

Provincial spotlight: Ontario, Alberta governments heavily criticized on nearly every aspect of provincial management

In Quebec, surging Conservative Party pressures CAQ government, opposition ahead of October election

March 31, 2022 – As if Canadians needed any more political drama in 2022, the spotlight is intensifying on the provincial scene in many regions of the country. Canada's two most populous provinces head to the polls, this year, while in the west, a beleaguered premier fights for his political survival.

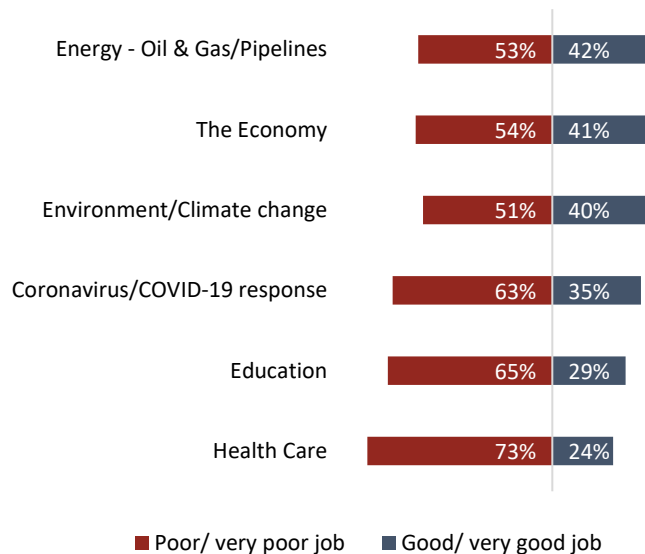
The latest data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Alberta Premier Jason Kenney in a precarious position ahead of an April 9 leadership review. His personal appeal remains among the lowest of provincial leaders at 30 per cent, with 46 per cent of his [past voters](#) saying they disapprove of his performance.

Perhaps more troubling for Kenney is his government's subpar management of myriad issues according to his constituents. Indeed, a majority of Albertans say the UCP has done poorly in handling 13 different areas of importance to the province. This, including the highest level of criticism over COVID-19 handling in the country, and three-quarters (73%) critical of the government's health care management more broadly.

Facing his own test in Ontario, where a provincial election is set to be held in on June 2, metrics are inching positively upward for Doug Ford and the Progressive Conservatives. Ford's approval improved greatly this quarter – up 13 points – and his party (37% vote intention) now holds a relatively comfortable lead over both the Ontario NDP (29%) and Ontario Liberals (25%).

Some have suggested that the Ontario Liberals and New Democrats may follow suit with their federal counterparts and [co-operate](#) if the election returns a minority PC government. With the campaign yet to officially begin, questions are now focused on the government and its record. Despite the current electoral advantage held by the PCPO, Ontario residents are much more likely to say that the government has done a poor job than a good one in its handling of health care, housing affordability, education, the economy, and other core voter issues. Overall, Ford's government fares worse than Kenney's with the

Do you think the current government of Alberta is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas? (AB, n=584)



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from March 10-15, 2022 among a representative randomized sample of 5,105 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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lowest score – tied with Manitoba – on the Angus Reid Institute’s Government Performance Index, which averages performance across all issues.

In Quebec, which will not hold an election until the fall, the surging Conservative Party is likely causing both the governing Coalition Avenir Quebec and the Quebec Liberal Party moment for pause. Support for the Quebec Conservatives has doubled since January, with one-in-five Quebec residents now saying they would support the party. This includes one-quarter of past CAQ voters (26%). That said, the incumbent party still holds a 14-point advantage (33% vote intention) over both the Liberals (19%) and Conservatives (19%).

More Key Findings:

- In British Columbia, new BC Liberal Party leader Kevin Falcon is unknown to 35 per cent of residents and viewed unfavourably by 44 per cent. The BC NDP holds a considerable advantage in vote intention currently (44 per cent to 29 per cent) over the opposition Liberals.
- Rachel Notley is viewed favourably by 40 per cent of Alberta residents, as she and her party await the results of the UCP leadership review in early April. The NDP (40%) and UCP (38%) are currently tied in vote intent in that province.
- In Saskatchewan, the governing Saskatchewan Party has improved its vote intention advantage from nine points in January to 18 points. The provincial government in Saskatchewan also scores highest on ARI’s Government Performance Index, which looks at responses to handling of 13 key issues in each province.

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 One: Alberta – Kenney’s reckoning?

The long-awaited April 9 leadership review of Premier Jason Kenney by the United Conservative Party is near. But what was to be an action-packed weekend in Red Deer lost some of its drama when it was [announced last week that it would be mail-in ballots](#) instead of in-person voting to decide Kenney’s fate as leader of the party.

The UCP board said the change was made because the number of people who had registered to vote – more than 15,000 – was far more than expected. Now the vote is open to any member of the party and not just those who are attending the convention. The results won’t be revealed until the ballots have been returned and counted, [likely mid-May at the earliest](#).

The expectation is the broader UCP voter base will [benefit Kenney’s bid to stay on as leader](#). However, it seems unlikely to quell party turmoil. Recently elected UCP MLA Brian Jean, the former leader of the Wildrose Party who is looking to oust Kenney, accused the [premier’s supporters of cheating and breaking the law](#). The switch to mail-in voting also goes against the wishes of [33 riding association presidents](#). And as many as [20 per cent of MLAs](#) are apparently threatening to leave the party if Kenney stays on.

Kenney himself apparently had his own doubts about staying on as premier. [According to audio leaked last week](#), he said he considered walking away from the job before Christmas but decided against it because he has to keep [“lunatics” from “trying to take over the asylum.”](#) He instead decided to fight against the “lunatics” – those with extremist views – for control of the UCP party to keep it from splintering.

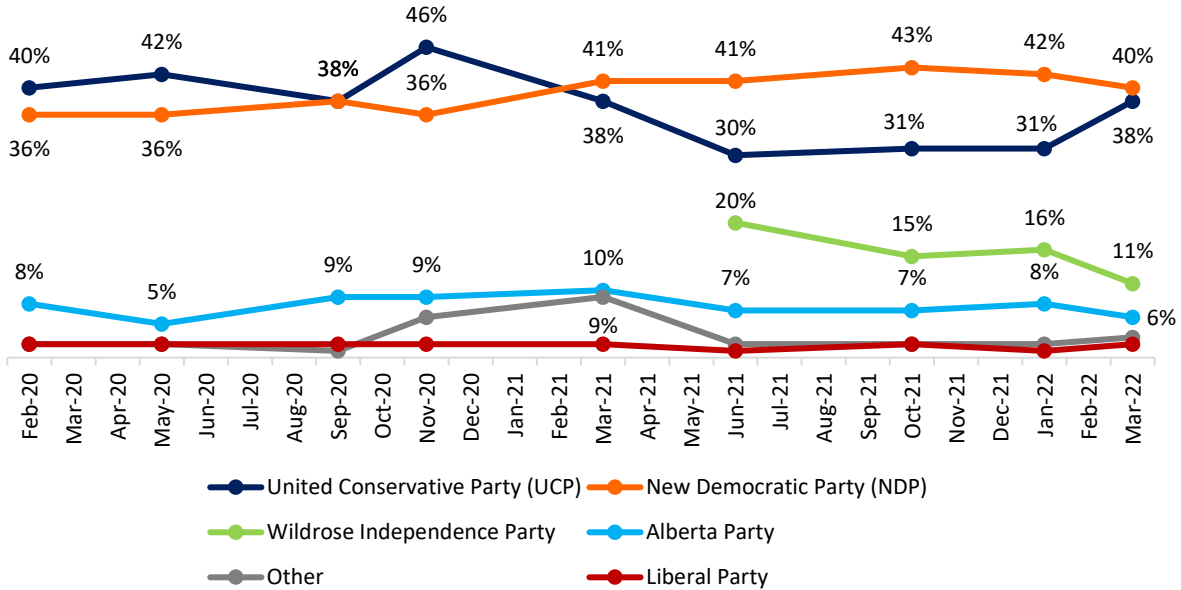
Vote intent – NDP/UCP in statistical tie

In data collected as the drama was unfolding, the UCP’s electoral fortunes appear to be improving. After trailing for three consecutive quarters, the UCP finds itself in a statistical tie with their NDP rivals led by former premier Rachel Notley. Two-in-five (38%) Albertans say they would vote UCP in an upcoming election, as many who would say they would vote for the NDP (40%). The rise for the UCP comes as the electoral outlook of the Wildrose Independence Party falls. One-in-ten (11%) say they would vote Wildrose, half the number who said they would as recently as June:

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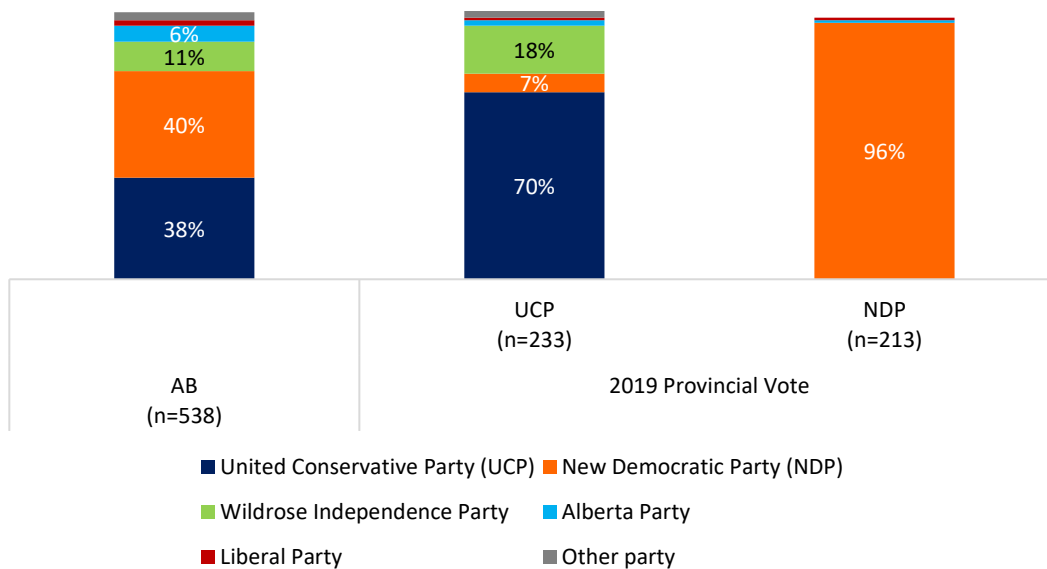
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**Vote Intent - Alberta
(Decided voters)**



The potential effect of the Wildrose on support for the UCP is seen on vote retention. Though seven-in-ten (70%) of those who voted for the UCP in 2019 say they will vote for them again in an upcoming election, one-in-five (18%) say they have instead moved to the Wildrose. For the NDP, they've retained nearly all of their support from the past election, and have pulled few voters from the UCP side (7%):

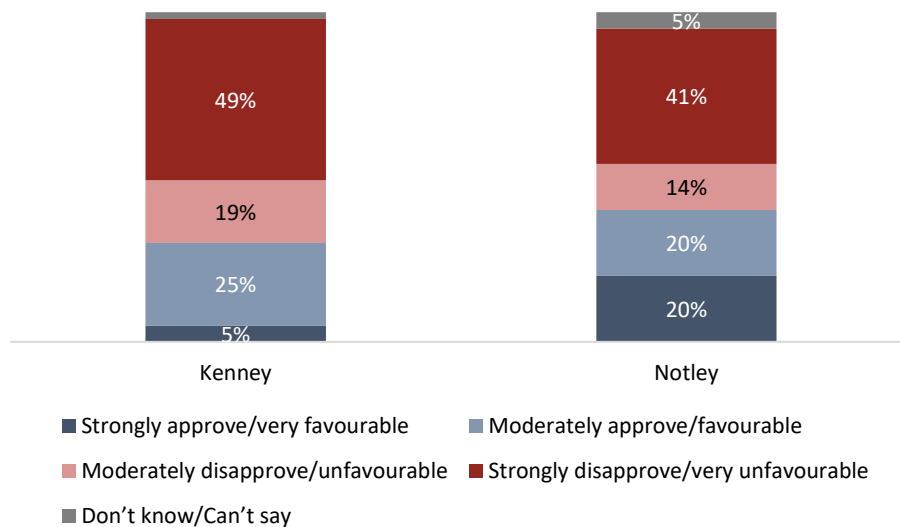
**Vote Intent - Alberta
(Decided voters)**



Leadership

While Kenney’s approval is no longer the lowest among premiers in the country, a majority of Albertans disapprove of him. Notley fares only slightly better. Two-in-five (40%) of Albertans have favourable views of Notley, including one-in-five (20%) with very favourable impressions of the former premier. Still, more than half (55%) instead hold unfavourable views.

Kenney approval vs. Notley favourability
(AB, n=584)



Issues

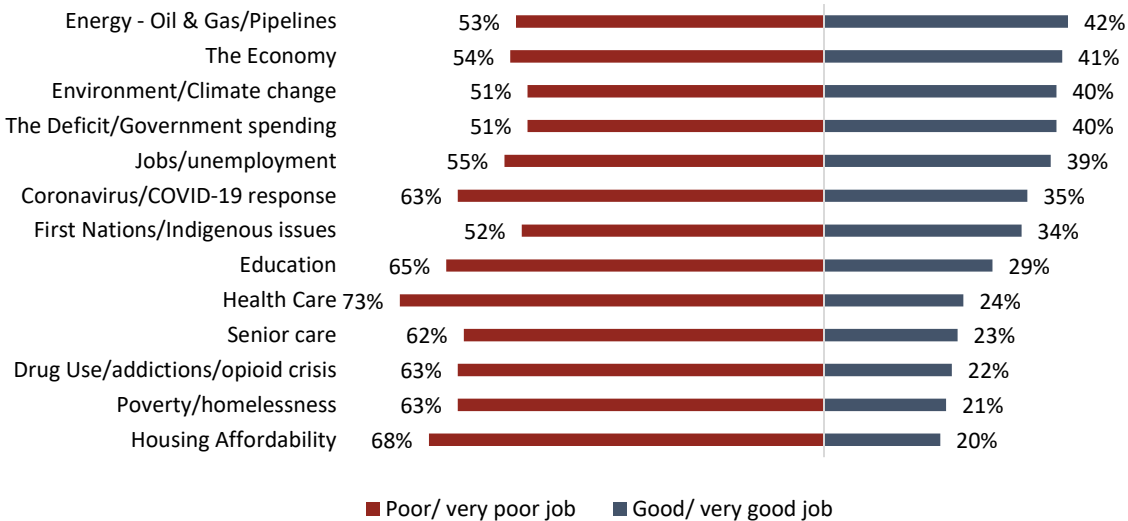
Much like its leader, the UCP government’s performance as a whole is not viewed very favourably. Albertans who say the government is doing a bad job outweigh those who say the opposite on every key issue.

On health care, Albertans are particularly negative. Three-quarters believe the Alberta government is performing poorly in that sector, three times as many who say instead it has done well. This comes after two years of pandemic, multiple waves of COVID-19 patients overwhelming hospitals, and an ongoing provincewide ambulance shortage that has been labelled a crisis. The latter was addressed in the province’s most recent budget, though the EMS union noted the funding only provided ambulances and not staff to work them.

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**Do you think the current government of Alberta is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas?
(AB, n=584)**



Part Two: Ontario – Ford recovers

Vote intent – PCPO lead; NDP, Liberals neck-and-neck

As noted in [earlier data released by ARI](#), Premier Doug Ford has reversed a trend of declining approval dating back to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. His party, too, is seeing a reversal of a trend of declining support, putting some separation between him and the two other parties contending to run the province in this summer’s election. Approaching two-in-five (37%) of Ontarians say they would vote for Ford and the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario. Behind the PCPO in vote intent are the NDP (29%) and Liberals (25%).

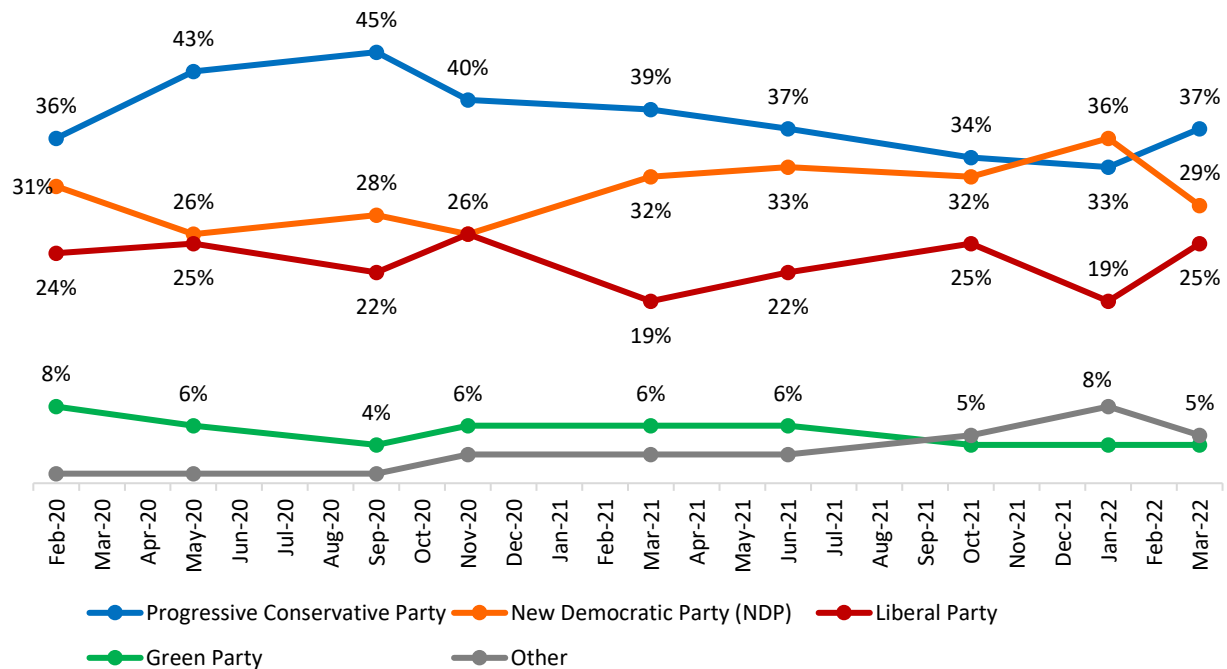
Last election, the PCPO won 76 seats and a majority with 40 per cent of the popular vote. Another majority may be necessary to keep the PCPO in power. After the federal NDP reached a [“confidence-and-supply” deal](#) to prop up the federal Liberal minority government, the Ontario NDP and Liberals have said [they would not support](#) a Ford minority government. As far as an alternative, Liberal leader Stephen Del Duca has said he would keep an [“open mind”](#) about forming a coalition; NDP leader Andrea Horwath would not say if that was a possibility.

There is much uncertainty for Ford – [as many as 19 MPPs](#) will not be running for the PCPO again, including members of cabinet such as health minister Christine Elliott and former long-term care minister Rod Phillips.

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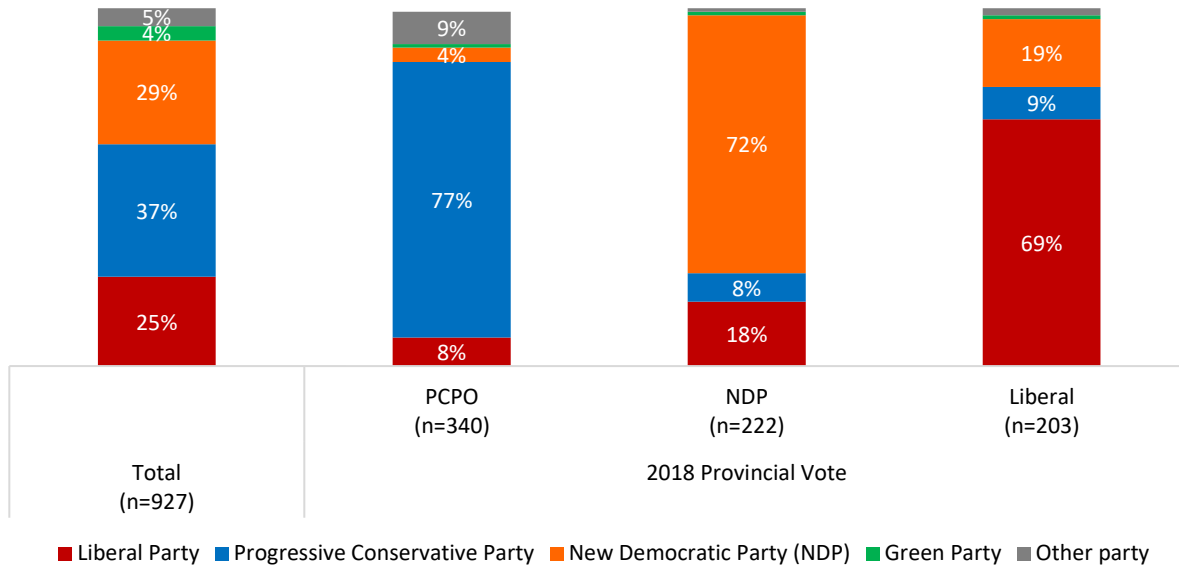
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**Vote Intent - Ontario
(Decided voters)**



The PCPO hold the edge in vote retention compared to rival parties. Three-quarters (77%) who voted PCPO in 2018 say they will again, slightly more than the 72 per cent who say they will repeat their vote for the NDP. Seven-in-ten (69%) of Liberals say they will vote for that party consecutively. One-in-five of past NDP say they'll switch to the Liberals and vice versa:

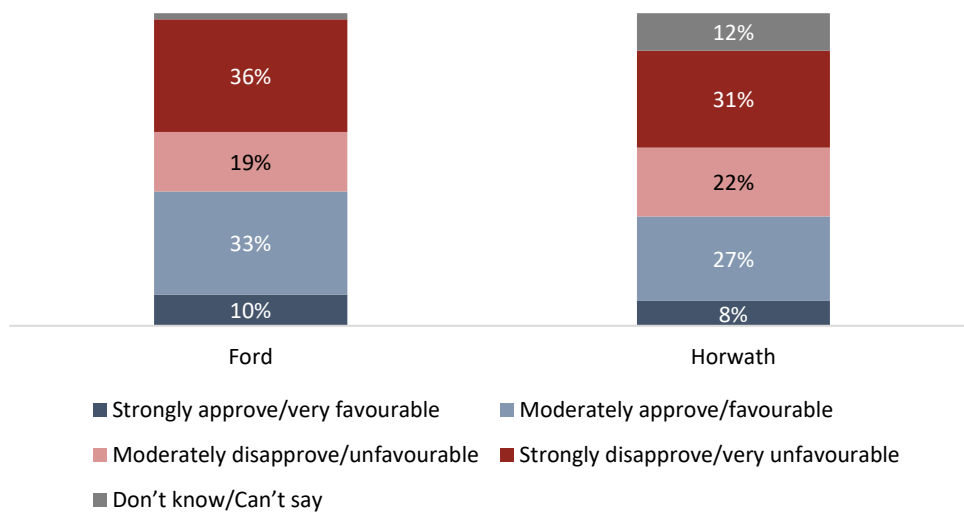
**Vote Intent - Ontario
(Decided voters)**



Leadership

ARI asked respondents to assess their premier and the leader of the official opposition in each province. Positive appraisals of Ford outweigh Horwath's favourability (43% vs. 35%):

**Ford approval vs. Horwath favourability
(Ontario, n=1,063)**



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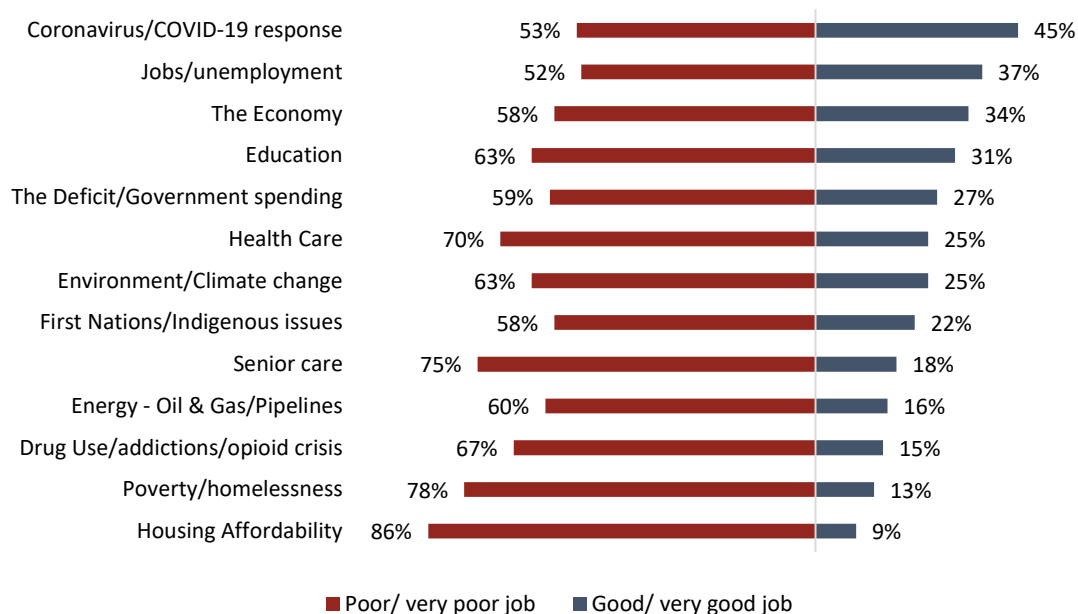
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Issues

The Ontario government [announced this week](#) that it had signed an agreement with the Liberal government to lower the average cost of childcare to \$10 a day by 2025. This may earn the government some much needed goodwill among constituents. Indeed, Ford and the PCPO government approach the end of their four-year term with more likely to say they're unhappy than not with this government's performance.

At least half of Ontarians say the government has done a poor job on every key file. Nearly all of Ontarians (86%) give Ford's government a thumbs-down on housing affordability. Toronto surpassed Vancouver as [the most expensive housing market](#) in the country in February, a situation that has increasingly had [a bleed over effect](#) into the rest of the province.

**Do you think the current government of Ontario is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas?
(ON, n=1,063)**



Part Three: Quebec – Provincial Conservatives on the scene

Vote intent – CAQ loses ground, still leads

As has been the case throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Coalition Avenir Québec led by Premier François Legault lead in vote intention. However, support for CAQ has weakened over the last two years, falling to 33 per cent, a new pandemic-era low as the party faces an election in October. Still, that represents a 14-point lead over the next closest of a pack of rivals, the Quebec Conservative Party.

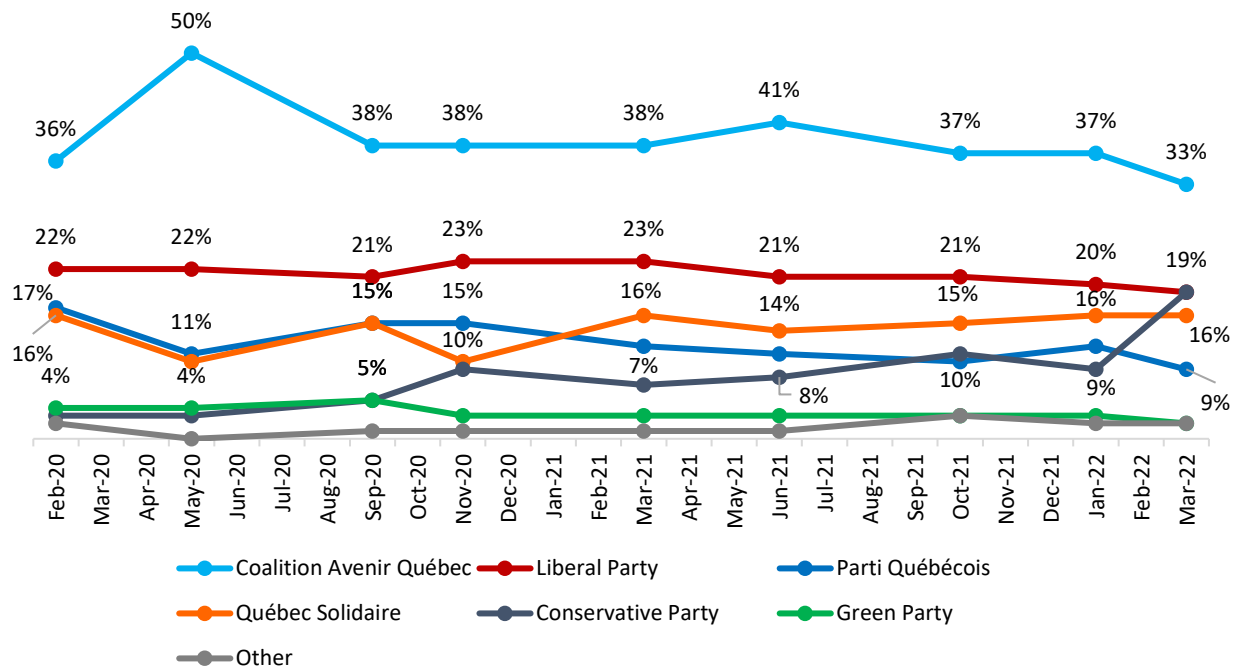
The Quebec Conservatives have seen a significant uptick in support – doubling from January – to climb to the top of the pile next to the Liberals. The party has been led since April 2021 by former radio host

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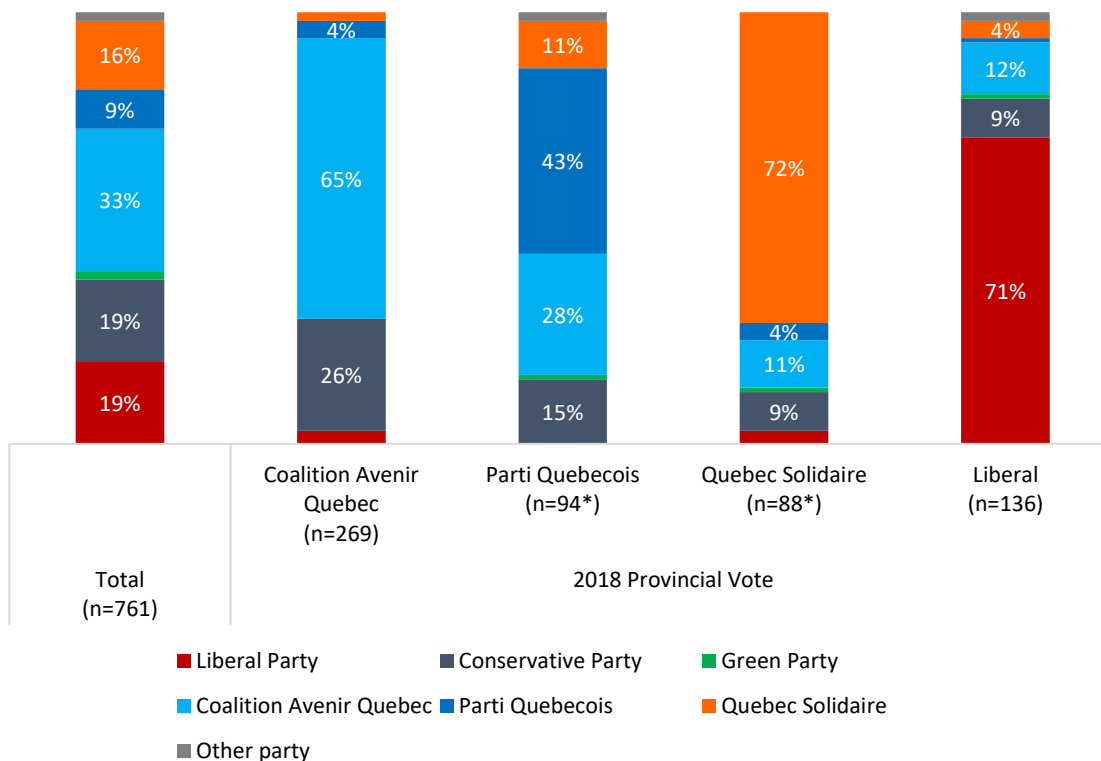
Éric Duhaime, who now appears regularly on Quebec conservative talk radio as an outspoken voice against COVID-19 restrictions. In the last two elections, the party that won the most seats in Quebec City also won the endorsement of Radio X, a conservative talk radio station and Duhaime's former employer. Flipping Quebec City seats helped both parties – the Liberals led by Philippe Couillard in 2014 and CAQ led by Legault in 2018 – win majority governments.

**Vote Intent - Quebec
(Decided voters)**



While two-thirds of those who voted for CAQ in 2018 say they will again in an upcoming election, the Conservatives earn the largest share (26%) of those who say they will place their vote elsewhere. The Conservatives have also siphoned 15 per cent of support from Parti Québécois, who won 10 seats and 17 per cent of the vote in 2018. Notably, the Liberals and Quebec Solidaire have each lost one-in-ten voters to the Conservatives, and slightly more than that to CAQ:

**Vote Intent - Quebec
(Decided voters)**



Leadership

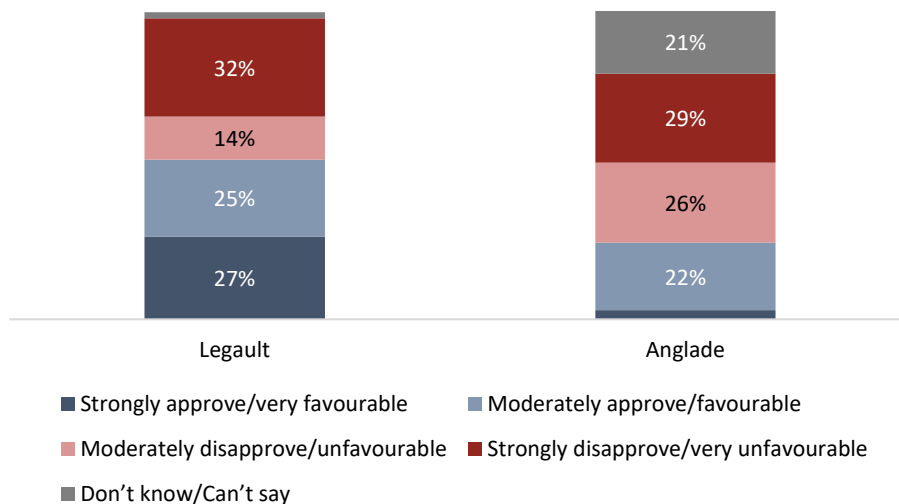
Currently it's the Quebec Liberal Party and leader Dominique Anglade – a former president of the CAQ – who hold the position of official opposition in the Assemblée nationale. Anglade stepped into the role in May 2020. Many Quebecers – one-in-five (21%) – say they don't have an opinion of Anglade, despite her being nearly two years into the job. For those that do, twice as many have negative impressions (55%) as positive ones (25%).

Half of Quebecers (52%) say they approve of Legault, a new low for him in his time as premier [as noted in earlier ARI data](#).

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**Legault approval vs. Anglade favourability
(Quebec, n=865)**



Issues

Perhaps Duhaime and the Conservatives are gaining ground by presenting themselves as the opposition to the relatively strict public health measures Quebec used to control the virus in recent waves of the pandemic. They do so in the face of a public who are more likely believe Legault and the CAQ government has done a good job than not on that matter. Three-in-five (59%) say the government has navigated the pandemic well; two-in-five disagree.

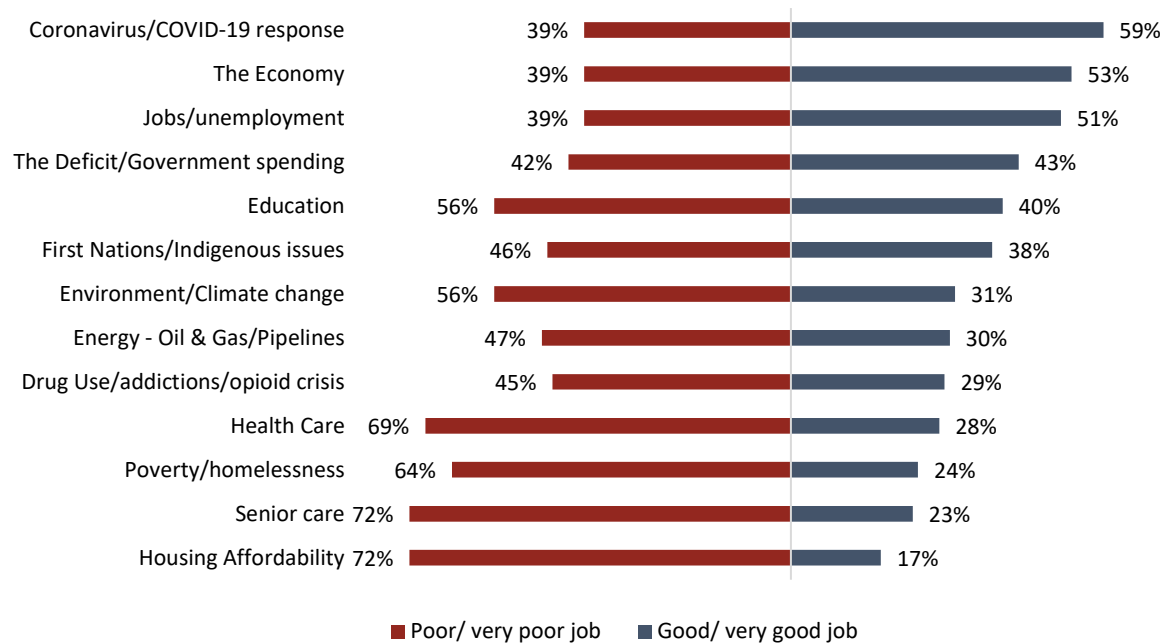
At least half of Quebecers, too, approve of the government’s handling of the economy and jobs. The populace is more split on how the CAQ have handled government spending and the deficit. For all other matters, detractors outweigh proponents, including notably on senior care, with painful memories of the death toll in the province’s long-term care facilities in the early days of the pandemic still lingering.

However, these data were collected before the government presented the final budget of its four-year term, which included a \$500 cash payment to those earning less than \$100,000 to help offset the rising cost of living.

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**Do you think the current government of Quebec is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas?
(QC, n=865)**

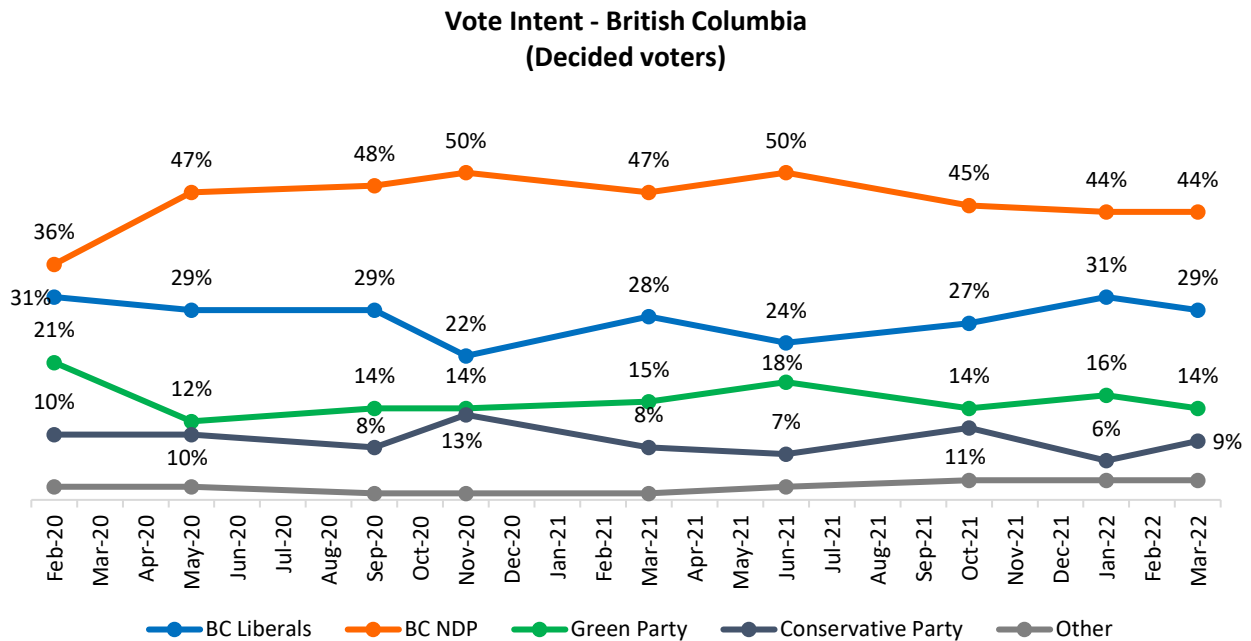


Part Four: B.C. – New leader for Liberals, little change in landscape

British Columbia’s official opposition Liberal Party elected a new leader in February. Kevin Falcon will take over from Andrew Wilkinson, and contest for Wilkinson’s Vancouver-Quilchena seat in a byelection some time in the next five months. Falcon steps into the driver seat of a party that faces an uphill battle against Premier John Horgan’s BC NDP.

Vote intent – BC NDP holds lead

As has been the case for the past two years since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the BC NDP holds a comfortable vote intention lead. The BC NDP won a majority government in October 2020:



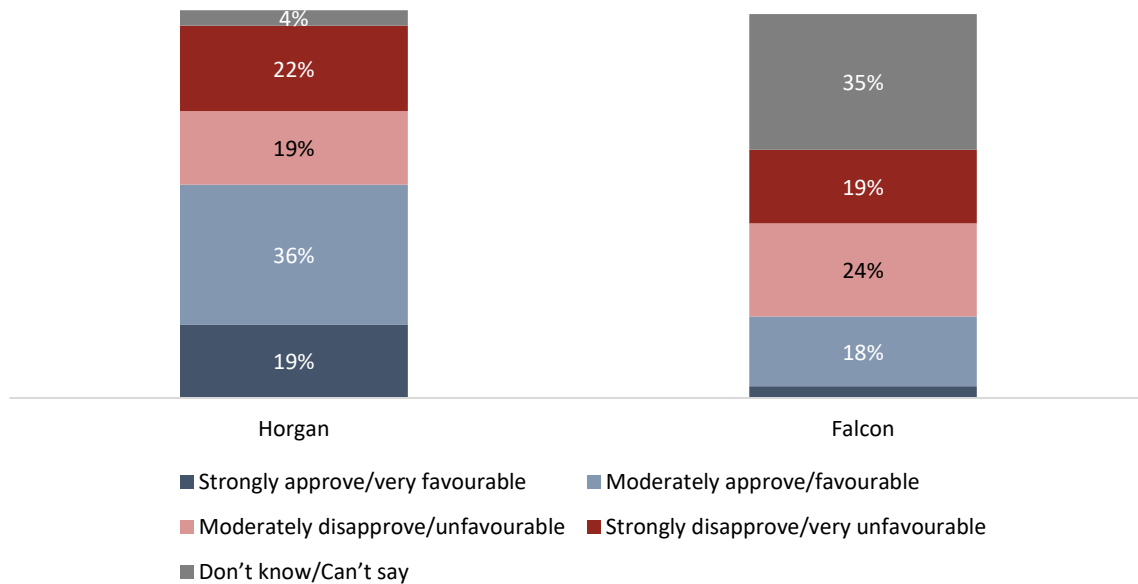
Leadership

Horgan continues to be one of the most popular provincial leaders in the country, approved of by 55 per cent of residents.

New BC Liberal leader Falcon is not a new face to the B.C. political scene. The three-time MLA was a cabinet minister and deputy premier in the Liberal government of former Premier Gordon Campbell. He also narrowly lost a previous Liberal leadership election to Christy Clark in 2011. However, he has been out of politics since 2013, when he decided not to seek re-election.

Falcon will have more than two years to re-introduce himself to B.C. residents before another provincial election is scheduled. Currently, 35 per cent say they have no opinion of him:

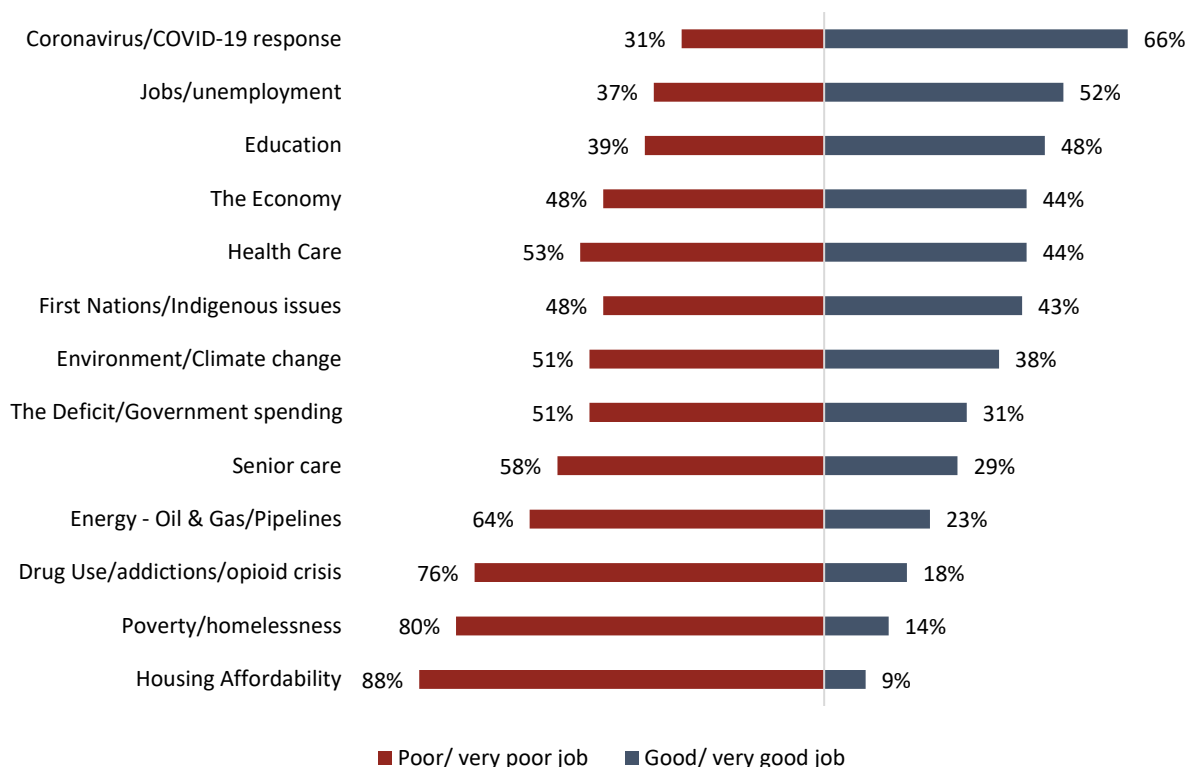
**Horgan approval vs. Falcon favourability
(B.C., n=604)**



Issues

The B.C. government is among the most praised provincial governments for COVID-19 management. Outside of Atlantic Canada, the BCNDP fares best in the country ([see detailed tables](#)). The government also fares well on assessments of jobs and education. That said, housing affordability continues to be a massive source of concern and criticism for residents:

**Do you think the current government of British Columbia is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas?
(BC, n=604)**

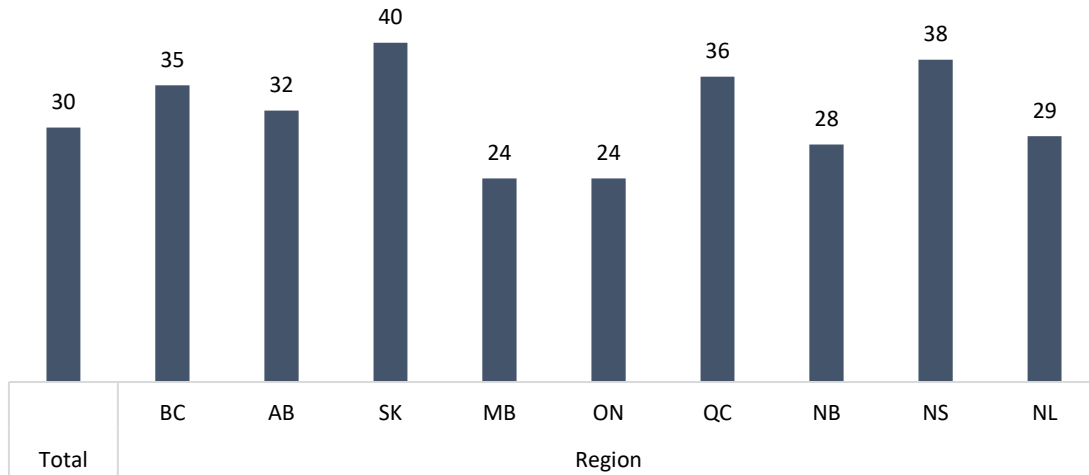


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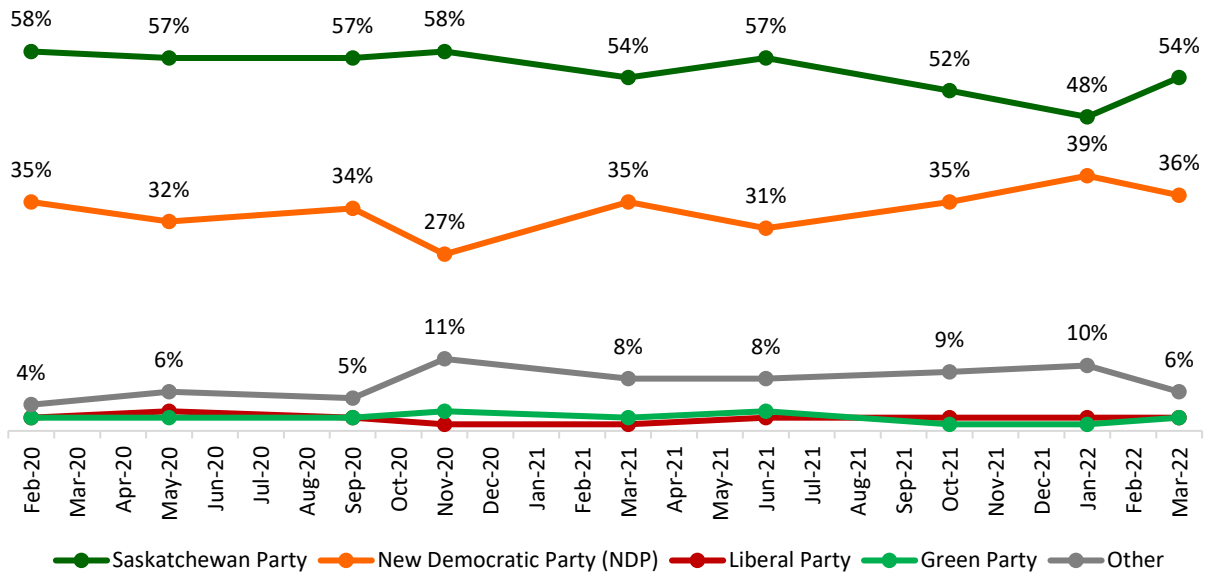
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Appendix: Government performance index and additional vote intent

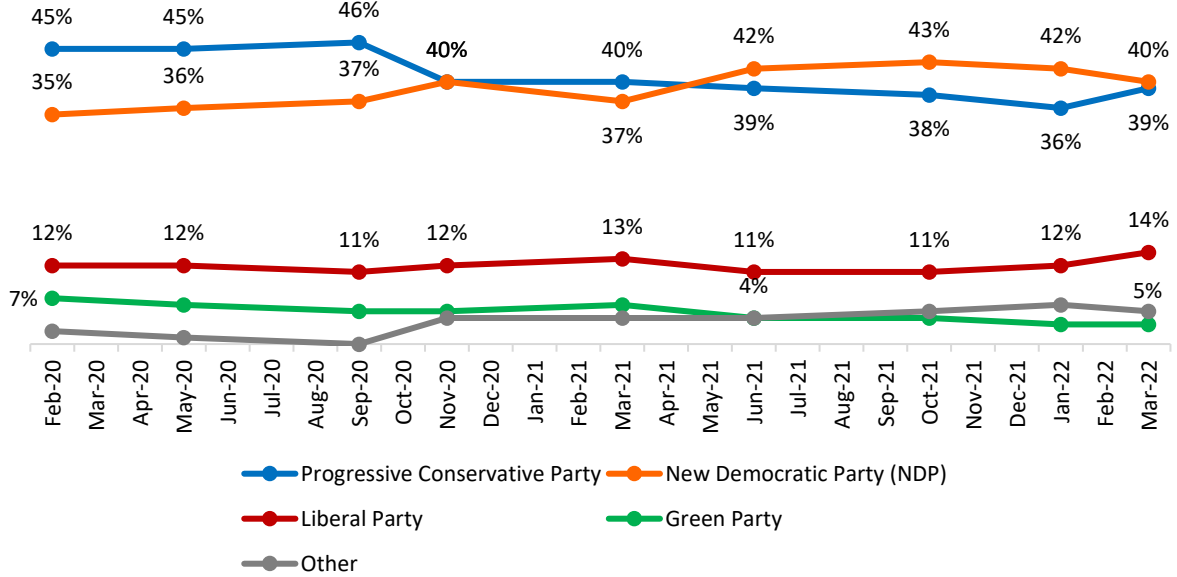
Government performance index
(Average number of respondents saying their government has done a "good job" across different issues)



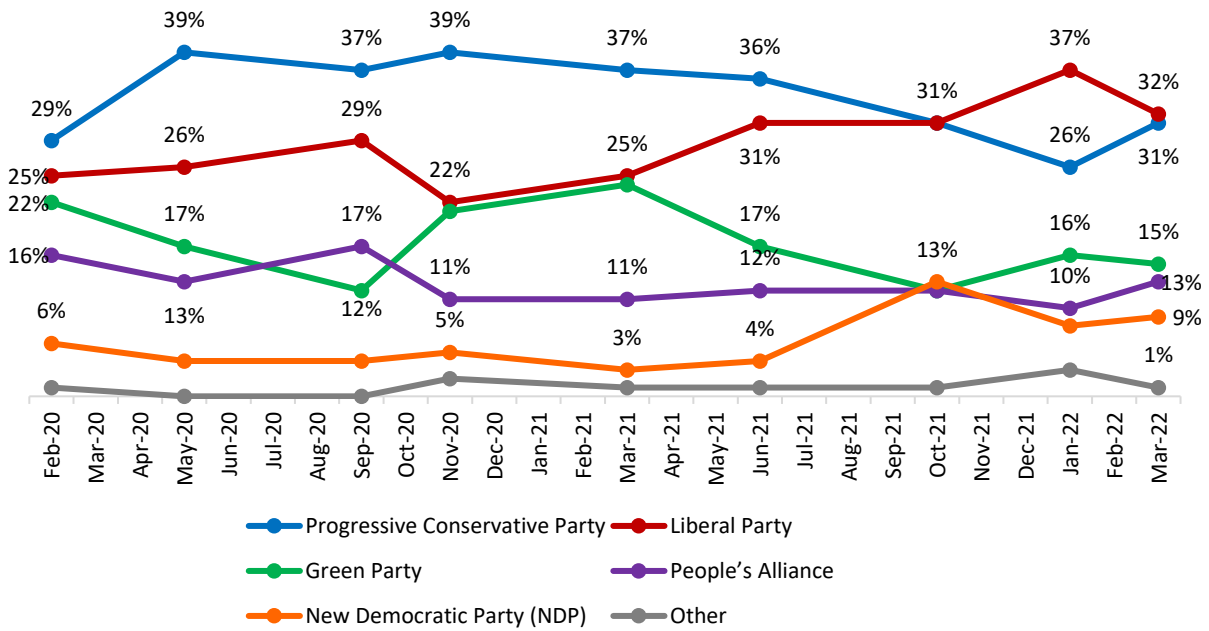
Vote Intent - Saskatchewan
(Decided voters)



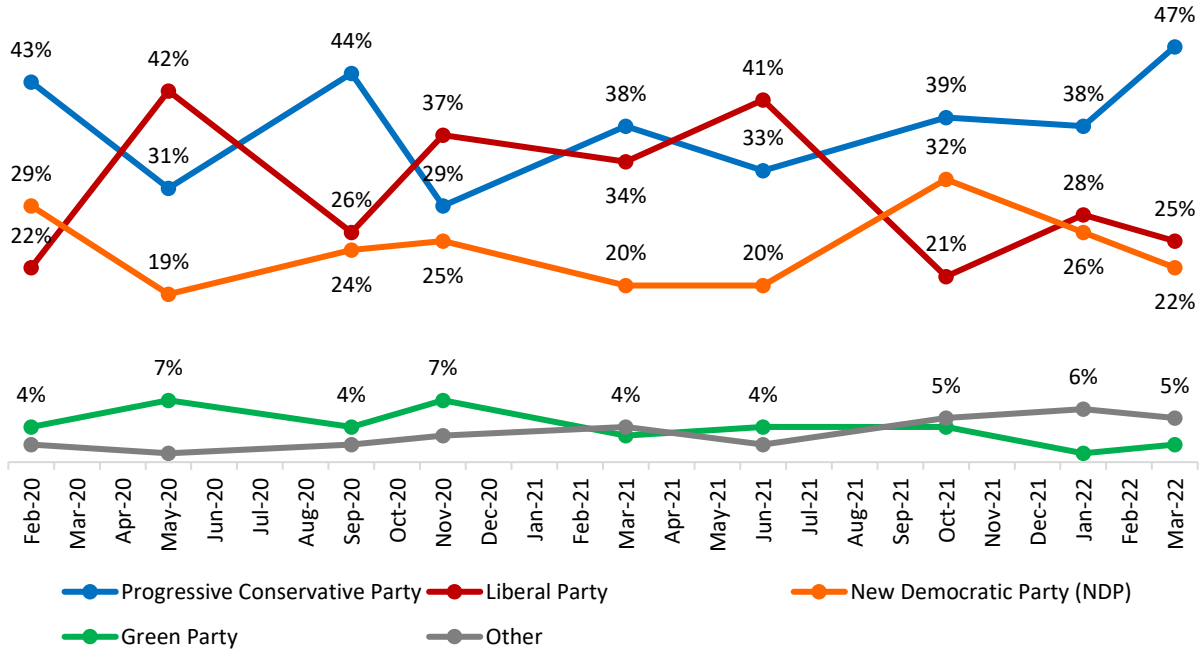
**Vote Intent - Manitoba
(Decided voters)**



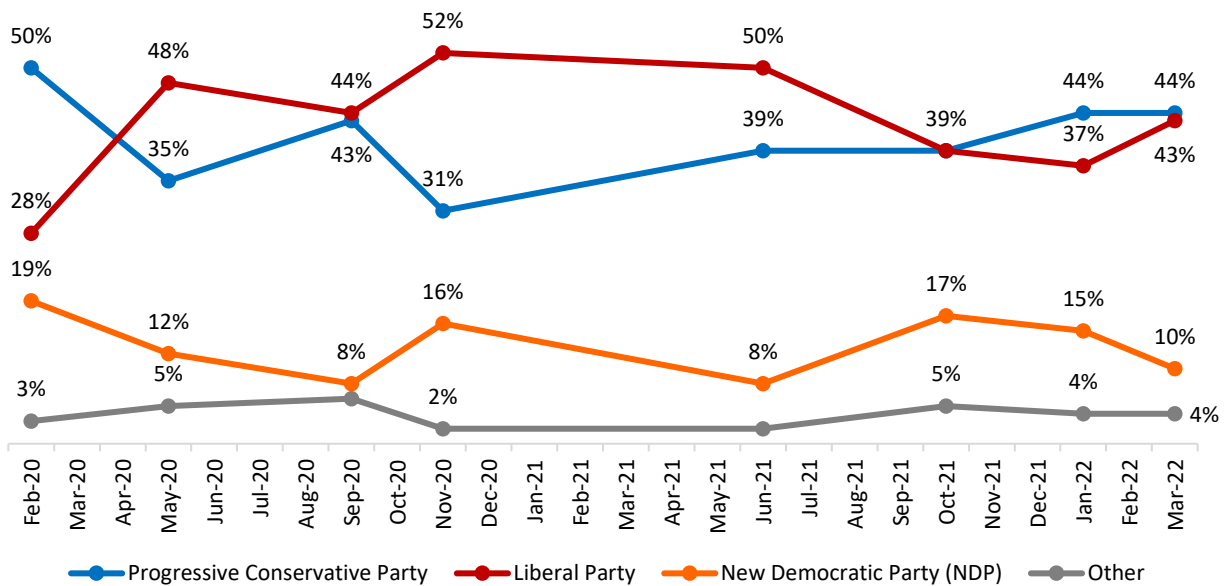
**Vote Intent - New Brunswick
(Decided voters)**



**Vote Intent - Nova Scotia
(Decided voters)**



**Vote Intent - Newfoundland and Labrador
(Decided voters)**



Margins of error								
BC (604)	AB (584)	SK (602)	MB (475)	ON (1,063)	QC (865)	NB (251)	NS (366)	NL (196)
+/- 4%	+/- 4%	+/- 4%	+/- 4%	+/- 3%	+/- 3%	+/- 6%	+/- 5%	+/- 7%

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

For detailed results by last provincial vote for B.C., Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, [click here](#).

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