

## Quarterly Approval Rating of Canada's Premiers:

### *Quebec's Legault Soars in Post Election High (61%)*

### *Despite Fierce Front Notley Falls (34% -7)*

**December 20, 2018** – Newly elected Quebec premier François Legault has an approval rating of 61% among those who live in the province – the highest rating of any premier elsewhere in the country according to a quarterly survey update released today. Taking the pulse of the provinces since 2013, the findings also reveal that despite of a fierce front that Alberta premier Rachel Notley has displayed in her fight with Ottawa about getting provincial oil resources moving by pipeline or otherwise, her approval rating has fallen from 41% in September to 34% (-7) in December.

These are some of the topline findings of a **DART Insight** poll conducted as part of a regular quarterly sounding of Canadians on various issues and matters that affect their lives as citizens, consumers, and voters. The survey was conducted among 5,962 randomly selected Canadian adults who are members of **Maru/Blue's** Online panel between December 5-12, 2018. *Because of extremely small sample sizes, approval ratings cannot be provided for Prince Edward Island, Nunavut and both the Yukon and Northwest Territories.*

The ranking of the premiers by their individual provincial approval ratings for this quarterly assessment – and any degree of fluctuation from last quarters results released in September – is as follows:

1. Quebec premier François Legault **61%** (*first measurement*)
2. Saskatchewan premier Scott Moe **56%** (**+1**)
3. British Columbia premier John Horgan **46%** (**-3**)

4. New Brunswick premier Blaine Higgs 43% (*first measurement*)
5. Manitoba premier Brian Pallister 42% (*no change since September*)
6. Ontario premier Doug Ford 35% (-2)
7. Alberta premier Rachel Notley 34% (-7)
8. Newfoundland and Labrador premier Dwight Ball 33% (-9)
9. Nova Scotia premier Stephen McNeil 30% (+4)

### *Some Notes on the Findings...*

- Newly minted **Quebec premier François Legault arrives with his first quarterly approval level of 61%**. Leader of the Coalition Avenir Québec (“CAQ”) party since its foundation in 2011 (and co-founder of Canadian airline Air Transat), premier Legault led the CAQ to a gain of 53 seats for a total of 74, vaulting his party from third place to a majority of 11 in the provincial general election on October 1, 2018. A veteran provincial and municipal politician, he is the first premier in 52 years who is not either a Liberal or Péquiste. Capturing 37.42% of the popular vote, Legault defeated incumbent Liberal premier **Philippe Couillard** (24.82% popular vote) **with an approval rating of 31% in September (having fallen from a similarly lofty height of 59% after his election in June 2014.)**
- On the other side of the country, **Alberta premier Rachel Notley’s approval rating has fallen from 41% in September to 34% in December – a fulsome drop of seven points** – despite a combination of activity and anger aimed at Ottawa’s intransigence on moving forward with an oil pipeline and no change in equalization payments to help
- **Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe continues to ride high in his performance as premier capturing second spot at 56%—up from 55% last quarter. Premier Moe**

is up overall from his first rating of 52% in March 2018 when he first took over the reins of the Saskatchewan Party from former leader and premier Brad Wall. He's allied with other premiers in objecting to the proposed federal carbon tax and launched a very public call for a change in Ottawa's (long outdated) equalization formula that would render increased transfer payments to provinces hurting from economic downturn.

- **Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister holds steady with a 42% approval rating – the same level of last sounding in September 2018. This remains 11 points back of his highest rating in September 2016 (53%).** The survey followed a late November Throne Speech with a focus on building the economy and a \$218-million increase in its equalization payments from Ottawa, the second year in a row that Pallister's government has benefited from unusually high transfer largesse.
- **Ontario Premier Doug Ford has an approval rating of 35%, down two points from September (37%) and a high-water mark of 40% (now -5) right after his June election (with 40% of the vote).** This follows the Toronto municipal election which incorporated the downsizing of the city council by provincial fiat and a series of other self-inflicted political distractions.
- **Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil rallies to just 30% approval rating,** up four percentage points from 26% in June. With his majority government re-elected in 2017 with 45% of the popular vote, there is early speculation that he may stay in the role of premier through to the next election for a possible threepart. While the healthcare and education files have caused some challenges, the financial books are in the black and no serious challenger on either side of the House is apparent.

- **New Brunswick Progressive Conservative Leader Blaine Higgs emerges as premier with a 43% approval rating** as former premier Brian Gallant (at 37% approval) loses a non-confidence vote on his governments Throne Speech and heads for the door by resigning as leader of New Brunswick's Liberal Party. The legislative shakeup comes after the incumbent Liberals placed second in a recent nail-biting election with just 21 of the legislature's 49 seats. The Progressive Conservatives took 22 seats and while it was not enough to give the party a majority, they were able to find common ground with three members of the populist People's Alliance party to topple Mr. Gallant and his government.
- **Newfoundland and Labrador Liberal party leader and Premier Dwight Ball arrives this quarter with a 33% (-9) approval rating** – a see-saw from September when his approval rating was 42% after his own party gave him a 79 per cent vote of confidence, up 10 points from 32% from the previous quarter. But then again, the session in the legislature was tumultuous with fiery episodes of Question Period about allegations and investigations that played out in the public eye and cabinet ministers were axed. As such, even when the government managed to pass new pieces of legislation it was like a tree falling in a forest.

Insight and Communications

– 30 –

### Methodology...

*These are some of the topline findings of a **DART Insight** poll conducted as part of a regular quarterly sounding of Canadians on various issues and matters that affect their lives as citizens, consumers, and voters. The research is created and analyzed under the direction of veteran pollster John Wright, CEO of **DART Insight** which is a division of **DART Insight and Communications** Inc. in partnership with Canada's national survey sample research provider **Maru/Blue** that curates a vast Online Panel and provides data collection services.*

*The survey was conducted among 5,962 randomly selected Canadian adults who are members of **Maru/Blue**'s Online panel between December 5-12, 2018. Respondents*

could opt in for either official language. The results have been weighted by education, age, gender, and region to match the population, according to Census data. This is to ensure the sample is representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Reporting of results from Prince Edward Island, Nunavut and both the Yukon and Northwest Territories is excluded because of extremely small sample sizes. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The precision of this **DART Insight** Online poll is measured using a Bayesian Credibility Interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 1.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadian adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population and individual provinces.

Visit <http://www.dartincom.ca/polls/> for the written release and detailed tables. For further information or commentary please contact:

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#### About **DART Insight** and **Maru/Blue**

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Public releases of polling results, including detailed tables (weighted/unweighted), questions used and analysis, are provided freely at <http://www.dartincom.ca/polls/>

**DART Insight and Communications** is a member in good standing with the Marketing Intelligence and Research Association (MIRA) of Canada. Accuracy of any Online polling results are measured using a Bayesian Credibility Interval which is endorsed by MIRA and the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR).

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