



B.C. voters paying close attention to election, despite hearing more about U.S. presidential race

VoteLocal poll finds economy and COVID-19 remain the top concerns for voters province-wide

October 21, 2020 (Vancouver, B.C.) -- According to the latest [VoteLocal survey](#) of British Columbians, in the final week leading up to British Columbia's general election on October 24th, residents' top priorities remain unchanged – the economy and COVID-19 – with recent campaign controversies making little impact on voters' decisions.

VoteLocal's second province-wide survey during this campaign found that B.C. voters are paying close attention to this election, and almost half tuned in for the leaders' debates, but 53% of those surveyed say they are hearing more about the U.S. presidential election compared to the provincial election.

The survey of 500 British Columbians, conducted by Mustel Group in partnership with FleishmanHillard HighRoad, was completed online from October 15-18, 2020.

"In the current environment where pandemic precautions have driven many British Columbians to vote in advance, the parties' opportunity to influence voters is waning and few voters remain undecided at this late stage in the campaign," said Anna Lilly, Senior Vice President and Partner of FleishmanHillard HighRoad. "Voters are worried about the pandemic and its impact on the economy, and any scandals that have cropped up during the campaign don't appear to have made much of an impact."

"British Columbians appear to be as engaged in this provincial election, as previous elections," said Evi Mustel, Principal of Mustel Group. "Those who are more engaged are concerned about government's response to COVID-19, the economy and government accountability and are interested in party policies or promises. Those less interested than in past elections primarily cite the early election call as the reason for not being more engaged."

The parties' signature economic policies announced early in the campaign have varying degrees of support, not necessarily along party lines. Policies targeted at supporting people with lower incomes are more popular than broad-based tax cuts. The Green Party's proposal to introduce a basic income for youth aging out of care and beginning a transition to a universal basic income program is the most popular idea.

- The Greens' basic income proposal is strongly supported by 38% of voters, and moderately supported by 37%, with the highest support among women.
- The BC NDP's offer of a \$1,000 COVID-19 relief payment for families earning up to \$125,000 is strongly supported by 21% of those surveyed and moderately supported by 38%.

- The BC Liberals' proposal to eliminate the 7% Provincial Sales Tax in its first year and re-introduce it at 3% the second year is strongly supported by 26% of voters and moderately supported by 21%, with the highest support among men.

The leaders' debates, which 46% say they watched or heard, did little to sway voters. Among those who tuned in, 82% say it didn't change who they intended to vote for. Among undecided voters, only 9% say the debates influenced their voting decision.

There is very high awareness of recent incidents and comments related to sexism, racism and privilege during the campaign, but few people say these are influencing their vote. 83% of voters are aware of sexist or racist incidents reported during the campaign, while 75% are aware of controversial comments by party leaders during the debate. 19% say these issues will have a strong influence on their vote; 34% say they will have some influence; and, 34% say they will have no influence on their vote.

The survey found British Columbians are split on whether they'd like to see a majority or minority government after this election, with 45% hoping for a party to secure a majority, and 42% wishing for another minority government.

A full report on the second 2020 Provincial Election survey is available online at www.votelocalbc.ca.

VoteLocal

VoteLocal is a research initiative of Mustel Group and FleishmanHillard HighRoad aimed at understanding how issues influence elections. VoteLocal seeks to raise awareness of issues in communities and to encourage voter participation in elections.

Survey Methodology

The VoteLocal survey included a random sample of British Columbia adults, 18 years of age or over (n=500). The survey was completed online from October 15-18, 2020.

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