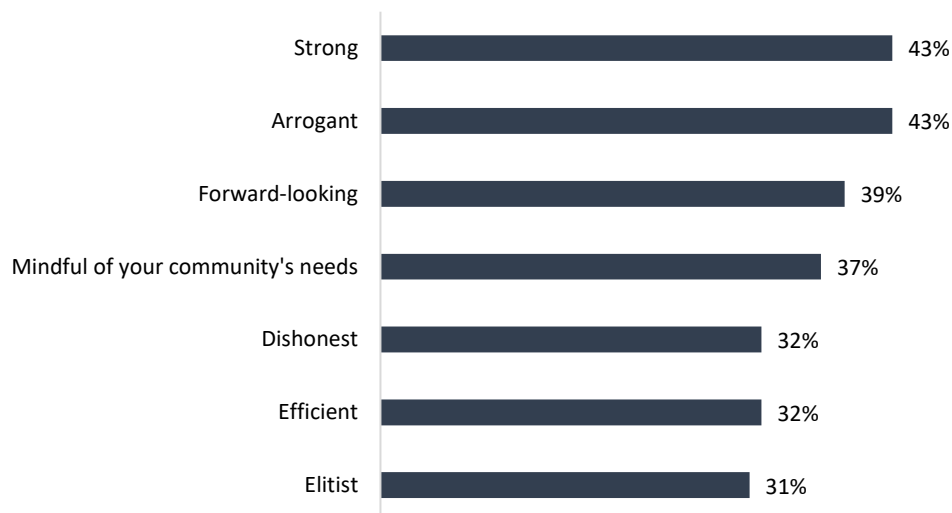
Albertans’ perceptions of each leader will certainly have time to change, particularly when the two partake in televised debates in the coming weeks (dates have yet to be announced). For now, Kenney appears more well-received, though each leader has a number of negative characteristics top of mind among the electorate:

**Please select up to six words you think describe Rachel Notley:
(words chosen by at least 30 per cent of Albertans shown)
(All Respondents)**



Kenney is most commonly described as 'strong' or 'arrogant' by Albertans (43%), with another four-in-ten saying that he is forward-looking (39%).

**Please select up to six words you think describe Jason Kenney
(words chosen by at least 30 per cent of Albertans shown)
(All Respondents)**

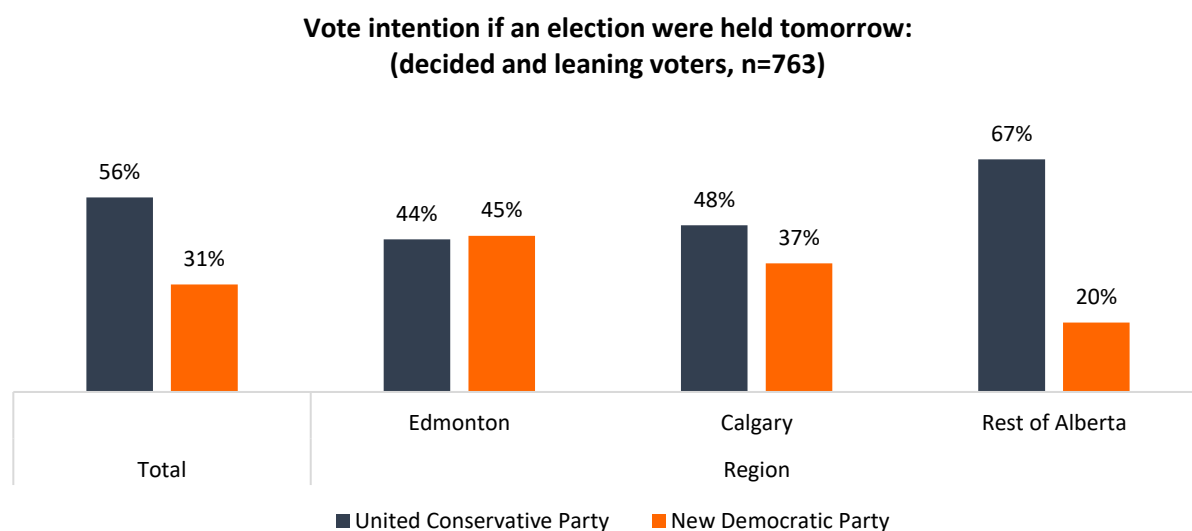


Part 3: Vote Dynamics

Close race in Edmonton, UCP leads elsewhere

Much of the NDP's success in the 2015 election can be attributed to its historic showing in the province's two largest cities: Edmonton and Calgary. The NDP won every riding in Edmonton and outpaced the incumbent Progressive Conservatives in Calgary.

Replicating this success appears to be a significant challenge for Notley and the NDP. The UCP holds an 11-point advantage in Calgary, while Edmonton appears competitive, with the two parties in a statistical tie.



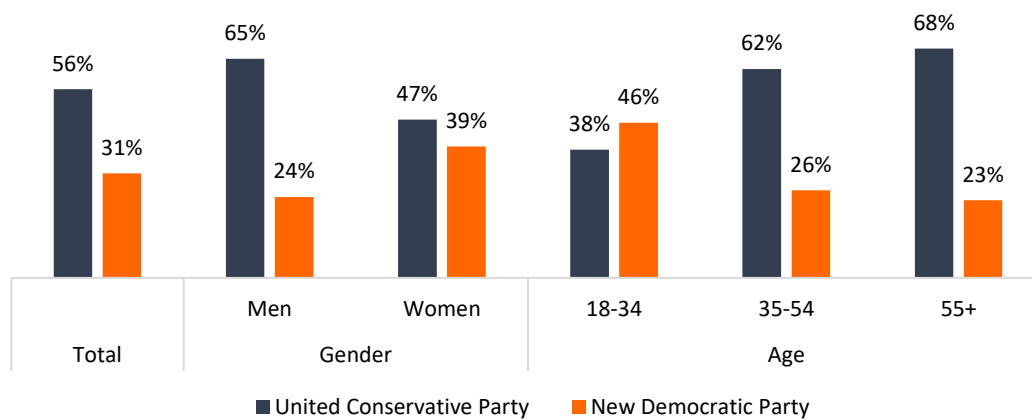
Gender and age inform party preference

Perhaps equally as troubling for Notley and encouraging for Kenney is the demographic breakdown of vote intention. Albertans between the ages of 18 and 34 are the only demographic in which the NDP leads. Polls [conducted prior to the 2015 election](#) saw the NDP leading in all five of the subcategories shown in the graph that follows.

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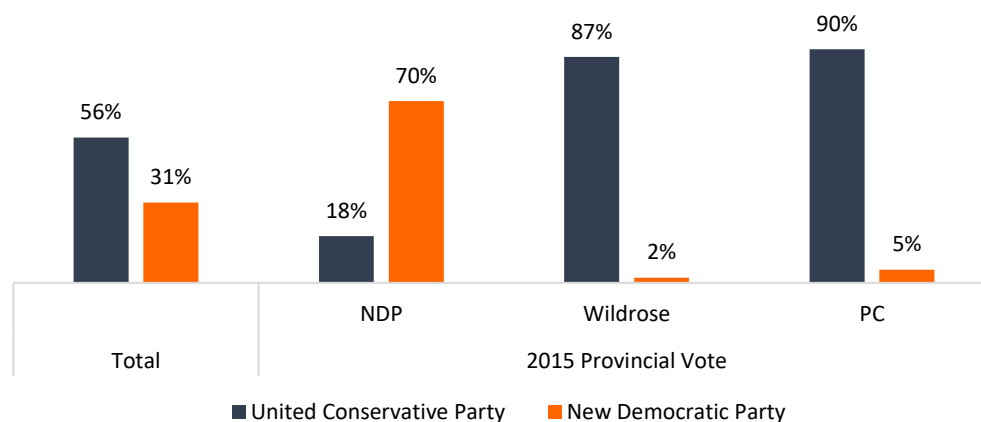
**Vote intention if an election were held tomorrow:
(decided and leaning voters, n=763)**



UCP remaining united, so far

Another aspect of the 2019 election is the merging of voters from Alberta’s now defunct Wildrose and Progressive Conservative parties to the new unified right leaning party. The UCP appears poised to collect nearly all of those who voted for either the Wildrose or PC parties in 2015 – roughly nine-in-ten from each – while the NDP looks to be retaining approximately seven-in-ten voters who supported it in the last election:

**Vote intention if an election were held tomorrow:
(decided and leaning voters, n=763)**



Summary tables follow.

If a provincial election were held tomorrow in Alberta, which of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?

(Decided and leaning voters)

(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (763)	Region		
		Edmonton (189)	Calgary (200)	Rest of AB (375)
Liberal Party	2%	1%	2%	2%
New Democratic Party	31%	45%	37%	20%
Green Party	2%	1%	3%	1%
United Conservative	56%	44%	48%	67%
Alberta Party	5%	5%	5%	5%
Freedom Conservative Party	3%	3%	3%	2%
Alberta Independence Party	1%	1%	1%	2%
Other Party	*%			*%

If a provincial election were held tomorrow in Alberta, which of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?

(Decided and leaning voters)

(weighted sample sizes)	Total (763)	Age		
		18-34 (243)	35-54 (279)	55+ (241)
Liberal Party	2%	3%	1%	1%
New Democratic Party	31%	46%	26%	23%
Green Party	2%	2%	1%	1%
United Conservative	56%	38%	62%	68%
Alberta Party	5%	4%	6%	5%
Freedom Conservative Party	3%	4%	3%	1%
Alberta Independence Party	1%	1%	1%	2%
Other Party	*%	1%		

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If a provincial election were held tomorrow in Alberta, which of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?

(Decided and leaning voters)

(weighted sample sizes)	Total (763)	Gender	
		Male (389)	Female (371)
Liberal Party	2%	1%	3%
New Democratic Party	31%	24%	39%
Green Party	2%	*%	3%
United Conservative	56%	65%	47%
Alberta Party	5%	6%	4%
Freedom Conservative Party	3%	3%	2%
Alberta Independence Party	1%	2%	1%
Other Party	*%	*%	*%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of the Premier and New Democratic Party leader Rachel Notley?

(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (812)	Region		
		Edmonton (201)	Calgary (214)	Rest of AB (390)
Strongly approve	21%	32%	24%	14%
Moderately approve	21%	24%	26%	15%
Moderately disapprove	10%	9%	13%	9%
Strongly disapprove	47%	33%	35%	61%
Not sure/Never heard of	1%	1%	2%	1%

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Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of Premier and New Democratic Party leader Rachel Notley?				
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (812)	Age		
		18-34 (259)	35-54 (295)	55+ (259)
Strongly approve	21%	31%	15%	19%
Moderately approve	21%	30%	18%	14%
Moderately disapprove	10%	8%	11%	12%
Strongly disapprove	47%	30%	55%	54%
Not sure/Never heard of	1%	1%	2%	1%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of Premier and New Democratic Party leader Rachel Notley?			
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (812)	Gender	
		Male (401)	Female (408)
Strongly approve	21%	18%	25%
Moderately approve	21%	16%	25%
Moderately disapprove	10%	9%	11%
Strongly disapprove	47%	56%	37%
Not sure/Never heard of	1%	1%	2%

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Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of United Conservative Party Leader Jason Kenney				
	Total (812)	Region		
		Edmonton (201)	Calgary (214)	Rest of AB (390)
Strongly approve	26%	20%	21%	32%
Moderately approve	30%	24%	29%	33%
Moderately disapprove	9%	9%	10%	8%
Strongly disapprove	32%	44%	36%	24%
Not sure/Never heard of	3%	4%	4%	3%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of United Conservative Party leader Jason Kenney?				
	Total (812)	Age		
		18-34 (259)	35-54 (295)	55+ (259)
Strongly approve	26%	14%	30%	34%
Moderately approve	30%	25%	33%	32%
Moderately disapprove	9%	11%	8%	8%
Strongly disapprove	32%	46%	27%	24%
Not sure/Never heard of	3%	4%	3%	3%

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Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of United Conservative Party leader Jason Kenney?			
	Total (812)	Gender	
		Male (401)	Female (408)
Strongly approve	26%	32%	20%
Moderately approve	30%	32%	27%
Moderately disapprove	9%	11%	7%
Strongly disapprove	32%	24%	40%
Not sure/Never heard of	3%	*%	6%

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Please rank the top three issues facing Alberta that you care about the most				
	Total (812)	Region		
		Edmonton (201)	Calgary (214)	Rest of AB (390)
Energy- Oil and gas / Pipelines	49%	44%	39%	59%
Jobs / Unemployment	41%	35%	40%	45%
The economy	41%	42%	41%	39%
The deficit / Government spending	24%	20%	24%	28%
Health care	24%	30%	25%	20%
Taxes	20%	17%	18%	23%
Environment / Climate change	15%	21%	18%	11%
Education	12%	15%	16%	9%
Leadership	9%	9%	7%	10%
Ethics / Accountability	9%	8%	8%	10%
Natural resources / Agriculture	8%	6%	6%	10%
Crime / Public safety	7%	6%	6%	9%
Senior care	7%	9%	8%	6%
Poverty	6%	9%	8%	4%
Drug use / Addictions	5%	3%	7%	5%
Energy / Electricity	4%	4%	4%	4%
Homelessness	4%	7%	6%	1%
First Nations issues / Aboriginal affairs	3%	3%	5%	2%
Housing	3%	4%	5%	2%
Child care / Day care	3%	2%	4%	2%
Municipal funding, services and powers	2%	4%	3%	1%
Highways	1%	1%	1%	2%
Other (specify)	1%	*%	1%	1%

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All things considered, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the performance of the current government of Alberta?				
	Total (812)	Region		
		Edmonton (201)	Calgary (214)	Rest of AB (390)
Very satisfied	18%	26%	22%	10%
Somewhat satisfied	22%	28%	27%	16%
Somewhat dissatisfied	17%	14%	17%	17%
Very dissatisfied	43%	31%	33%	56%

Do you think the current government of Alberta is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas? (Very good/good)				
	Total (812)	Region		
		Edmonton (201)	Calgary (214)	Rest of AB (390)
Health care delivery	54%	67%	61%	44%
The economy	34%	45%	43%	23%
Managing natural resources	36%	47%	42%	25%
Protection of the environment	56%	64%	63%	47%
Management of transportation infrastructure	53%	60%	64%	42%
Education system	52%	61%	59%	43%
Representing my province's interests with the federal government	38%	49%	49%	25%

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Overall, do you think Alberta is on the right track, or the wrong track?				
	Total (812)	Age		
		18-34 (259)	35-54 (295)	55+ (259)
Right track	29%	43%	24%	23%
Wrong track	57%	41%	63%	65%
Not sure	14%	16%	13%	12%

Overall, do you think Alberta is on the right track, or the wrong track?			
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (812)	Vote intention (decided and leaning voters)	
		United Conservative (430)	NDP (239)
Right track	4%	82%	36%
Wrong track	87%	7%	38%
Not sure	9%	12%	26%

Which of these leaders would make the best premier of Alberta?				
	Total (812)	Region		
		Edmonton (201)	Calgary (214)	Rest of AB (390)
Premier and NDP leader Rachel Notley	34%	46%	42%	24%
UPC leader Jason Kenney	52%	39%	45%	64%
Liberal Party leader David Khan	2%	2%	1%	2%
Green Party leader Cheryle Chagnon-Greyeyes	1%	1%	2%	1%
None of these	10%	11%	10%	10%

Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with...						
	Leader					
	Premier and NDP leader Rachel Notley	United Conservative Party leader Jason Kenney	Liberal Party leader David Khan	Green Party leader Cheryle Chagnon- Greyeyes	None of them	Not sure
Economy	26%	56%	2%	1%	5%	10%
Healthcare	34%	43%	2%	1%	7%	13%
Education	33%	43%	2%	1%	7%	14%
Environment	29%	39%	2%	11%	8%	11%
Crime	22%	52%	2%	1%	6%	17%
Affordability	29%	49%	2%	1%	6%	13%

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Please select up to six words you think describe Premier and NDP leader Rachel Notley

	Total (812)	Region		
		Edmonton (201)	Calgary (214)	Rest of AB (390)
Out of touch with your community's needs	47%	36%	38%	60%
Ineffective	44%	32%	37%	54%
Arrogant	33%	27%	28%	40%
Dishonest	32%	26%	24%	40%
Weak	31%	26%	24%	38%
Forward-looking	30%	36%	36%	23%
Secretive	27%	21%	22%	34%
Strong	27%	36%	30%	19%
Compassionate	26%	34%	30%	19%
Honest	23%	34%	29%	14%
Down to earth	22%	27%	26%	17%
Elitist	20%	16%	17%	25%
Mindful of your community's needs	20%	28%	22%	14%
Uncaring	18%	14%	16%	22%
Open	18%	22%	25%	12%
Efficient	16%	19%	19%	13%
Dull	14%	14%	14%	14%
Charismatic	13%	17%	14%	10%
Modest	12%	14%	17%	8%
Backward-looking	11%	11%	9%	12%

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Please select up to six words you think describe UPC leader Jason Kenney				
	Total (812)	Region		
		Edmonton (201)	Calgary (214)	Rest of AB (390)
Strong	43%	36%	37%	51%
Arrogant	43%	53%	45%	36%
Forward-looking	39%	31%	32%	47%
Mindful of your community's needs	37%	34%	28%	44%
Dishonest	32%	40%	37%	26%
Efficient	32%	28%	28%	36%
Elitist	31%	42%	35%	22%
Secretive	27%	32%	31%	22%
Backward-looking	27%	35%	31%	20%
Out of touch with your community's needs	25%	36%	23%	20%
Uncaring	24%	29%	34%	15%
Down to earth	22%	15%	20%	28%
Open	19%	15%	19%	21%
Honest	19%	17%	17%	20%
Charismatic	16%	14%	12%	19%
Compassionate	10%	8%	9%	13%
Dull	9%	11%	12%	7%
Inefficient	9%	8%	10%	8%
Modest	8%	7%	7%	10%
Weak	6%	7%	7%	5%

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