

BC Spotlight: Cost-of-living crisis persists, but NDP holds comfortable lead; BC United under Falcon yet to gain

One year after winning opposition leadership, Falcon unknown to 31%, viewed positively by 22%

April 12, 2023 – Two competing ideas can be true at the same time in politics and one need look no further than British Columbia for evidence of this.

A new study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds that on one hand, B.C. residents voice widespread dissatisfaction with their government on the most important issues facing the province. In fact, at least two-thirds say the B.C. NDP are doing a poor job of handling the cost-of-living crisis, health care and housing affordability.

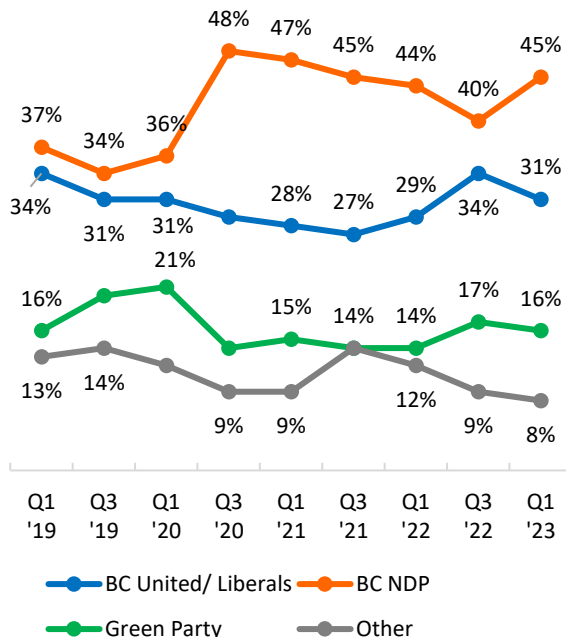
On the other, Premier David Eby remains popular, and his party holds a comfortable and continuing lead in vote intention. Eby entered his post at an opportune time, taking over a \$5.7-billion surplus, which has allowed the government to announce a plethora of spending priorities.

As the one-year mark of Kevin Falcon's tenure as B.C. Liberal (**now B.C. United**) leader passes, his personal favourability rating sits at 22 per cent. Falcon has yet to resonate with many, as three-in-ten still say they have no opinion of him.

Whether residents trust the current government to guide the province out of the challenges it currently faces, or they see no current alternative that they prefer, this consistent advantage for the B.C. NDP has the party in good shape [if an election takes place this year](#). The B.C. NDP are the preferred choice for 45 per cent of would-be voters currently, with the opposition B.C. Liberals supported by 31 per cent.

These evident challenges, however, offer the opposition a foothold to gain ground. The saying goes that a crisis is an opportunity riding a dangerous wind, and British Columbians appear to see the wind guiding more than one. Three-in-five say that the cost of living is among their top concerns (63%), alongside health care (50%) and housing affordability (40%). No other issue rises above 24 per cent.

**Vote Intent - British Columbia
(Decided and leaning voters)**



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from March 6 - 13, 2023 among a representative randomized sample of 641 British Columbian 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 +/- 4 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.

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

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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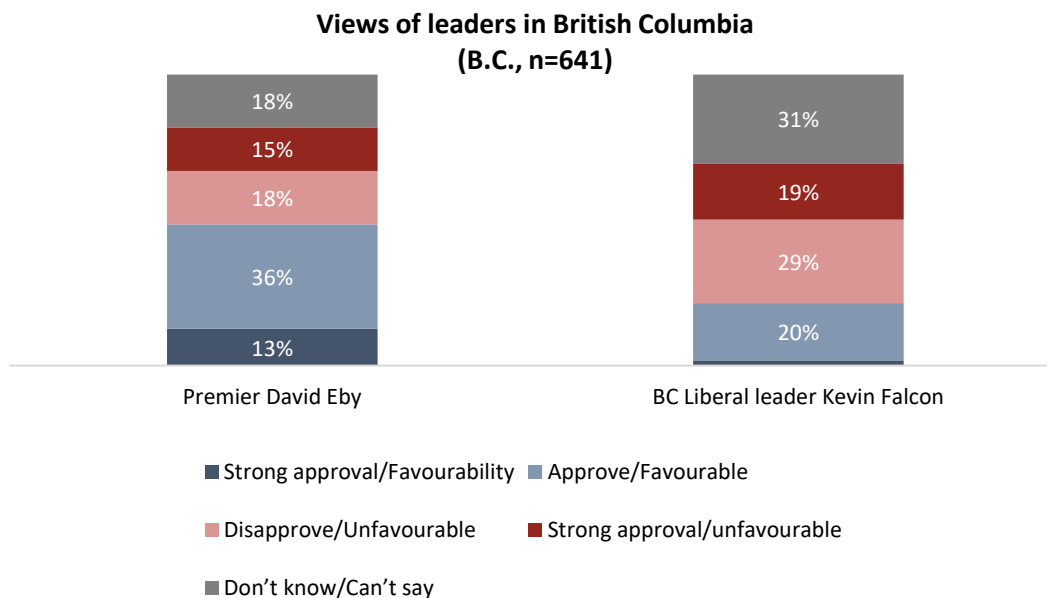
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- **By region**
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Part One: British Columbians on the leaders

The 2020 provincial election was held during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, with John Horgan leading the incumbent New Democrats, and Andrew Wilkinson leading the opposition B.C. Liberals. Now, the B.C. Liberals are B.C. United, having voted on [new branding](#) last fall.

While the view may feel different from 10,000 feet, much remains the same. Premier David Eby has taken over and maintained much of the trademark popularity of the retired Horgan. Meantime, B.C. United leader Kevin Falcon has yet to hit his stride, something the party’s previous leader was arguably never able to do:

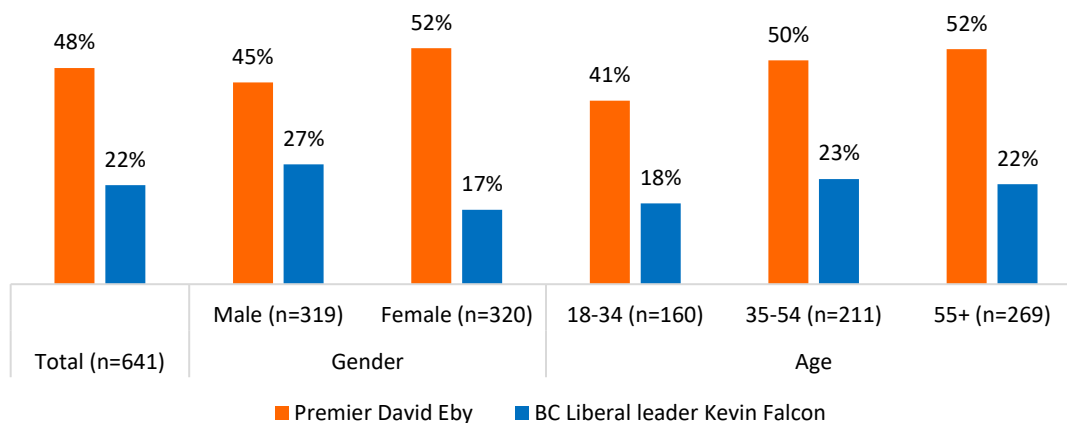


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The key for any electoral success, whenever an election is indeed called, will be connecting with a broad swath of voters. Turnout in British Columbia [hit historic lows](#) in 2020, with just 52 per cent of eligible voters casting a ballot. A majority of those [most likely to vote](#), residents over 54 years of age, view Eby in a positive light, while Falcon and the B.C. United brass evidently have much work to do in generating positive impressions:

Percentage who approve of Premier Eby, view opposition leader Falcon favourably



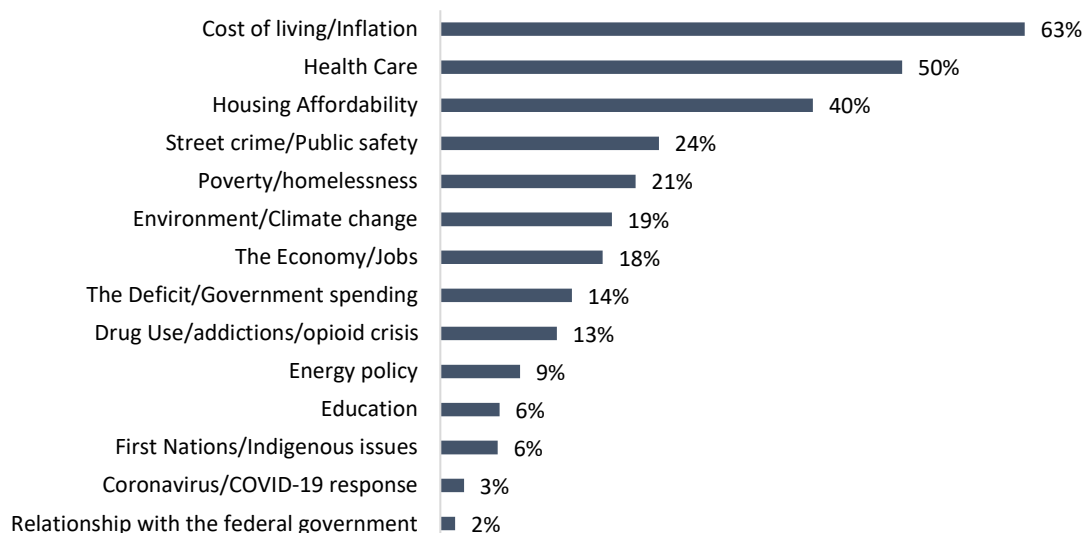
Part Two: The issues

While the ground around the B.C. NDP appears politically stable, the opposition needn't work too hard to find potential cracks. The cost of living continues to drive anxiety in the province, alongside years of health care and housing affordability challenges. Those three issues represent the top concerns for residents by a considerable margin:

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**Top Issues facing British Columbia
(B.C., n=641)**



Further evidence of these concerns is found when asking respondents about the current government's performance on those top issues.

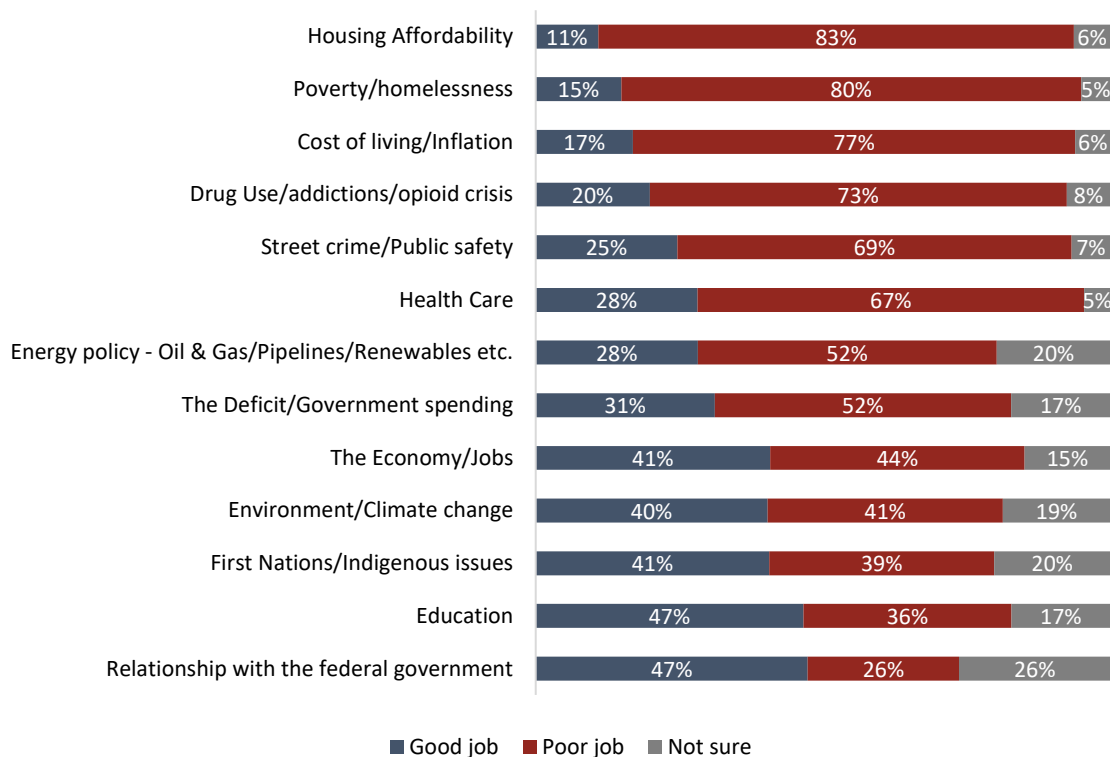
Fewer than three-in-ten (28%) say the government is performing well on the issue of health care. This, as the province announced a new \$27-billion funding agreement with the federal government at the beginning of March. These funds will be used to address long wait-times and [urgent needs in pediatric hospitals and emergency rooms](#).

Fewer than one-in-five (17%) say that the government is handling the cost-of-living crisis well. [New measures](#), including the B.C. Affordability Credit coming in April, increasing the B.C. Family Benefit, and additional programs targeted for relief are being rolled out, but at this point British Columbians remain uncertain if enough is being done.

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**Provincial government performance on each issue:
(B.C., n=641)**



Current B.C. NDP voters are far more likely to say that the government has done well in handling health care (46%) compared to other party supporters but are comparably negative on housing affordability and cost-of-living challenges. Areas where the government performs best are largely those which are lower priorities for British Columbians:

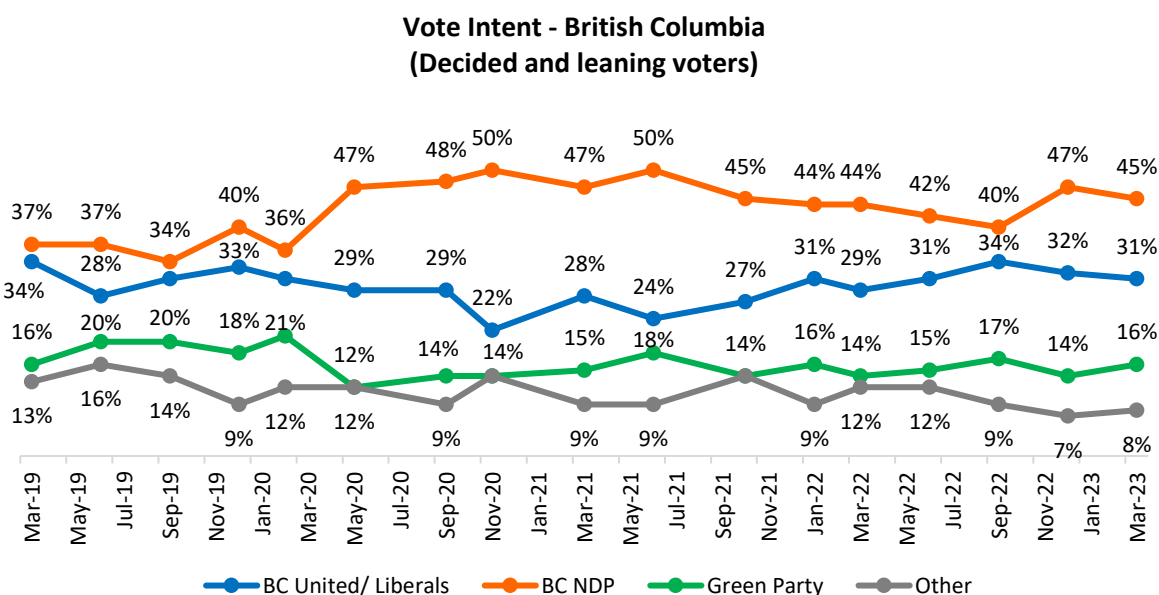
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Percentage saying their provincial government is doing a good job of handling these issues:				
	Total B.C. (n=641)	Current Vote Intention		
		NDP	BC Liberal/ United	Green
Housing Affordability	11%	18%	9%	5%
Poverty/homelessness	15%	23%	14%	10%
Cost of living/Inflation	17%	28%	13%	14%
Drug Use/addictions/opioid crisis	20%	30%	18%	12%
Street crime/Public safety	25%	39%	11%	30%
Health Care	28%	46%	15%	22%
Energy policy - Oil & Gas/Pipelines/Renewables etc.	28%	42%	20%	27%
The Deficit/Government spending	31%	52%	19%	27%
Environment/Climate change	40%	51%	40%	30%
First Nations/Indigenous issues	41%	53%	46%	31%
The Economy/Jobs	41%	59%	33%	36%
Education	47%	64%	39%	50%
Relationship with the federal government	47%	67%	40%	51%

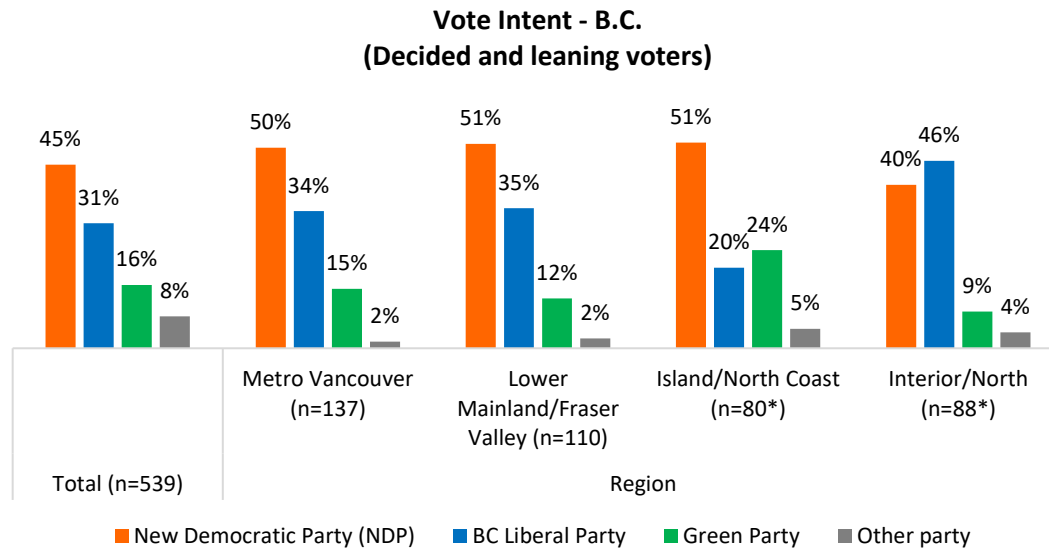
Part Three: Vote intention

While Eby has committed to a fixed election date, which would carry the province to October 2024, some have speculated that the conditions are ripe for a snap election call. The B.C. NDP continues to hold a comfortable lead over the opposition B.C. United:



By region

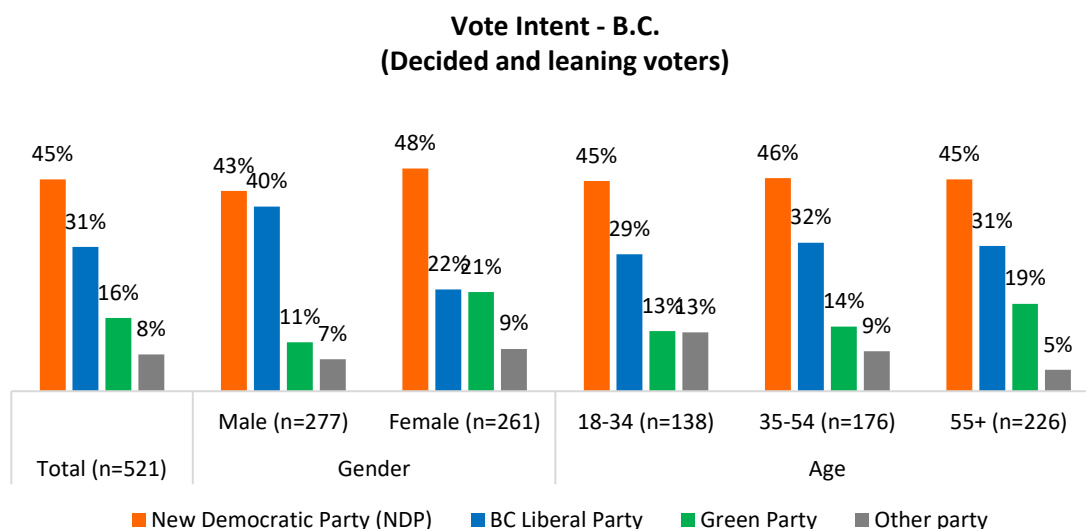
The incumbent's advantage continues to be significant in most of the province. Only in the Interior do the B.C. United hold a regional lead:



**Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

By age and gender

An election among only men in the province would yield much more competitive races, as the top two parties are preferred by nearly the same number, approximately two-in-five. Women, however, are more than twice as likely to say that they would vote for the B.C. NDP (48%) than the opposition (22%) or the Green Party (21%) if an election were held:



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

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