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Vancouver, BC - It appears that Gordon Campbell's premiership has weathered the initial storm but rough waters may still lie ahead. While the Premier and his party have maintained sufficient support to form a majority government, the degree to which Gordon Campbell is able to put the matter behind him will ultimately depend on his personal ability to rebuild trust and convince British Columbians he has the moral authority to lead.

A new Ipsos-Reid/CTV poll shows that British Columbians are evenly split over whether Gordon Campbell should resign (50%) his position or stay on (48%) as Premier of the province in the wake of being arrested and charged with driving under the influence of alcohol while vacationing in Maui, Hawaii.



However, the emotional apology he delivered on Sunday appears to have resonated with British Columbians as 62% say they accept his apology and 56% agree that “this incident is primarily a personal mistake and does not reflect on Campbell’s ability to make decisions as Premier”. Furthermore, 58% say it is possible for Campbell to earn back their trust.

Meanwhile, support for the BC Liberals and approval of Gordon Campbell has remained essentially unchanged. If an election were held tomorrow, 41% of decided voters in BC say they would vote for the BC Liberals - only three points lower than in December 2002 and within the margin of error - and 38% say they approve of Gordon Campbell’s performance as Premier. Experience shows that polling numbers in this range would still yield a majority government for the BC Liberals.

But, despite their apparent willingness to forgive the Premier, some political damage has been done. Many BC residents (74%) agree that “Gordon Campbell is being a hypocrite, because if this incident had happened to any other politician, he would demand their resignation” and 55% say he has lost the moral authority to lead.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/CTV poll conducted on January 13th, 2003. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 800 adult British Columbians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult British Columbian population been polled. The margin of error will 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 British Columbia population according to the 2001 Census data.



British Columbians Dead Split Over Whether Premier Gordon Campbell Should Resign (50%) or Stay On (48%) in Wake of Drinking and Driving Charge

Since the news of Premier Campbell being arrested and charged with drinking and driving while on vacation in Maui became public on Friday, public debate has been preoccupied with the question of whether or not he should resign. It appears that British Columbians are evenly split on the matter with 50% saying he should resign (39% strongly, 11% somewhat) and 48% saying he should stay on (28% strongly, 20% somewhat).

- Residents of Vancouver Island (59%) are more likely than residents in the rest of BC (48%) to say the Premier should resign.
- Lower and middle income residents (55%) and union households (55%) are more likely than high income residents (48%) and non-union households (48%) to say Campbell should resign.

Six in Ten (62%) Accept His Apology and 56% Say the Incident Does Not Reflect on His Ability To Make Decisions as Premier

Premier Campbell choked back tears as he offered his apology to British Columbians, his colleagues and his family. In response, six in ten (62%) of British Columbians say they “personally accept the Premier’s apology for his actions”. In addition, many (56%) agree with the government that this was “primarily a personal mistake and does not reflect on Campbell’s ability to make decisions as Premier”. This includes four in ten (37%) who “strongly agree” and one in five (19%) who “somewhat agree”. In contrast, 43% disagree (29% “strongly disagree”, 14% “somewhat disagree”). In his apology, Campbell acknowledged his obligation to regain the “trust and confidence of the people of this province”. In all, a majority (58%) of British Columbians agrees (24% “strongly agree”, 34%



“somewhat agree”) that this is possible while a minority (42%) disagrees (29% “strongly disagree”, 13% “somewhat disagree”).

- Men are more likely than women to say they accept the Premier’s apology (66% vs. 58%) , to say the incident does not reflect on Campbell’s ability to make decisions as Premier (60% vs. 52%) and to say it is possible for Campbell to regain the trust of British Columbians (60% vs. 55%).
- Residents aged 55+ (66%) and households with income over \$60K (65%) are more likely than those aged 18-34 (58%) and households with income under \$30K (55%) to say they accept his apology.
- Non-union households are more likely than union households to accept Campbell’s apology (66% vs. 53%), to say the incident does not affect his job as Premier (59% vs. 50%) and to say it is possible for him to regain trust (60% vs. 52%).
- Residents of the Interior (63%) are most likely to agree the incident does not reflect on his ability to make decisions as Premier, while residents of the Island (43%) are the least likely to agree.

Meanwhile, Support for BC Liberals (41%) and Campbell’s Approval Rating (38%) Hold Steady

Even though the incident has garnered much controversy and national attention, the incident does not seem to have had a negative impact on support for the governing Liberals or on the Premier’s approval rating. In all, if an election were held tomorrow, 41% of decided voters say they would vote for the BC Liberals. This is essentially unchanged (within the margin of error) from December 2002 when they received support from 44% of the population.

Similarly, approval of the job that Gordon Campbell is doing as Premier has not fallen. Currently, 38% approve of his performance including 14% who “strongly approve” and 24%



who “moderately approve”. Meanwhile, 59% disapprove of his performance (41% “strongly disapprove”, 18% “moderately disapprove”). These numbers are essentially unchanged from the ratings he received in December 2002 (37% approve, 56% disapprove). As a point of comparison, the lowest approval rating of two other embattled BC Premiers was 19% for Glen Clark and 21% for Mike Harcourt.

Meanwhile, support for BC’s other parties also remains relatively unchanged with the NDP at 34% support (up three points), the Green Party at 18% (up one point), and BC Unity at 3% (down two points). NDP Leader Joy McPhail’s approval rating is up slightly (four points) from 49% in December 2002 to 53% today.

- Support for the Liberals and approval of Campbell is highest in the Lower Mainland (43% Liberals, 40% Campbell) , among men (44%, 43%), those aged 55+ (50%, 41%), households earning over \$60K (47%, 45%) and among non-union households (47%, 40%).

But, Three Quarters (74%) Say Campbell is a Hypocrite and 55% Say He Has Lost the Moral Authority to Lead

On the whole the news for the Premier is very good, but it is not without some political fallout. Three quarters (74%) agree with the statement “Gordon Campbell is being a hypocrite, because if this incident had happened to any other politician, he would ask for their resignation”. This includes 54% who “strongly agree” and 20% who “somewhat agree”. Only 24% disagree with this statement (9% “strongly disagree”, 15% “somewhat disagree”). In addition, a bare majority (55%) agrees that the Premier has “lost the moral authority to lead British Columbia” (37% “strongly agree”, 18% “somewhat agree”) while 44% disagree (22% “strongly disagree”, 22% “somewhat disagree”).



- Younger residents (79%) and union households (81%) are more likely than middle-older residents (71%) and non-union households (70%) to say Campbell is a hypocrite.
- Residents of the Interior (51%) are least likely to agree that Campbell has lost the moral authority to lead.
- Men (50%), households earning \$30K or more (54%) and non-union households (52%) are less likely than women (59%), households earning under \$30K (61%) and union households (60%) to say Campbell has lost the moral authority to lead.

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