

ELECTION RACE TIGHT IN FINAL DAYS

NDP Holds 3-Point Lead Over The PCs (46% to 43%); Liberal Support Hits Single Digits (7%)

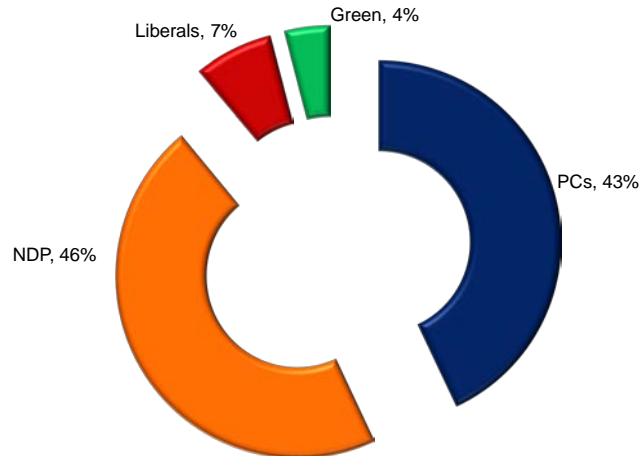
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Winnipeg – As the 2011 Manitoba election campaign enters its final stretch, Greg Selinger’s New Democrats enjoy a slight lead over Hugh McFadyen’s Progressive Conservatives, according to a Probe Research telephone survey of 1,000 Manitoba adults conducted September 21st to 28th exclusively for the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

Forty-six percent of decided Manitoba voters surveyed said they would re-elect the NDP to a fourth term, compared to 43 percent who intend to cast ballots for the Progressive Conservatives on Oct. 4th. Jon Gerrard’s Liberals, meanwhile, have faltered significantly in this campaign, at just seven percent support among decided voters, and now poll in the single digits alongside the James Beddome-led Green Party (4%). Nearly one-in-four survey respondents (23%) were unable or unwilling to identify their party preference.

The survey results show profoundly polarized urban and rural electorates, with NDP support province-wide fuelled by its significant strength in Winnipeg, where more than one-half of decided voters intend to cast a ballot for this party. Outside Winnipeg, the PCs register an equally substantial lead over their NDP rivals, which suggests the next Legislature may be even more sharply divided along regional lines.

"Which party's candidate are you most likely to support in this provincial election?" (n=1,000)



Base: Decided Voters

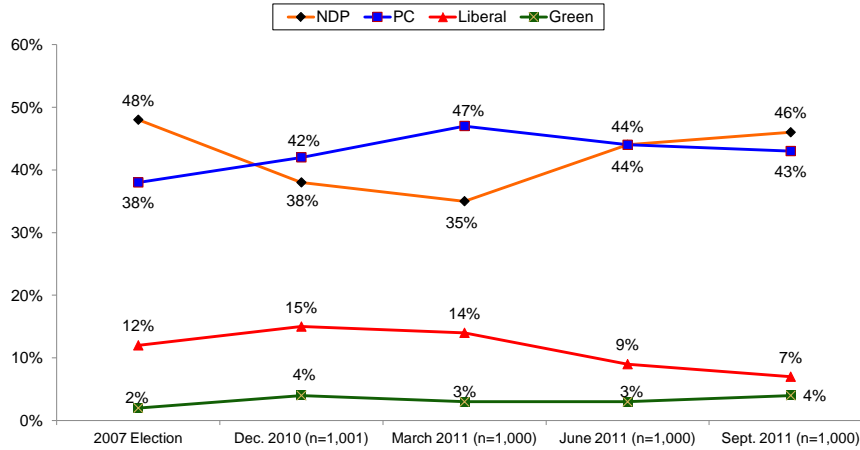
NDP Hold Slight Edge Over the PCs

Heading into the final stretch, 46 percent of decided Manitobans plan to cast ballots for the NDP. This is down from the 48 percent the party won in the 2007 provincial election, but is up slightly (+2%) from the last Probe Research survey conducted in June. With 43 percent support, the PCs look poised to improve on their 2007 election result (+5).

The current three-point NDP lead is considerably tighter than their 10-point win in 2007 and their 13-point win in 2003. It is, however, instructive to note that the Doer NDP's first majority in 1999 was won with a three-point lead at the polls.

Provincial Party Support

"Which party's candidate are you most likely to support in this provincial election?" (n=1,000)



Base: All respondents

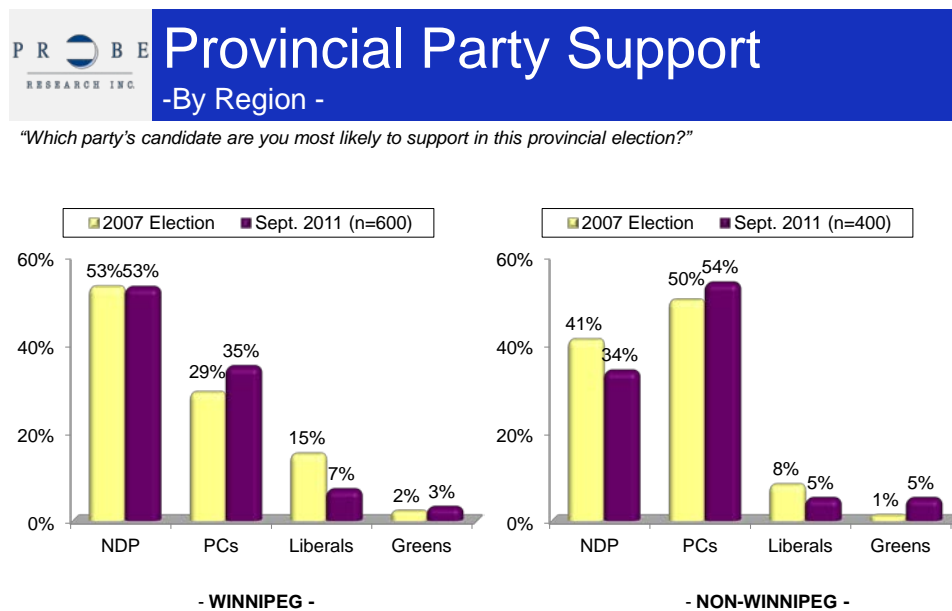
The Liberals have witnessed the most dramatic decline in their popularity – just seven percent would cast ballots for the Liberals in this election, compared to 12 percent who voted for this party in 2007. As the graph above shows, Liberal support was in the mid-teens as recently as March, but dropped into the single digits in June and has remained there throughout the campaign. The Green Party, meanwhile, has the backing of four percent of decided voters, which would be an improvement (+2%) upon their 2007 election showing.

Overall, 23 percent of voters were undecided or refused to indicate which party they would cast a ballot for on Tuesday, October 4th.

A Tale of Two Provinces

The Manitoba electorate is sharply split along regional lines. Support for the NDP remains strong in the City of Winnipeg, while outside the provincial capital the Progressive Conservatives have become the choice of half the electorate.

In Winnipeg, more than one-half of decided voters (53%) said they will cast ballots for an NDP candidate, which is the same level of support that the NDP recorded in the 2007 election. The PCs, however, have made gains in the NDP's urban stronghold, with more than one-in-three city voters (35%) now indicating they will vote for a PC candidate (up from 29% in 2007). Much of this increase in PC support in Winnipeg appears to be at the expense of the Liberals: just seven percent of adult Winnipeggers now say they would vote for a Liberal candidate, down substantially from 15 percent in 2007. Three percent of Winnipeg voters, meanwhile, say they will cast a ballot for a Green Party candidate (versus 2% in 2007).



Base: Decided Voters

Outside the provincial capital, the Progressive Conservatives are the choice of more than one-half (54%) of decided voters, which is higher than the 50 percent share of the “rural” vote the PCs captured in 2007. Support for the NDP has decreased substantially outside Winnipeg to 34 percent, down seven points from 2007. The Liberals and Greens are both polling five percent outside Winnipeg (-3% for the Liberals, +4% for the Greens versus 2007).

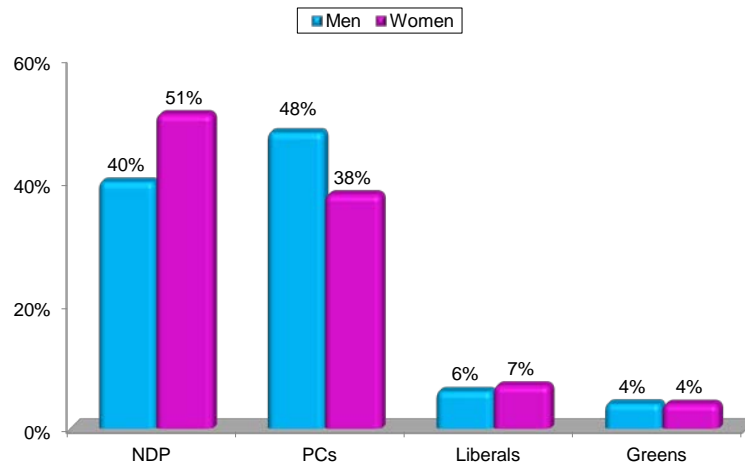
Looking within each area of the city, the NDP holds a significant lead over its rivals in the Core area (69%, versus 19% for the PCs, 7% for the Liberals and 6% for the Greens) and the Northeast (61%, versus 32% for the PCs). In the battleground constituencies of Southeast Winnipeg, the NDP enjoy a more modest edge over the PCs (51% versus 39% respectively). The two parties are statistically tied in the Northwest (47% for the NDP vs. 41% for the PCs, respectively) and Southwest (44% PC vs. 41% NDP) areas of Winnipeg. The Liberals post their highest support in Southwest Winnipeg which includes the River Heights seat held by party leader Jon Gerrard (14%) and in Northwest Winnipeg, which includes the Inkster/Tyndall Park seat vacated by former Liberal MLA-turned-MP Kevin Lamoureux, (9%).

PROVINCIAL PARTY STANDINGS IN RURAL AND URBAN MANITOBA -- September 2011 -- Net Voting Intentions Among Decided Voters					
<i>"If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party's candidate would you be most likely to support?"</i>					
	Total Manitoba	Winnipeg	Non- Winnipeg		
(Base)	(1,000) (%)	(600) (%)	(400) (%)		
NDP	46	53	34		
PC	43	35	54		
Liberal	7	7	5		
Greens	4	3	5		
	Northwest Winnipeg	Southwest Winnipeg	Southeast Winnipeg	Northeast Winnipeg	Core Area
(Base)	(129) (%)	(138) (%)	(105) (%)	(106) (%)	(122) (%)
NDP	47	41	51	61	69
PC	41	44	39	32	19
Liberal	9	14	3	2	7
Greens	2	1	5	1	6

Women Still Hold The Key To an NDP Majority

There continues to be an important gender gap in Manitobans' party support.

Currently, one-half of women voters (51%) indicate they would cast ballots for an NDP candidate, compared to 38 percent of women who support the PCs and seven percent who prefer the Liberals. Nearly half of decided male voters (48%), on the other hand, would cast ballots for a PC candidate, versus 40 percent who prefer the NDP and six percent who plan to vote Liberal.



Base: Decided Voters

The NDP's base of support is slightly stronger among middle-aged voters (49% of those aged 35-54 prefer this party, compared to 42 percent who support the PCs), with very little difference between the two parties among younger voters aged 18-34 years (43% each for both the PCs and NDP) and older voters aged 55 years and over (45% prefer the PCs and 44% back the NDP, respectively).

A key demographic indicator for predicting party support is voters' levels of formal education. Today, university and college graduates are more likely to prefer the NDP (49%, versus 40% who plan to cast ballots for a PC candidate), while those with a high school diploma or less are more partial to the PCs (50%, versus 40% who prefer the NDP). In terms of income, the NDP has strong appeal among lower-income voters (49% among those earning less than \$30,000/year, versus 33% PC) and those earning slightly higher than average household incomes (48% of those earning \$60,000-\$99,999/year, compared to 40% who prefer the PCs).

PROVINCIAL PARTY STANDINGS AMONG SELECTED SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS -- September 2011 -- Net Voting Intentions Among Decided Voters							
<i>"If a provincial election were held tomorrow, which party's candidate would you be most likely to support?"</i>							
	Total	Gender		Age			
		Men	Women	18-34	35-54	55+	
(Base)	(1,000) (%)	(484) (%)	(516) (%)	(314) (%)	(358) (%)	(280) (%)	
NDP	46	40	51	43	49	44	
PC	43	48	38	43	42	45	
Liberal	7	6	7	9	4	7	
Greens	4	4	4	4	5	2	
	Education			Income			
	HS or Less	Some Post-Sec.	Post-Sec. Grad	<\$30K	\$30K-\$59K	\$60K-\$99K	\$100K+
(Base)	(323) (%)	(174) (%)	(490) (%)	(115) (%)	(200) (%)	(308) (%)	(203) (%)
NDP	40	47	49	49	46	48	44
PC	50	40	40	33	44	40	49
Liberal	7	4	7	8	5	8	6
Greens	2	8	4	9	3	3	1

PC, NDP Support Is Solidified

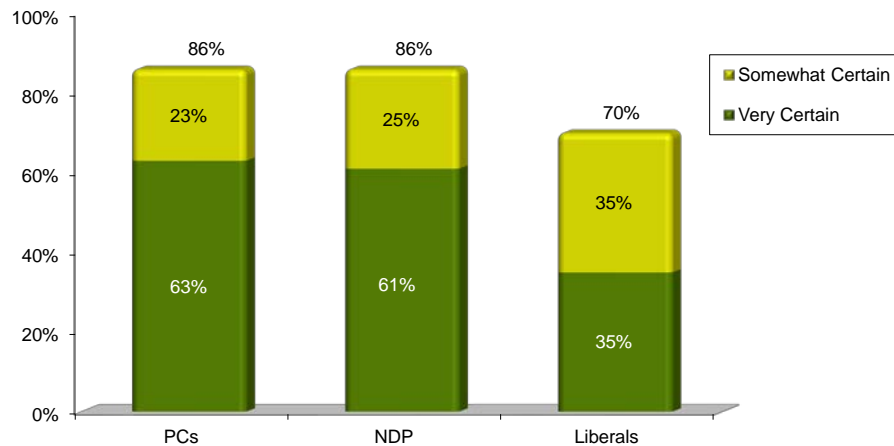
When asked to indicate how certain they are to vote for their chosen party, most NDP and PC supporters say they are unlikely to change their minds between now and election day. Just better than six-in-ten PC supporters (63%) and NDP supporters (61%) say they are “very certain” to vote for their chosen party on October 4th. Liberal support, on the other hand, is more ephemeral: just one-in-three Liberal supporters (35%) are “very certain” to cast ballots for this party, with an additional 35 percent saying they are “somewhat certain” about their choice.

P R B E
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Vote Certainty

- By Party Preference -

*“How certain are you that you will actually vote for (PARTY) in the upcoming provincial election?
Are you ...?” (n=1,000)*



Base: Decided Voters

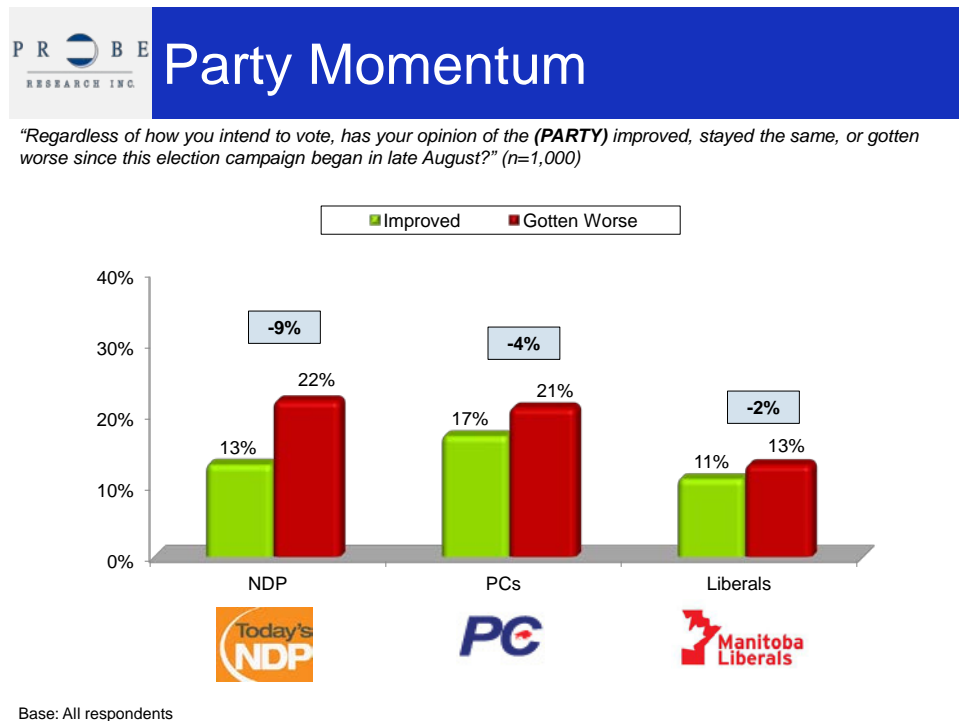
Major Parties Maintain Support From 2007

A "retention analysis" comparing how Manitobans voted in 2007 to current voter preferences reveals that both the PCs and NDP have held onto most of their support from the 2007 election, with the edge going to the PCs. Just more than four-in-five (82%) of those who voted for the PCs four years ago plan to do so again, with handfuls opting for the NDP or remaining undecided at this time. The NDP retention is marginally lower: 71 percent of their 2007 support is still onboard, but one-in-ten (9%) said they intend to vote PC this time and a similar number are sitting on the sidelines (11%). The Liberals are holding less than a third of their 2007 support base (28%), and are bleeding voters equally to each other party (26% to the NDP and 20% to the PCs) and to the undecided column (20%).

PARTY RETENTION LEVELS				
- Where Are 2007 Voters Today? -				
Current Voting Intentions	Manitoba Vote 2007			
	NDP (%)	PC (%)	Liberal (%)	Didn't Vote/ Don't Recall (%)
NDP	71	6	26	27
PC	9	82	20	32
Liberal	4	1	28	4
Green	3	1	3	2
Undecided/ refused	11	10	20	33

Parties Fail To Impress Voters in Campaign

No party seems to have established any significant momentum during the campaign. Indeed, public perceptions of the NDP have actually worsened since the campaign began. Neither the Progressive Conservatives nor the Liberals, however, have impressed large numbers of Manitobans.



When asked if their view of each party has improved, worsened or stayed the same since the outset of the campaign, a larger proportion of Manitoba voters said they now think *less* of the NDP than those who said their opinion of this party has improved (22% vs. 13% whose view of the NDP has improved since the start of the campaign). Slightly higher numbers of voters also think less of the PCs (21%, versus 17% whose opinion of the PCs has improved) and the Liberals (13%, versus 11% respectively) than they did prior to the campaign.

This province-wide survey was designed and conducted by Probe Research Inc. via telephone interviews conducted between September 21st and September 28th, 2011 among a random and representative sampling of 1,000 Manitoba adults. With a sample of 1,000, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within +/- 3.1 percentage points of what they would have been if the entire adult population of Manitoba had been interviewed. The margin-of-error is higher within each of the survey's population sub-groups. Modified random-digit dialing was used to ensure that all Manitoba adults would have an equal opportunity to participate in this Probe Research survey. Minor statistical weighting has been applied to this sample to ensure that the age and gender balance correspond with the province as a whole.

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