

Public Disapproves Of Almost Everyone In BC Teachers Contract Dispute

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BC Teachers (38%, up 1 point) Slightly Ahead of Provincial Government (30%, unchanged) in Being Fair and Reasonable

A new Ipsos Reid poll shows that last week's three day legal strike action has had little impact on public opinion about the contract dispute between BC teachers and the provincial government.

Overall, teachers continue to have a slight public opinion advantage over the provincial government in terms of who is being more fair and reasonable. However, the public largely disapproves of the actions of both sides in this dispute. The poll also shows that British Columbians are split on the provincial government's Bill 22.

More Fair and Reasonable

BC teachers continue to have a slight edge in public opinion, with 38% of British Columbians thinking that BC teachers (represented by BCTF) have been more fair and reasonable in this contract dispute (18% "strongly", 20% "somewhat"). Three-in-ten residents (30%) think the provincial government (represented by BCPSEA) has been more fair and reasonable in this contract dispute (16% "strongly", 14% "somewhat"). These numbers are essentially unchanged from previous poll when teachers led by a margin of 37% to 30%.

The remaining one-third (32%) of British Columbians do not view either side as being more fair and reasonable in this contract dispute. Nearly one-quarter (23%, up 3 points) say "neither" side has been more fair and reasonable, 1% (down 1 point) say "both" sides have been equally fair and reasonable, and 8% (down 4 points) are undecided.

By demographics:

* BC teachers have a bigger advantage among younger residents.

- Among 18 to 34 years (42% BC teachers vs. 23% provincial government)
- Among 35 to 54 years (39% BC teachers vs. 33% provincial government)
- Among 55+ years (33% BC teachers vs. 33% provincial government)

* BC teachers also do better with women.

- Among women (41% BC teachers vs. 25% provincial government)
- Among men (34% BC teachers vs. 36% provincial government)

By past vote:

* 2009 NDP voters favour BC teachers by a margin of 60% to 13%.

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* 2009 BC Liberal voters favour the provincial government by a margin of 51% to 20%.

Approval of Dispute Participants

BC teachers in general are the only party that receives more public approval (54%) than disapproval (41%) for their actions in this contract dispute.

All other parties have more public disapproval than approval. Overall, parties associated with the BC teachers' side of the dispute do slightly better than those associated with the provincial government's side of the dispute.

Support for Bill 22

British Columbians are divided in their views of the provincial government's Bill 22, which orders a six-month cooling-off period, the appointment of a mediator, and fines for any illegal strike action. Half (47%, including 24% "strongly") say they approve of the bill and half (49%, including 33% "strongly") say they disapprove of the bill. Four percent are undecided.

By demographics:

* Support for Bill 22 increases with age.

- Among 18 to 34 years (42% approve vs. 51% disapprove)
- Among 45 to 54 years (46% approve vs. 50% disapprove)
- Among 55+ years (52% approve vs. 46% disapprove)

- * Support for Bill 22 is higher among men.
- Among women (42% approve vs. 53% disapprove)
- Among men (52% approve vs. 45% disapprove)

By past vote:

- * 2009 NDP voters generally disapprove of Bill 22 (24% approve vs. 73% disapprove)
- * 2009 BC Liberal voters generally approve of Bill 22 (66% approve vs. 31% disapprove)

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll of 1,200 adult British Columbians conducted online using Ipsos Reid's™ national online household panel between March 9 and March 12, 2012. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of ± 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The margin of error would be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual BC population according to 2006 Census data.

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