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UCP & NDP EVENLY MATCHED AS UNOFFICIAL PROVINCIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN BEGINS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UCP & NDP Evenly Matched as Unofficial Provincial Election Campaign Begins

(Edmonton) Albertans will be heading to the polls this spring to elect a new provincial government, and the latest ThinkHQ Public Affairs Alberta survey provides three key observations about the upcoming race:

- It's largely a two-horse race between the United Conservatives (UCP) and New Democrats (NDP)
- The two parties are evenly matched as the unofficial campaign begins
- The outcome of the next provincial campaign will largely be decided by voters in Calgary

The Provincial Political Horserace

Presently, the UCP hold a slight three percentage point lead over the NDP in the province-wide decided vote (48% vs. 45%) followed by the Alberta Party well back at 4% and various other party alternatives at 1%. At present fully 12% of provincial voters are undecided about how they will vote in the next provincial election.

- The next provincial election will likely be a two-party choice for voters between the UCP and NDP. The Alberta Party, once capturing vote intentions in the mid-teens, has fallen below 5%. Similarly, support for the Wildrose Independence Party has evaporated since Danielle Smith became UCP leader
- At present, neither the UCP nor the NDP have a clear majority of seats. One of these parties will be Government following the next election, however at this stage neither can be certain of at least 44 legislature seats without capturing “leaning” or “tossup” constituencies
- Calgary voters will likely decide the outcome of the next provincial election, and that race is very divided. The UCP hold a nominal lead in Calgary CMA (47% vs. 45% for the NDP), but the NDP hold the same edge (47% vs. 45% UCP) within Calgary proper
- There are sizable gender and generational gaps in party support. Women and younger voters are disproportionately planning to vote NDP, while men and middle-aged and older voters tilt more toward the UCP

Many Voters Unimpressed with Alternatives

Voter turnout is likely to play a major role in the next provincial election, and at present, there is a sizable block of voters who are not impressed with the electoral choices available to them.

Indeed, almost four-in-ten (37%) agree with the statement, “I don’t really like any of the party/leader choices in Alberta today”. This sentiment is very high among undecideds (80%) and those considering a vote for the Alberta Party (73%) but is even relatively consistent among voters planning to support the front-running parties. Over one-third (35%) of those planning to vote UCP say they don’t really like their choices, compared to 27% of likely NDP voters.

Commentary

Commenting on the results of the survey, ThinkHQ Public Affairs President Marc Henry notes:

“The next provincial election is shaping up to be one of the most competitive in Alberta’s history.

As it sits today, the NDP can capture 20 seats out of Edmonton without breaking a sweat, and the UCP can say the same for most of the constituencies outside of the two biggest cities. But, neither the UCP nor NDP have a clear lock on Government at this point – both are shy of the 44 seats required for a majority without capturing “leaning” or “toss up” constituencies.

Calgary will be the real battleground for seats: 26 within city-limits, 29 including others in the CMA. It’s seat-rich and very divided today.

The UCP have made some notable gains with Danielle Smith as leader, largely by eliminating erosion on the right to the WRIP, but that tank is dry at this point.

Commentary ... continued

Eight-in-ten undecided voters don't really like the alternatives. Even 1/4 - 1/3 of voters looking at the NDP or UCP aren't especially happy about the decision. With this in mind, turnout is going to be a decisive factor in the next election.”

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Alberta's Political Horserace



If a provincial election were held today, which one of the following parties' candidate would you, yourself, be most likely to support?

		TREND	Region				
			Calgary	Edmonton	North	Central	South
			(n=364)	(n=327)	(n=131)	(n=118)	(n=107)
UCP	 48%	↑4	47%	36%	62%	67%	51%
NDP	 45%	↓1	45%	58%	34%	28%	40%
Alberta Party	 4%	↓3	5%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Another party	1%	↓1	1%	1%	1%	2%	4%

Base: Decided voters (n=1,048) | Initial undecided: 12% | *Totals do not add to 100% due to rounding

Eye on Alberta: Methodology

Approach: Online survey of Adult Albertans

Field dates: January 19-20, 2023

Sample size: January 2023 (n=1,144) | MOE +/- 2.9 ppts + increases with subgroups

Sampling: A random stratified sample of panelists, invited from the Angus Reid Forum panel

Weighting: Weighted to reflect gender, age and region of Alberta according to Stats Canada

Alberta's Political Horserace

If a provincial election were held today, which one of the following parties' candidate would you, yourself, be most likely to support?

		Gender		Age (Years)			
		TREND	Men	Women	18-34	35-54	55+
		From Dec'22	(n=534)	(n=511)	(n=333)	(n=377)	(n=338)
UCP	 48%	↑4	57%	39%	36%	52%	56%
NDP	 45%	↓1	38%	53%	55%	42%	40%
Alberta Party	 4%	↓3	4%	5%	6%	5%	2%
Another party	1%	↓1	1%	2%	3%	0%	2%

Base: Decided voters (n=1,048) | Initial undecided: 12% | *Totals do not add to 100% due to rounding

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Many Voters Unimpressed with Party Alternatives

The following is a list of statements that some people might say about provincial politics and the upcoming provincial election.
To what extent do you agree or disagree with each?

“I don’t really like any of the party / leader choices in Alberta”

	Provincial Vote Intention				
	Total Alberta	UCP	NDP	Alberta Party	Undecided
Base :	(n=1,144)	(n=505)	(n=476)	(n=47)*	(n=83)*
Agree	37%	35%	27%	73%	80%
Disagree	58%	60%	69%	25%	4%
Unsure	5%	5%	4%	1%	15%

Base: All respondents (n=1,144) | *Caution: Small sample size

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