

Ballot Backlash: BC Conservatives open 8-point lead after snap election call, but electorate far from locked in

BC NDP faces challenge in drawing 2024 voters; 62 per cent will support the party again, others less sure

September 24, 2026 – Just two days after BC NDP leader David Eby dissolved the British Columbia legislature and called a snap election, party supporters, candidates, volunteers and donors may be questioning the wisdom of his political gamble, as the opposition BC Conservatives jump out to a commanding – but early – eight-point lead in vote intention over the incumbent.

New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute shows the now-newly-re-united right-of-centre movement, coalesced once again under the BC Conservatives – this time under their third leader in less than a year – has the support of 43 per cent of B.C. voters, compared to 35 per cent for the New Democrats.

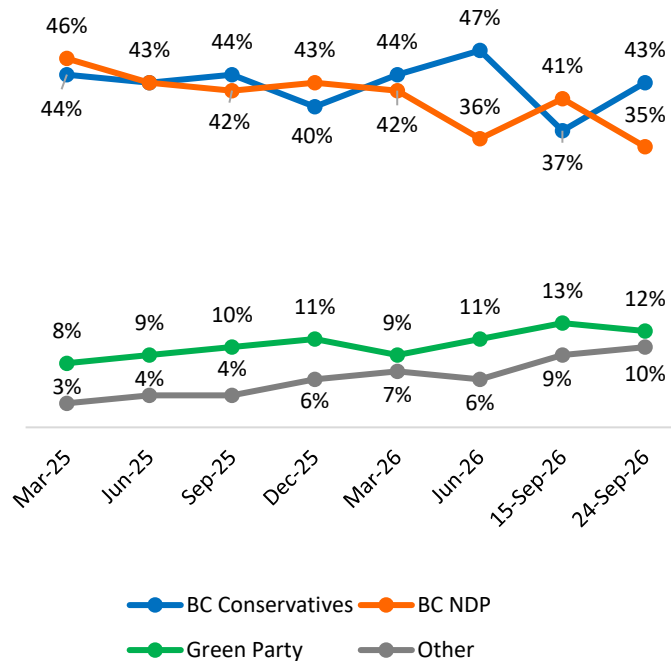
The reversal of fortune for the BC NDP has been swift: as recently as ten days ago, the governing party had a slim four-point advantage over the BC Conservatives.

Ire over the timing of the early election call may be driving some of the backlash. Fully two-thirds of the province says it's "too soon" to be going to the polls – including 71 per cent of BC Conservative voters but crucially – half of BC NDP voters (52%), too.

Further, two-thirds (65%) of the province say David Eby is putting his own interests ahead of the province in calling this election.

The New Democrats will also have to work to pull back its 2024 voting base back together. Currently, only 65 per

**B.C. provincial vote intent
(Decided and leaning voters)**



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from September 22-24, 2026, among a randomized sample of 801 British Columbian adults. Respondents are drawn from the [Angus Reid Forum](#), a large-scale online panel developed to include Canadian residents in each of the 343 federal ridings in Canada and representative of the Canadian population by age, gender, family income, ethnic status and education. The sample was weighted to be representative of adults nationwide according to region, gender, age, household income, and education, based on the Canadian census. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 3.5 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.

For more information on our polling methods, [click here](#).

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cent of those who voted for the party two years ago say they'll do the same again. This compares to 85 per cent of past BC Conservative voters who are ready to re-commit.

It is early days in the campaign however, as underscored by the one-in-five who say they are undecided about their vote choice, and the fact that only 35 per cent say they are "very certain" about which party they will support.

More Key Findings:

- The top issues driving votes are not necessarily those focused on by the leaders in their early statements. The cost of living (59%), health care (42%) and the economy (28%) are key drivers. Well ahead of the U.S. tariff issue focused on by David Eby (15%), and DRIPA (13%), noted by Lorne Doerksen as the most important issue for his party.
- Both of those latter issues play better among each leader's current base – DRIPA seen as a top three issue by 22% of BC Cons. voters, and tariffs by 31% among BC NDP voters – but trail well behind top issues.
- David Eby's personal favourability is 33 per cent, with 60 per cent viewing him unfavourably. His approval was registered at 41 per [less than two weeks ago](#).
- Both BC Conservative leader Lorne Doerksen and BC Greens leader Emily Lowan are unknown to two-in-five British Columbians at the beginning of this campaign.
- Two-in-five British Columbians say that if their choice is between the BC NDP and the BC Conservatives, they don't feel there is a good option.

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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- 39% of the electorate feels it doesn't have a good option
- Majority across all parties say they're not enthusiastic about voting

Part Three: Leaders and timing

- Most British Columbians, and past BC NDP voters, say it's 'too soon' for election
- Half of past BC NDP voters say Eby is putting personal interests over province's
- Eby unfavourably by more than half, plurality don't know Doerkson or Lowan

Part One: Vote intent

Conservatives lead, but uncertainty on both sides

The election rumours became election reality this week after Premier David Eby announced a snap election on Tuesday. The dropping of the writs come in a year of political upheaval in the province. The opposition BC Conservatives have seen waves of defections since the 2024 election, when former leader John Rustad was narrowly defeated by Eby and the BC NDP. Rustad was ousted amidst caucus discontent in December last year. He was replaced by Kerry-Lynne Findlay, who won a leadership election by the slimmest of margins. Further caucus upheaval forced Findlay's hand, and she resigned on Sunday, just 48 hours before the election call.

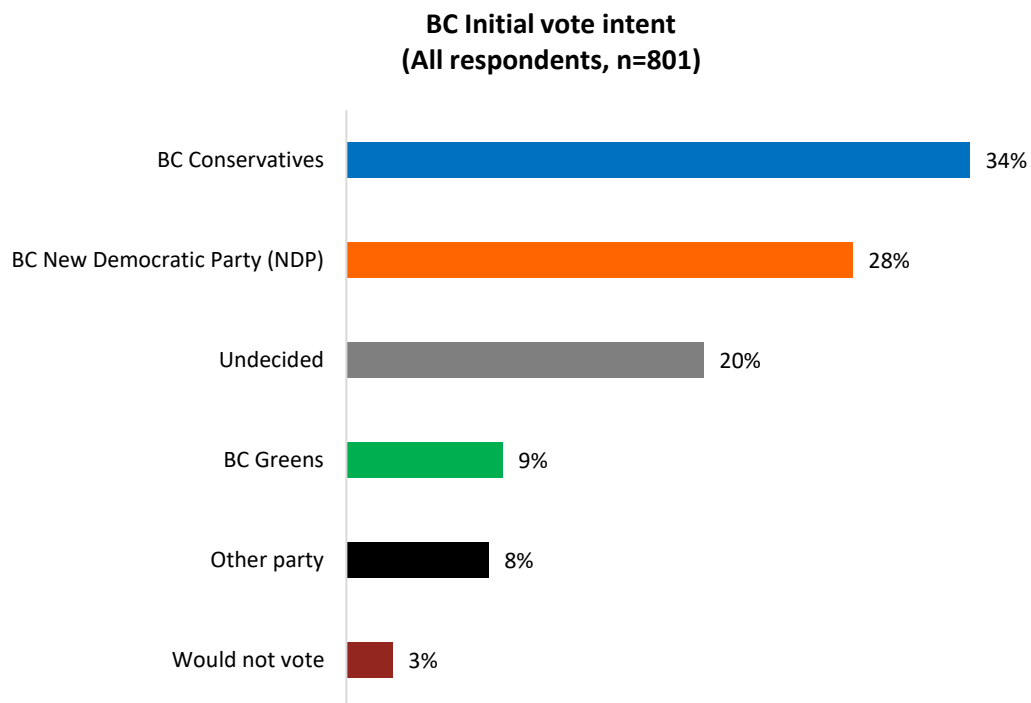
But the impending campaign has brought renewed unity to the BC Conservatives, who struck a deal hours after the election call to bring back seven MLAs who had defected to the upstart CentreBC. The interim leader of the BC Conservatives, Lorne Doerkson, who will become the permanent leader should the party form government after the election, still has plenty of work to do to keep a fractured caucus rowing in the same direction.

It is perhaps no surprise given the amount of uncertainty in the political scene, and the surprise election call, that many in the electorate (20%) aren't sure which box they'll mark come Oct. 24.

The BC Conservatives, despite the turmoil, lead the incumbent BC NDP, with third parties in the BC Greens, OneBC, and CentreBC potentially in contention for picking up seats throughout the province:

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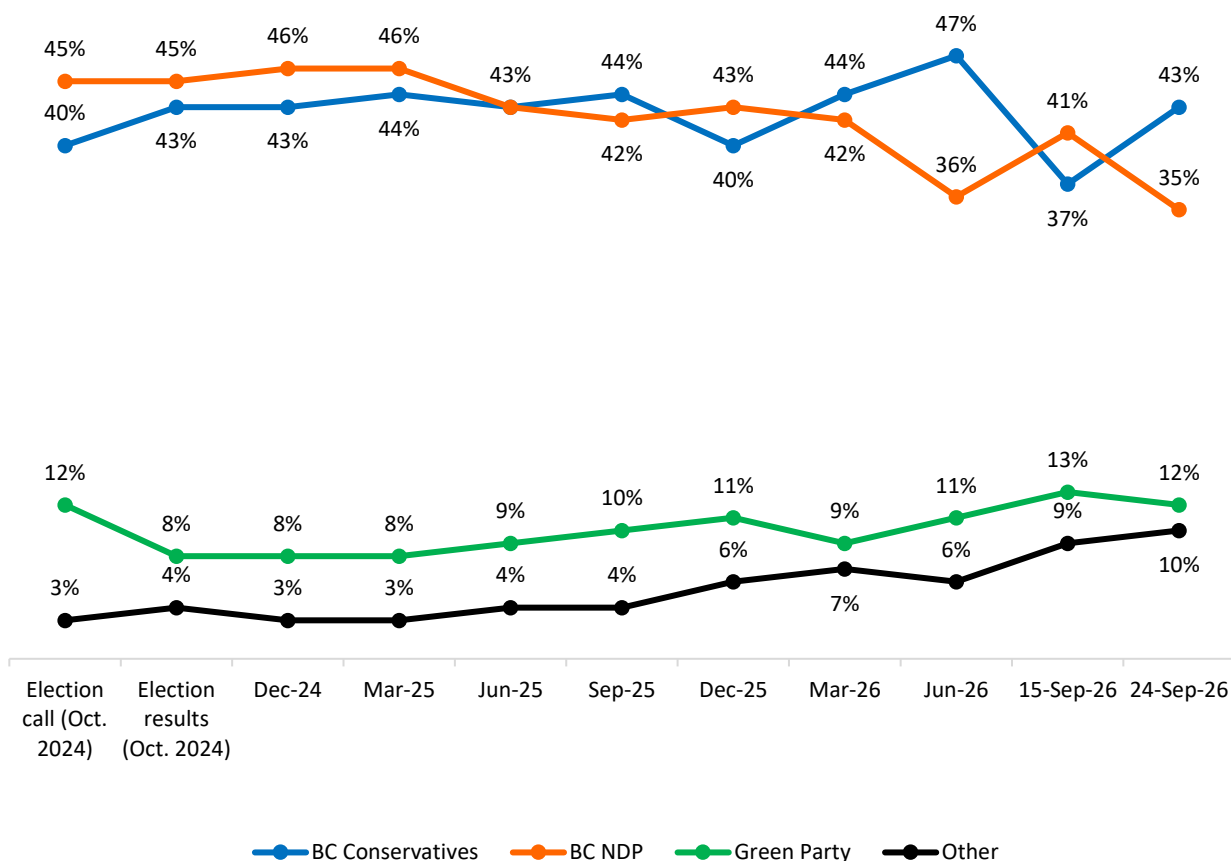
BC Cons. 43%, NDP 35% among decided and leaning voters

Trimming down the electorate to those who are more decided in their vote produces an eight point lead for the BC Conservatives (43%) over the BC NDP (35%). Notably, 43 per cent is on par with the vote share the BC Conservatives received in the Oct. 2024 election; the BC NDP are underperforming their previous vote share by 10 points currently:

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B.C. provincial vote intent (Decided and leaning voters, n=682)



Demographics and regions

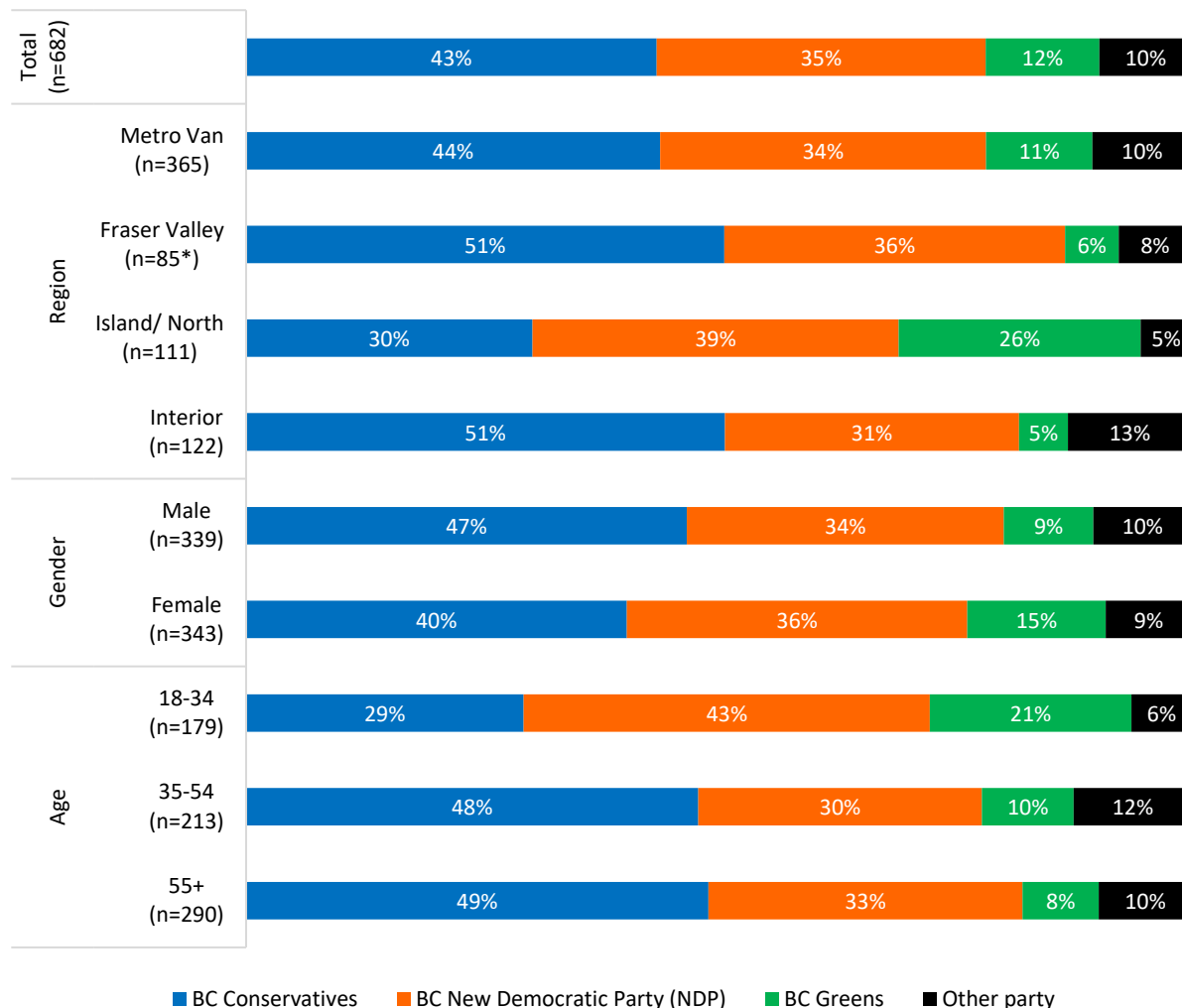
The Conservatives garner half of vote intention in Fraser Valley and the Interior and they lead in Metro Vancouver, which does not bode well for the incumbent BC NDP. Eby's party leads on the Island, where the BC Greens' popularity will create three-way races.

The BC Conservatives 16-point lead among those older than 54 is perhaps most concerning for the BC NDP at this point in the campaign because of that demographics' historically higher turnout in Canadian elections. The BC Greens perform best among 18- to 34-year-olds, who are less reliable voters:

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B.C. provincial vote intent (Decided and leaning voters)



**Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

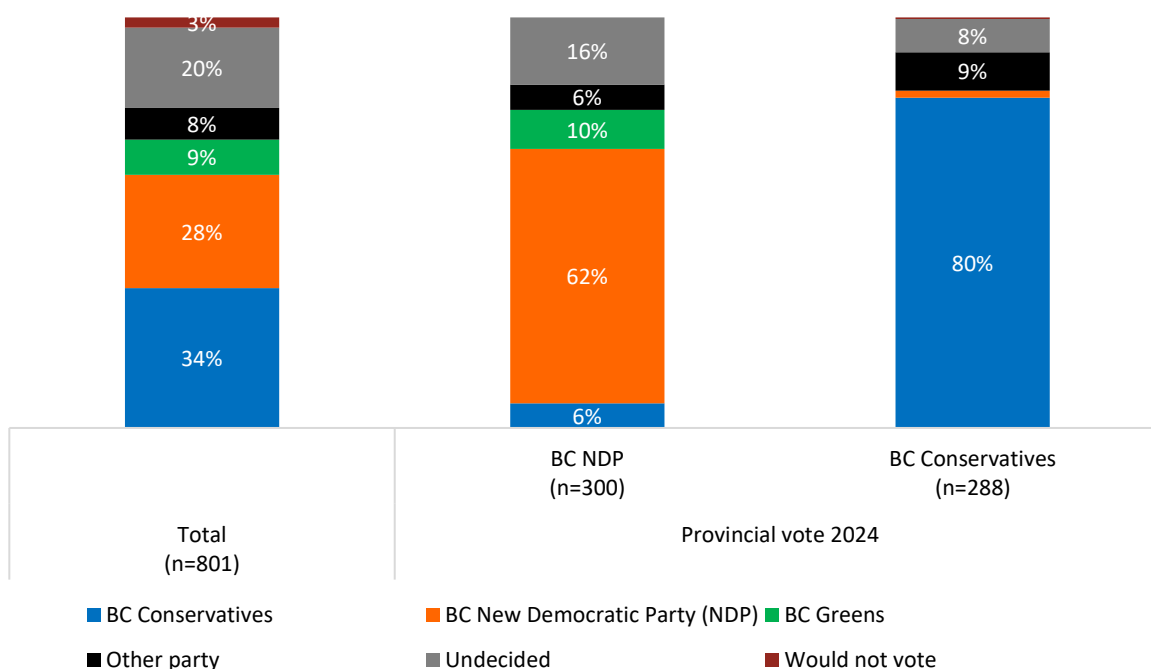
NDP faces challenge in bringing back 2024 voters

The BC NDP's 10-point difference in vote intention compared to the 2024 election result is driven by uncertainty among the party's 2024 voters. One-in-six (16%) are undecided at this point in the campaign, doubling the BC Conservative voters (8%) who say the same. The 2024 BC NDP coalition has also shed 10 per cent to the BC Greens, six per cent to the BC Conservatives and six per cent to other parties, leaving them with just three-in-five (62%) who say they will repeat their vote. Four-in-five (80%) 2024 BC Conservative voters say the same:

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Vote retention with undecideds included



Looking at this with decided voters, the NDP's retention jumps to 72 per cent while the BC Conservatives' increases to 88 per cent ([see detailed tables](#)).

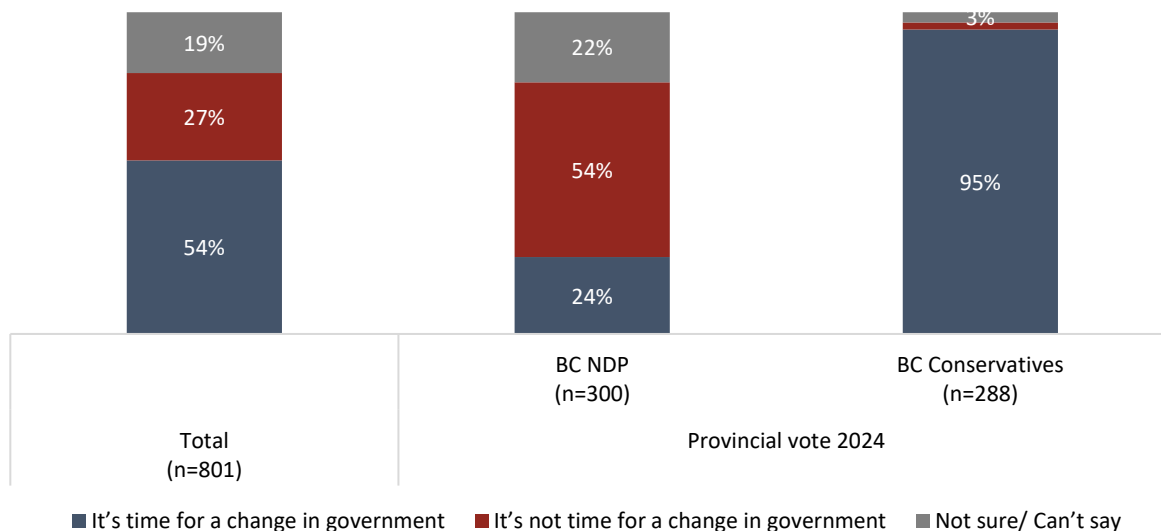
The uncertainty among the 2024 BC NDP is perhaps driven by a desire to see change in governance. Although a majority (54%) of those who voted for Eby and the BC NDP in 2024 believe it's not the right time for a switch in provincial leadership, one-quarter (24%) believe it's time for change.

Overall, a majority (54%) of British Columbians want turnover in Victoria:

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Which of the following two statements best reflects how you feel today when it comes to the provincial political picture?



But concerns about the Conservatives' readiness to govern

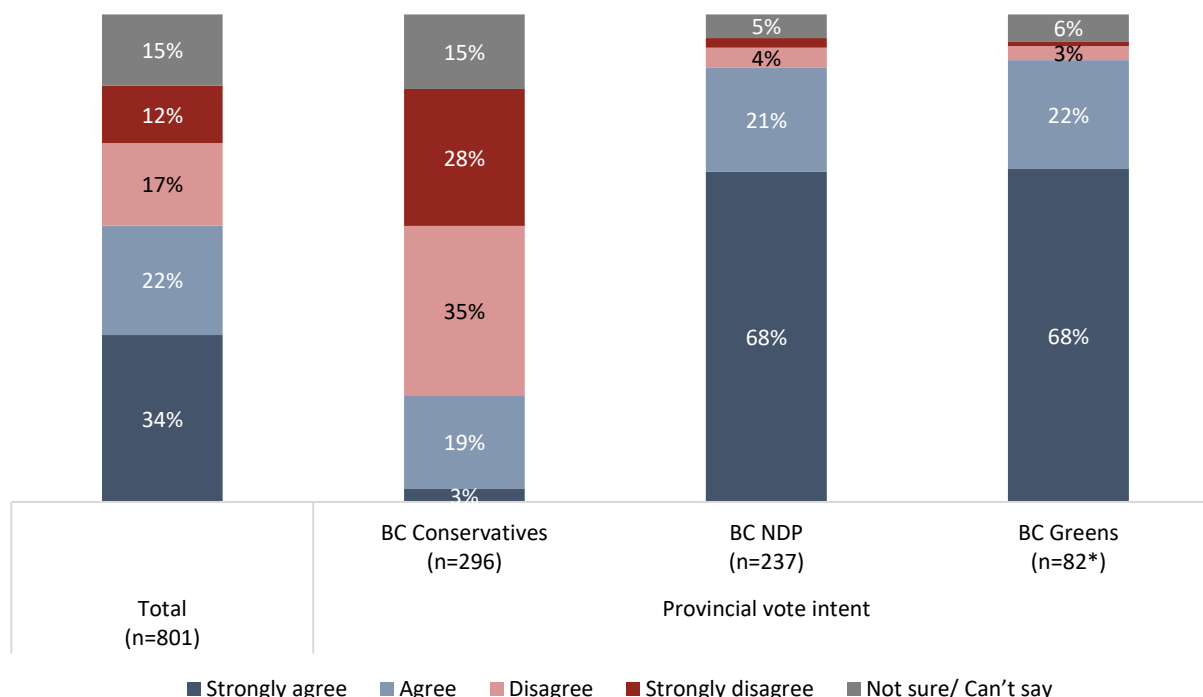
That doesn't mean there is a full-throated endorsement among the electorate for the BC Conservatives, the competing alternative to the BC NDP. A majority (56%) of British Columbians believe the opposition Conservatives "are not ready to govern B.C.", including one-in-five (22%) current BC Conservative supporters who express reservation.

Few current BC NDP or BC Greens supporters see the BC Conservatives as a government-in-waiting:

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Agree vs. disagree - "The BC Conservatives are not ready to govern B.C."



**Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

Part Two: Issues and Motivation

For most it's cost of living/jobs, health care, that will drive their vote

Given Eby's speech announcing the election call, the Premier appears to be trying to strike while the tariff war is hot. The issue has played well for his personal popularity over the past 21 months.

Related: Premiers' Performance: Ford, Eby rebound; the rest benefit little from intensifying US-Canada trade war

But the U.S. tariffs and B.C.'s response falls far down the list of top issues on voters' minds as they enter the campaign. Higher priorities are the high cost of living (chosen by 59%), health care (42%), the economy (28%), housing affordability (25%), street crime (25%) and B.C.'s ballooning deficit (24%). Notably, those are also the top six issues in order for undecided voters, among whom only 12 per cent select U.S. relations as pressing concern ([see detailed tables](#)).

There is also clear political delineation on these issues. Those currently supporting the BC Conservatives are much more concerned about the deficit (44%), the economy (34%), public safety (33%) and the looming issue of DRIPA (22%) than others. Doerkson said repealing DRIPA would be a "[top priority](#)" for his government.

Related: Still-leaderless BC Conservatives open 10-point lead over NDP amid DRIPA uncertainty (May 5, 2026)

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For BC NDP supporters, there is more concern over health care (51%) and the tariffs (31%) than the deficit (7%), DRIPA (4%) or public safety (19%):

Now, thinking ahead to the election, which of the following issues would you say are the most important to you when it comes to deciding which party and candidate to support?				
	Total (n=801)	Provincial vote intent		
		BC Conservatives (n=296)	BC NDP (n=237)	BC Greens (n=82*)
Cost of living/Inflation	59%	55%	62%	56%
Health Care	42%	37%	51%	45%
The Economy/Jobs	28%	34%	23%	21%
Housing Affordability	25%	15%	29%	34%
Street crime/Public safety	25%	33%	19%	8%
The Deficit/Government spending	24%	44%	7%	13%
The U.S. tariffs/Donald Trump/alcohol ban	15%	6%	31%	7%
Environment/Climate change	14%	2%	23%	40%
First Nations/Indigenous issues/ DRIPA	13%	22%	4%	16%
Drug Use/addictions/opioid crisis	13%	16%	12%	11%
Poverty/homelessness	12%	6%	13%	19%
Energy policy - Oil & Gas/Pipelines/Renewables etc.	11%	13%	8%	8%

**Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

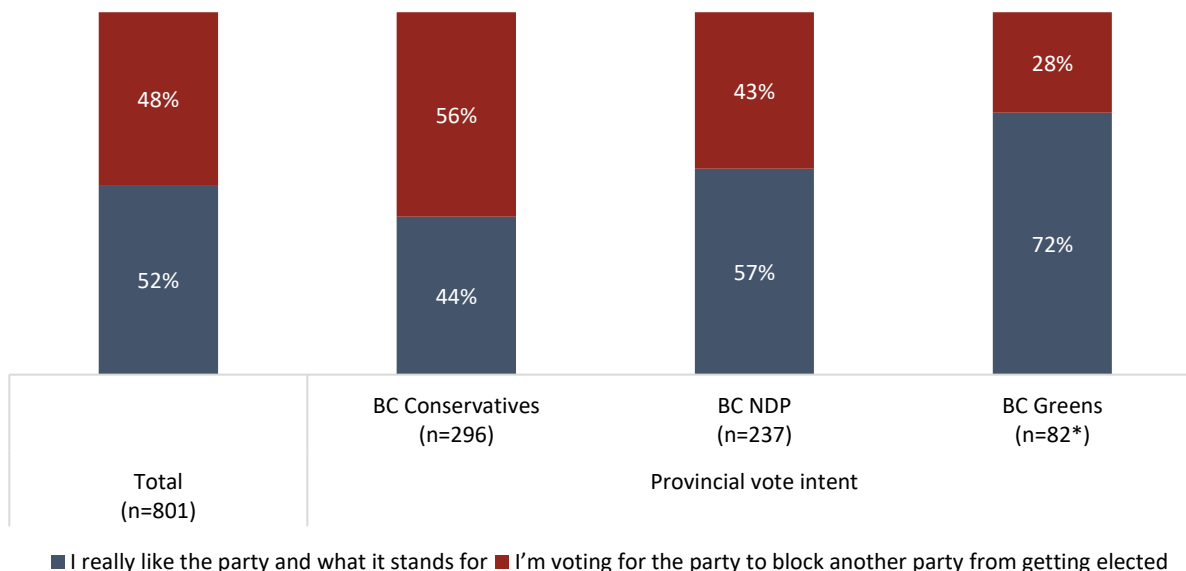
Conservatives more motivated to block another BC NDP government

The issues are one potential source of motivation for voters, but there is also dislike of the alternatives. Current BC Conservative supporters are more likely than others to say they are voting because they want to block their rivals, the BC NDP, from getting elected. Those currently supporting the BC NDP (57%) and BC Greens (72%) are more likely to say they are choosing their vote because they “like the party and what it stands for”:

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Thinking about your current choice for provincial vote, would you say you are supporting this party because you...



**Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

39% of the electorate feels it doesn't have a good option

Much of the turbulence the BC Conservatives have endured since the 2024 election has been the struggle for former leaders Rustad and Findlay to hold together a coalition across the centre right and right. The unrest spawned two new parties from former and current MLAs disillusioned with Rustad or Findlay's leadership in OneBC and CentreBC. Those new parties did not get the time to coalesce or build momentum with Eby's early election call, leaving voters once again with the same two parties with the best chance to form government.

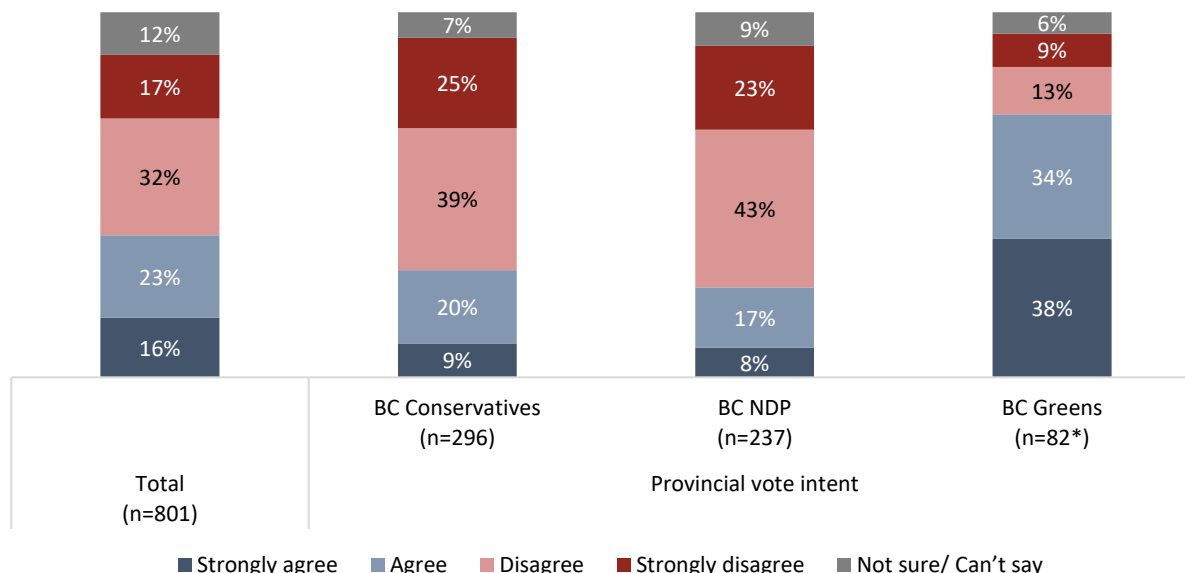
Related: BC's Political Orphans: Unhappy with NDP, wary of alternatives, half say they have no party to gladly support (Sept. 17, 2026)

Two-in-five (39%) British Columbians, including three-in-ten (29%) current BC Conservative and one-quarter (25%) current BC NDP supporters, believe they don't have a good option if they are forced to choose between the two leading parties:

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Agree vs. disagree - "If my main choice is between the BC Conservatives or BC NDP, I don't have a good option"



**Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

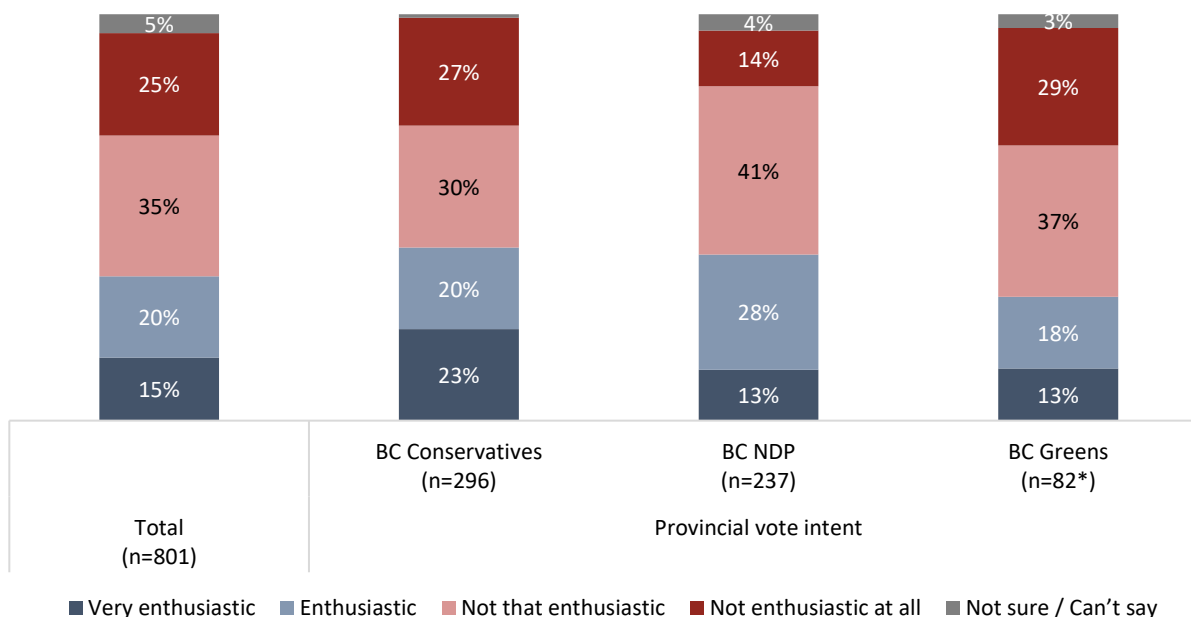
Majority across all parties say they're not enthusiastic about voting

Disaffection with the options is perhaps also leading to voter malaise. Three-in-five (60%) British Columbians describe themselves as not enthusiastic about voting on Oct. 24. Those currently supporting the BC Conservatives are nearly twice as likely (23%) as those supporting the BC NDP (13%) to say they are "very enthusiastic" about casting a ballot. But in both groups the enthusiastic voters are the minority:

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How enthusiastic would you say you are about voting in this upcoming provincial election?



Part Three: Leaders and timing

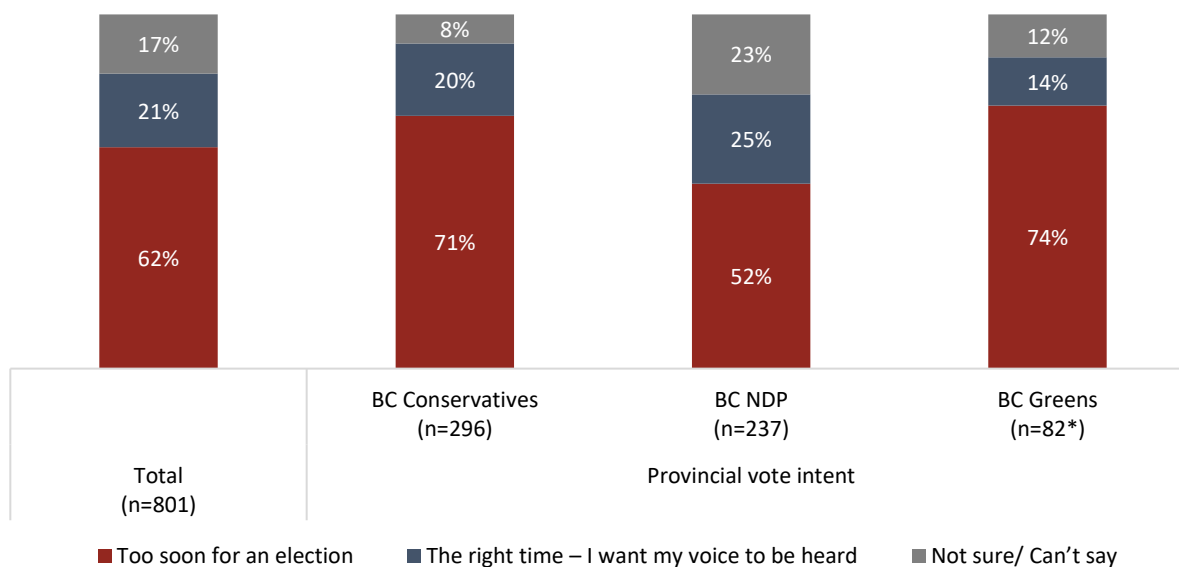
Most British Columbians, and past BC NDP voters, say it's 'too soon' for election

Eby cited the “existential” threat of U.S. President Donald Trump as one of the major reasons for the election call, though many have pointed out the BC NDP are already operating with a majority. Those who believe it's the right time for an election (21%) are outnumbered almost three-to-one who believe it's too soon (62%). Half (52%) of BC NDP supporters believe it's too soon for an election, and many (23%) are uncertain whether it's the right time or not:

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What about the timing of the election?



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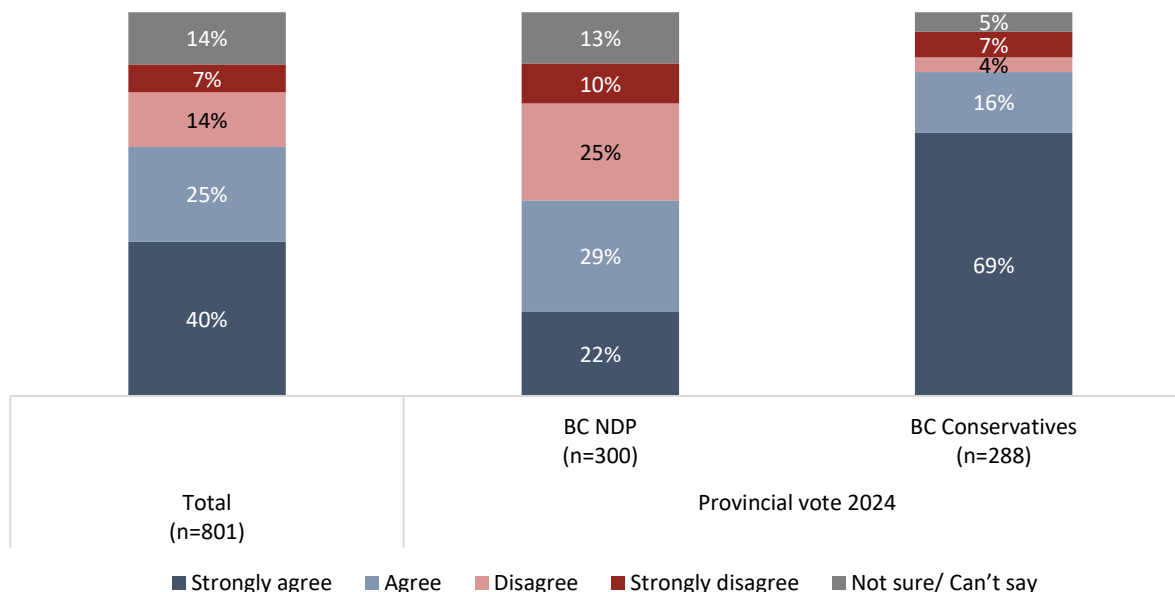
Half of past BC NDP voters say Eby is putting personal interests over province's

There are also questions from the electorate on Eby's motivation. Two-thirds (65%) of British Columbians believe he is "putting trying to stay in power over the interests of the province". Half (51%) of past BC NDP voters agree:

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Agree vs. disagree - "David Eby is putting trying to stay in power over the interests of the province"



Eby unfavourably by more than half, plurality don't know Doerkson or Lowan

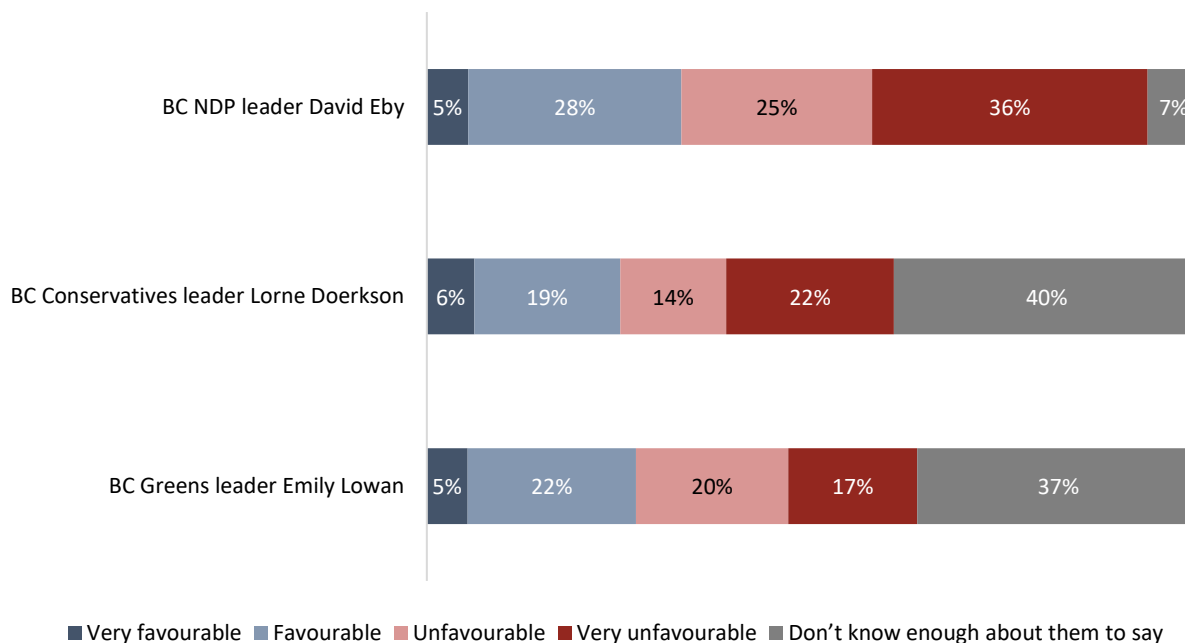
Eby has seen some recovery this year from previous lows in approval of his performance as premier as the U.S. tariff issue has moved from the back to the front burner. But as the campaign begins, there are a majority who view Eby unfavourably (61%), while one-third (33%) say they have a positive impression of the BC NDP leader.

But for many British Columbians, the alternatives are unknown. Two-in-five say they don't know enough to view Doerkson (40%) or Lowan (37%) positively or negatively. For those who do have an impression, it is more likely to be negative than positive for both (Doerkson -11 favourability; Lowan, -10):

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**Would you say you have a favourable or unfavourable view of the following
leaders:
(All respondents, n=801)**



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

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