

HEALTH CARE, CRIME TOP LIST OF PUBLIC CONCERNS

NDP Seen as Best-Equipped to Manage Health Care; Voters Look to the PCs to Tackle Crime

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

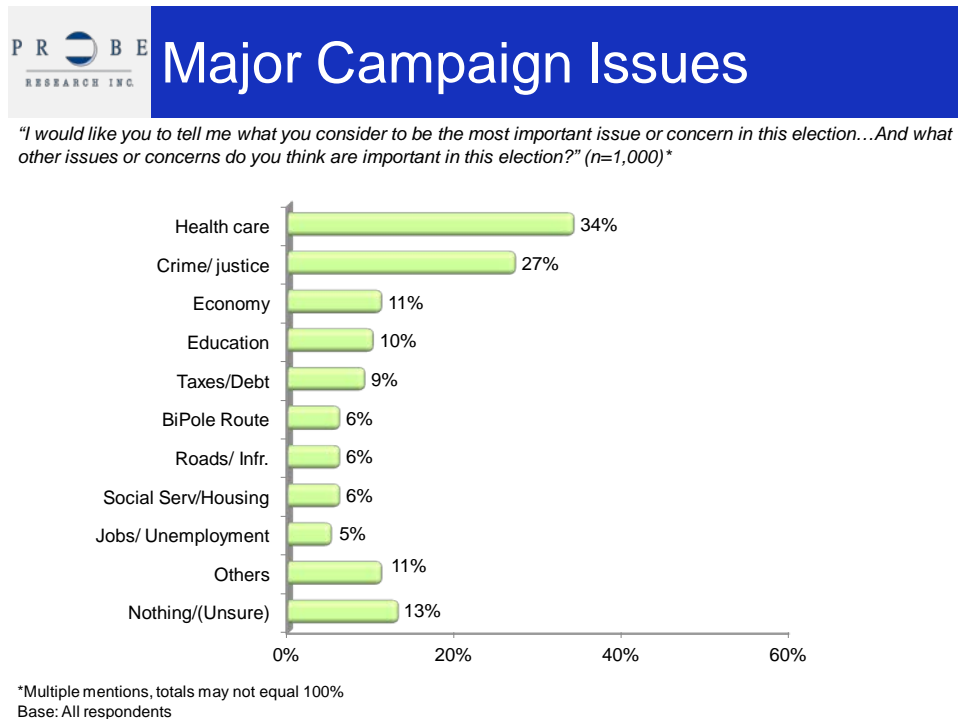
Winnipeg – With health care and crime foremost on the minds of most Manitoba voters, the New Democrats and Progressive Conservatives can each lay claim to holding public confidence on one of these pressing concerns. Health care is an area where voters expect a better performance from the NDP, while voters are more likely to turn to the PCs for solutions to their fears about crime. These findings emerged from a province-wide telephone survey of 1,000 adults taken by Probe Research exclusively for the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

Other survey findings reveal that voters are more likely to entrust the Progressive Conservatives to manage economic issues, while voters are more likely to view the NDP as the party best suited to improve public education and manage the province's largest public utility, Manitoba Hydro.

Health Care, Crime Dominate Voters' Campaign Issues Agenda

Two issues - health care and crime - are at the forefront of citizens' minds when they contemplate their most pressing concerns in this current provincial election campaign.

One-third of citizens (34%) point to health care as the top issue in the campaign. Interestingly, there is very little variation in the stated importance of this issue across Manitoba (33% in Winnipeg versus 34% outside Winnipeg), although women are significantly more likely than men (41% versus 26%) to single out health care concerns. Those who intend to support provincial NDP candidates were only slightly more likely than Progressive Conservative supporters to mention health care as their primary election concern (37% versus 33% respectively).



Crime is also very much on voters' minds as they prepare to cast their ballots, with more than one-in-four (27%) suggesting that this is a major concern for them. Crime and public safety concerns are far more apparent in Winnipeg than outside of the city (36% versus 15%), although those intending to vote for the Progressive Conservatives are somewhat more likely than NDP voters (32% versus 25%) to point to crime as their most pressing concerns.

Other issues mentioned with some frequency include the state of the economy (11%), education (10%), taxes and government spending/debt (9%), the routing of Manitoba Hydro's BiPole III transmission line, infrastructure/roads, social services and housing (6% each), as well as jobs/unemployment (5%).

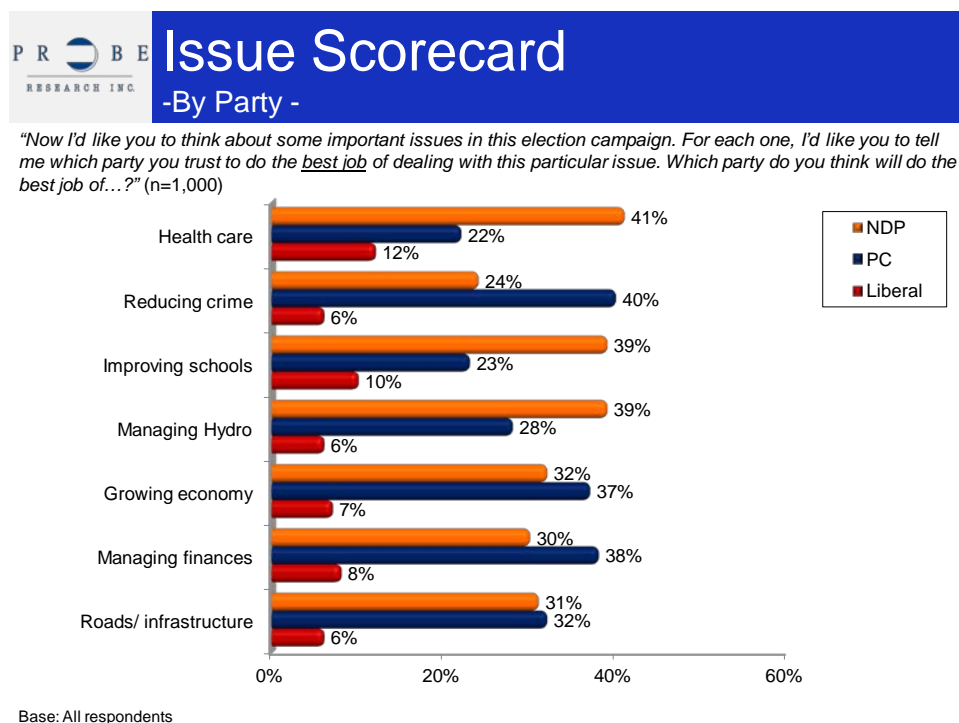
Most Important Campaign Issue -By Gender, Age & Voting Intention-										
<i>"I would like you to tell me what you consider to be the most important issue or concern in this election?"</i>										
	Total MB (1,000)	Men (484)	Women (516)	18-34 (314)	35-54 (354)	55+ (280)	NDP (352)	PC (330)	Lib. (50)	Undec. (143)
Health care	34%	26%	41%	24%	38%	38%	37%	33%	30%	33%
Crime	27%	28%	27%	24%	28%	29%	25%	32%	17%	29%
Economy	11%	16%	7%	8%	14%	10%	11%	13%	9%	9%
Education	10%	6%	13%	15%	9%	5%	13%	8%	3%	11%
Taxes/Debt	9%	13%	6%	8%	11%	9%	6%	13%	11%	11%
BiPole III	6%	8%	4%	3%	6%	10%	4%	9%	4%	7%
Roads/ Infra.	6%	8%	3%	8%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Social Serv./ Housing	6%	5%	6%	6%	5%	7%	8%	3%	13%	4%
Jobs	5%	5%	4%	5%	6%	4%	5%	4%	8%	7%
Nothing/ (Unsure)	13%	13%	13%	19%	8%	9%	10%	10%	13%	18%

**Totals exceed 100% as multiple responses were accepted.*

Party Strength Varies by Issue

Voters surveyed were asked to indicate which party they believed would perform best on seven selected issues. Overall, the NDP has the lead on social issues, while the Progressive Conservatives edge out the NDP on economic matters, in addition to their solid lead on crime reduction.

Improving Manitoba's health care system – perceived by voters to be the most critical issue in this campaign - is regarded as an area where voters trust the NDP. Overall, 41 percent felt that the NDP would perform best on this front compared with almost half as many (22%) who thought the PCs would be best entrusted with the future of the province's health care system. Twelve percent suggested that the Liberals would perform best on this issue.



The campaign's other major issue area – *reducing crime* – is an evident strength for Manitoba's Progressive Conservatives. Here, some 40 percent pointed to the PCs as the party best able to ensure public safety and reduce crime, compared with only 24 percent who felt the NDP would perform best on this front. Six percent felt the Liberals would do the best job of reducing crime.

Improving public schools was also viewed as a clear strength for Manitoba's governing New Democrats, as 39 percent pointed to the NDP as the party best suited to improve Manitoba's public schools. Only 23 percent said that the PCs would perform best here and 10 percent felt this was an area of Liberal party strength.

Managing the future of Manitoba Hydro was also seen as a strong suit for Manitoba's New Democrats. Thirty-nine percent of those surveyed suggested that the NDP would be the best guardians of Manitoba Hydro compared with 28 percent for the PCs. Six percent said the Liberals would be best equipped to manage this public utility.

Growing Manitoba's economy is an area where the Progressive Conservatives have an edge, but not a large one: Overall, some 37 percent of voters surveyed felt the PC's would do the best job of ensuring the growth of the provincial economy compared to 32 percent who named the NDP as best on this front and seven percent who said the Liberals would do the best job.

Similarly, *managing the province's finances* shows a modest PC advantage: 38 percent of those surveyed felt that the Progressive Conservatives would be the best party to oversee the public treasury compared with 30 percent who said this would be an area of NDP strength and eight percent who identified the Liberals as the best stewards of the public purse.

Maintaining the province's roads and bridges is an issue where there is no clear winner. Thirty-two percent of those surveyed suggested the PCs would be the best party to improve or maintain the province's roads, bridges and other infrastructure, while virtually the same number (31%) felt the NDP would do the best job on this front.

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.

For more information on this survey, please contact:

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