

Third Quarter 2021 Provincial Premiers Ratings

Saskatchewan's Scott Moe (63%) has highest approval level while newly elected Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston (58%) tied with BC's John Horgan (58%) and Quebec's Françoise Legault (58%)

Departing Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister (34%) languishes while Alberta's Jason Kenney (31%) still falling in a race to the bottom

TORONTO, September 22, 2021—A new quarterly survey of approval ratings of Canada's premiers was released by Maru Public Opinion today and finds that Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe (63% **-1**) continues to lead as the country's most popular provincial leader. This is the third quarter where the Premier has led the way.

This is the third quarter measurement that is conducted regularly throughout the year. This release is accompanied by a set of tracking charts for each Premier and the detailed tables for this measurement that are posted at <https://www.marugroup.net/public-opinion-polls/canada>.

Premier Moe is followed by newly elected Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston (58%) who is tied with British Columbia Premier John Horgan (58% **-2**) and Québec Premier Françoise Legault (58% **-4**).

The next tier of approval ratings finds New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs (52% **-4**) leading Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey (48% **-11**) and Ontario Premier Doug Ford (42% **+2**).

The lowest approval rated Premiers are Manitoba's Brian Pallister (34% **+1**) who has recently announced he is leaving politics, and Alberta Premier Jason Kenney (31% **-2**) who finds himself at an even lower level than his previous low in the past quarter. It should be noted that this measurement was taken up to one week *before* Premier Kenney enacted new measures to combat COVID spread on September 15, 2021, so his approval rating update will be heavily anticipated for the next quarterly sounding.

All of the Premiers have continued to deal with the pandemic as their top priority and most have been involved in decisions regarding vaccine identity cards/passports. The current federal election campaign (that concludes on September 20, 2021) has either engaged numerous Premiers or caused them to be relatively absent so as not to be tarred or provoked by any particular federal leader.

The Rankings In Detail

1. Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe (63% **-1)** is down just slightly from his last two quarters of approval ratings (June 64%/March 65%), the Saskatchewan Party Premier has led the country as the most popular Premier for the last three quarters. His highest approval rating was in June 2020 (66%) while his lowest rating was in December 2020 (55%).

2. Newly elected Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston makes his debut with a second-place showing (58%) which is considerably more than he captured in his most recent upset election (38.59% of the popular vote) over incumbent and now former Premier Ian Rankin (36.82%). Premier Houston capitalized on their main opponent's early stumbles and promised a big-spending fix to the troubled health system. The Progressive Conservative Leader unveiled a relatively left-leaning platform that promised hundreds of millions of dollars in the first year of the party's mandate to increase the number of family doctors, bolster the mental health system and create more nursing home beds.

3. British Columbia Premier John Horgan (58% -2) is tied for second place in these third quarter rankings. First measured in the month of September 2017 as the new NDP Premier (48%), the peak of his approval ratings was in June 2019 (71%) and has slid since by a few points every quarter.

4. Québec Premier Françoise Legault (58% -4) is also tied for second place. The Premier had his highest sounding in June 2020 (76%) which was well above his first measurement in December 2018 (61%). The Coalition Avenir Quebec leader has remained very popular (and many times having led the country as its most esteemed Premier since being elected), however his approval rating has slid 12 percentage points over the past year (70% in December 2020).

5. New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs (52% -4) has had relatively steady approval ratings over the past year. While his peak (71%) was in June 2020 after the initial response to the pandemic, the Conservative leader had his ratings fall back to earth in September 2020 (55%) from where he's carried on not far from that measurement ever since.

6. Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey (48% -11) is right back at the level of approval (48%) that he had a year ago after he became leader of the provincial Liberal party and the province. In the interim, it's been nothing short of a whipsaw. By the end of 2020 he was riding high in the approval ratings (63%) but plummeted 23 points (40%) during an almost near politically fatal election call that ran smack into difficulties with outbreaks of COVID on the campaign trail and led to delayed provincial one voting. Since eking out a razor thin majority election victory, the premier managed to rebound in June (59%) but has slid back since then by 11 percentage points.

7. Ontario premier Doug Ford (42% +2) has apparently halted the slide in approval ratings that the Premier has had since his peak measurement (62%) in June 2020. With his eye on the provincial election slated for June 2022, he's just two percentage points higher in approval ratings than he was when he was first elected in June 2018 (receiving 40% of the vote and a 40% approval rating) for his conservative majority government. After being elected, the Premier was on a slow slide to his lowest ebb (September 2019 26%) but rebounded at the beginning of the pandemic.



Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister (34% +1) indicated on August 30, 2021, that he's leaving office before a new Progressive Conservative party leader is elected on October 30, 2021, because he doesn't want to jeopardize the process, and didn't want to comment on a leadership contest because he thinks neutrality must exist. The first approval rating measurement of the premier was in May 2016 (46%) which, after an initial rise, ebbed and flowed until September 2020 when it reached its highest level (54%). However, December of that year was his undoing as he, in his own words, "cancelled Christmas" forcing the province into a lock-down in an attempt to stop the spread of the virus throughout visiting over the holiday season. His approval rating plummeted by 19 percentage points that quarter (35%) and never recovered.

Alberta premier Jason Kenney (31% -2) continues as a personal race to the bottom and as noted above, this measurement was taken up to one week before he enacted new measures to combat COVID spread on September 15, 2021. Granted, other Premiers measured this quarter have been even lower during their tenure, but it's fair to say that the slide from his highest level when first measured in June 2019 (55%) it has been like a steady toboggan ride down to the bottom of the hill, wherever that may be. The Premier has faced open revolt in caucus because of the style and substance of his leadership – but even having managed that, his government's response to the pandemic over the last few months have led to a crisis in the healthcare sector with the medical community indicating that with so many unvaccinated COVID infected patients on the wards and in ICUs, the entire hospital system is near collapse.

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Methodology

These are some of the findings released by Maru Public Opinion from a survey undertaken between August 26 and September 8, 2021, by Maru/Blue of 5278 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Maru Voice Canada online panelists. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size has an estimated margin of error (which measures sampling variability) of +/- 1.4%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been weighted by education, age, gender, and region (and in Quebec, language) to match the population according to Census data which ensures the sample is representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals when compared to the data tables are due to rounding.

How We Calculate the Approval Ratings—and how there can be differences between other publicly released approval ratings of the Premiers

Our question to our adult (18+) population respondents in their province is straight forward:

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of each of the following people? [Insert name of Premier]:



[Choose one]

Strongly approve
Moderately approve
Moderately disapprove
Strongly disapprove
Not sure

We then take the top two responses and add them together (Strongly approve/Somewhat approve) and this produces the “Approval” number that is put into this release. We also add the two bottom responses together (Moderately disapprove/Strongly disapprove) and while this is not shown in the release or the ranking chart that accompanies this release, it is in the detailed tables that are released at the same time.

And we don’t change anything else—we don’t report the “Not sure” percentage, but again, these are reported in the tables. This is the way we have done it for decades so we have not changed how we do the calculation. There are, however, others who may ask the exact same question with the same methodology but get a different answer because they remove the “Not sure” group and then rebase and calculate the new net results. There is nothing wrong in doing this—but it does produce a different result which is sometimes confusing to people when they hear different approval ratings and try to compare them on an apples-to-apples basis.

Panel and data services provider <https://www.marugroup.net/maru-blue> is deeply rooted in the Maru/HUB technology platform and offers on-demand, high quality, highly scalable online community samples of deeply engaged, known respondents. Because of extremely small sample sizes, approval ratings cannot be provided for Prince Edward Island, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon.

Excerpts from this release of findings should be properly attributed, with interpretation subject to clarification or correction. Maru Public Opinion does not do any work for any political party.

Maru Public Opinion polls with supporting detailed tables are found here:
<https://www.marugroup.net/public-opinion-polls/canada>

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