

## ALBERTA ELECTION 2008 – POLITICAL NUMBERS

# Tory Fortunes Hinge on Voter Turnout as Alberta Prepares for Legislative Ballot

*Despite his party's lead, Alberta Premier has a negative momentum score.*

[CALGARY – Feb. 29, 2008] - As the Alberta election campaign winds to a close, a new Angus Reid Strategies poll shows a contest that could tighten significantly, especially depending on turnout rates.

In the online survey of a representative provincial sample, Premier Ed Stelmach and the Progressive Conservative Party are leading Kevin Taft's Liberals by 15 percentage points (43% to 28%).

The same poll, however, shows that among Albertans who claim they are "absolutely certain" to vote on Monday, the gap between the PC's and Liberals drops to nine percentage points (39% to 30%). In many senses, the fate of Premier Stelmach and his party will rest on turnout levels on Election Day.

This new poll confirms a trend evident in an earlier Angus Reid survey carried out midway through the provincial legislative campaign, which showed that the disapproval rating for Stelmach hovers around the 50 per cent mark, that only three-in-ten (30%) Alberta residents feel that he would make the best premier, and that a majority (52%) of Albertans feel that it is time for a change in government in the province. In addition, Stelmach is the only one of the five party leaders to register a negative momentum score (-13) over the past two weeks.

Faced with this negative voter mood and continuing concerns in the province about health care, the environment and public services, Alberta's Progressive Conservatives are facing the most significant electoral cloud they've had to face since 1993.

## KEY FINDINGS

- » **Among Decided Voters: PC 43%, Lib. 28%, NDP 13%, WA 10%, Grn. 7%**
- » **Among Certain Voters: PC 39%, Lib. 30%, NDP 13%, WA 10%, Grn. 8%**
- » **Momentum Scores: Stelmach -13, Taft +5, Mason +5, Read +1, Hinman +7**
- » **Best Premier: Stelmach 30%, Taft 28%, Not sure 42%**
- » **52% say it is time for a change in government, 26% disagree, 22% are not sure**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

*From February 27 to February 28, 2008, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 753 adult Albertans. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.6 %, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

If there is any area of encouragement for the Stelmach government, it is the relatively low rating for Liberal leader Kevin Taft. Only 25 per cent of respondents approve of his performance, and 28 per cent believe he would make the best premier for Alberta.

In the decided voter category, the New Democratic Party (NDP) is third with 13 per cent, followed by the Wildrose Alliance Party with 10 per cent, and the Green Party with seven per cent. Among those absolutely certain to vote on Monday, the only change for the three minor parties is a one-point gain for the Greens.

Taft maintains roughly the same momentum score (+5) he posted in the previous survey (23% of respondents say their opinion of the Liberal leader has improved, while 18% say it has worsened). The NDP's Brian Mason (+5), the Green Party's George Read (+1) and Paul Hinman of the Wildrose Alliance Party (+7) all did better than Stelmach in connecting with the public over the past fortnight.

Just days before the provincial election, roughly one-in-five respondents (21%) remain undecided. More than half of PC (57%), Liberal (57%) and Green (61%) voters say their choice in this election is final. Conversely, 62 per cent of NDP voters and 57 per cent of Wildrose Alliance voters say they could change their minds before Election Day.

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<b>Alberta Election 2008 – Political Numbers</b>		
In the Alberta provincial election on March 3rd, which one of the following parties are you most likely to vote for in your riding?		
	<b>Decided Voters</b>	<b>Absolutely Certain Voters</b>
<b>Progressive Conservative</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Liberal</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>New Democratic Party</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Wildrose Alliance Party</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Green Party</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>

<b>Alberta Election 2008 – Political Numbers</b>					
And, how certain are you that you will vote for this party?					
	<b>PC voters</b>	<b>Liberal voters</b>	<b>NDP Voters</b>	<b>Green Voters</b>	<b>Wildrose Alliance Voters</b>
<b>I will definitely vote for this party</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>I could change my mind before March 3rd</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>57%</b>

<b>Alberta Election 2008 – Political Numbers</b>			
Do you approve or disapprove of (...) performance?			
	<b>Approve</b>	<b>Disapprove</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
<b>Ed Stelmach as Premier</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Kevin Taft as leader of the Liberal Party</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Brian Mason as leader of the NDP</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>George Read as leader of the Green Party</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>Paul Hinman as leader of the Wildrose Alliance Party</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>67%</b>

<b>Alberta Election 2008 – Political Numbers</b>					
Over the last couple weeks, has your impression of the performance of the following provincial leaders and parties changed?					
	<b>Improved</b>	<b>Stayed the same</b>	<b>Worsened</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>Momentum Score</b>
<b>Ed Stelmach and the Progressive Conservative Party</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>-13</b>
<b>Kevin Taft and the Liberal Party</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>+5</b>
<b>Brian Mason and the NDP</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>+5</b>
<b>George Read and the Green Party</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>+1</b>
<b>Paul Hinman and the Wildrose Alliance Party</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>+7</b>

<b>Alberta Election 2008 – Political Numbers</b>		
Of the following provincial party leaders, which one do you think would be the best Premier of Alberta?		
	<b>Feb. 28</b>	<b>Feb. 20</b>
<b>It is time for a change in government in Alberta—a different provincial party should be elected into power</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>It is not time for a change in government in Alberta—the provincial Progressive Conservative Party should be re-elected</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>25%</b>

<b>Alberta Election 2008 – Political Numbers</b>		
Of the following provincial party leaders, which one do you think would be the best Premier of Alberta?		
	<b>Feb. 28</b>	<b>Feb. 20</b>
<b>Ed Stelmach</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Kevin Taft</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>45%</b>

*Angus Reid Strategies is a North American full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995. Located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal, our team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research.*

*Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel ([www.angusreidforum.com](http://www.angusreidforum.com)), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.*

*Angus Reid Strategies has been successful in predicting the outcome of last year's provincial elections in:*

*Quebec: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=37>*

*Manitoba: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=56>*

*Ontario: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=129>*

*Saskatchewan: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=138>*

*More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>*

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**For more information, please contact  
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:  
[www.angusreidstrategies.com](http://www.angusreidstrategies.com)**