

THE SENATE OF CANADA

Canadians yearn for Senate reform; majority supports concept of elected senators

Three-in-four would hold referendum on upper house's future

[VANCOUVER – Nov. 8, 2007] – Many adults in Canada believe the Senate should be reformed and want to play a role in the process to change it, a new Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 77 per cent of respondents support holding a nationwide referendum to decide the future of the Senate of Canada. Atlantic Canadians (87%) and men (82%) are particularly eager about voting on this particular issue.

The poll allowed Canadians to express their views on two prospective referendum questions. Only 36 per cent of Canadians say they would cast a ballot in favour of abolishing the Senate, while 39 per cent would vote against this measure. Almost two-in-five (19%) are undecided.

The provincial breakdowns show residents of Quebec (54%) clearly in favour of doing away with the upper house, while respondents in Alberta (49%) and Atlantic Canada (51%) would endorse its continuance.

However, if the question before voters revolves around reforming the Senate to allow Canadians to directly elect the members of the upper house, a majority (61%) would vote "Yes", while 18 per cent would vote "No". Once again, Albertans (72%) and Atlantic Canadians (75%) agree on the need for an elected Senate.

Seven-in-Ten Canadians (71%) are in favour of implementing two measures that have been discussed by the current government: Limiting appointed Canadian senators to eight-year terms, and allowing Canadians to directly elect their senators. Support is markedly lower (43%) for two other options:

KEY FINDINGS

- » **77% want to hold a referendum on the future of the Canadian Senate**
- » **61% would vote to allow Canadians to directly elect their senators**
- » **36% would vote to abolish the Senate**
- » **5% think the current guidelines that call for appointed senators are OK**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

*From November 6 to 7, 2007, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of **1,009 adult Canadians**. The margin of error for the total sample is **+/- 3.1 %**, **19 times out of 20**. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

Abolishing the Senate altogether, and creating a panel of distinguished Canadians to choose senators, instead of the Prime Minister.

When asked to voice their opinion on whether Canada actually needs a Senate, a third of respondents (32%) call for all legislation to be reviewed and authorized by the House of Commons. Almost half of respondents (47%) support having an upper house, but want citizens to take part in the process to choose senators. Only five per cent of respondents believe the current guidelines that call for appointed senators should not be modified.

Quebecers (50%) lead the way in calling for a unicameral legislature, followed by respondents in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (36%). Conversely, at least half of residents in Ontario, Atlantic Canada and British Columbia want to have a chance to choose their senators.

The Future of the Senate

Q. Would you support or oppose holding a nationwide referendum to decide the future of the Senate of Canada?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Support	77%	74%	77%	73%	78%	75%	87%	82%	72%
Oppose	12%	8%	11%	12%	12%	15%	3%	13%	10%
Not sure	12%	18%	11%	16%	10%	10%	10%	5%	18%

Abolishing the Senate

Q. Suppose a nationwide referendum on the future of the Senate of Canada took place, and the question before voters was: "Do you agree that the Senate of Canada should be abolished?" - How would you vote?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Yes	36%	28%	23%	42%	29%	54%	28%	46%	26%
No	39%	39%	49%	31%	46%	23%	51%	40%	37%
Would spoil ballot	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Would abstain from voting	6%	8%	8%	9%	3%	6%	7%	5%	7%
Not sure	19%	24%	20%	18%	21%	17%	13%	9%	29%

Reforming the Senate

Q. Suppose a nationwide referendum on the future of the Senate of Canada took place, and the question before voters was: "Do you agree that the Senate of Canada should be reformed to allow Canadians to directly elect their senators?" - How would you vote?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Yes	61%	66%	72%	67%	58%	54%	75%	66%	57%
No	18%	9%	12%	17%	21%	21%	13%	21%	14%
Would spoil ballot	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%	6%	0%	3%	1%
Would abstain from voting	4%	6%	2%	3%	3%	5%	5%	3%	5%
Not sure	15%	19%	14%	14%	17%	14%	7%	7%	23%

Proposals to Reform the Senate

Q. As you may know, several proposals have been made over the past few years to reform the Senate of Canada, do you support or oppose each of these ideas?

	Support	Oppose	Not sure
Limiting appointed Canadian senators to eight-year terms	71%	14%	15%
Allowing Canadians to directly elect their senators	71%	16%	13%
Abolishing the Senate of Canada altogether	43%	36%	21%
Creating a panel of distinguished Canadians to choose senators, instead of the Prime Minister	43%	41%	16%

Canadians and the Senate									
Q. Which of these statements comes closest to your own point of view?									
	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Canada does not need a Senate, all legislation should be reviewed and authorized by the House of Commons	32%	20%	21%	36%	28%	50%	25%	40%	25%
Canada needs a Senate, but Canadians should be allowed to take part in the process to choose senators	47%	58%	62%	39%	50%	32%	56%	48%	46%
Canada needs a Senate, and the current guidelines that call for appointed senators should not be modified	5%	2%	9%	7%	8%	2%	5%	4%	6%
Not sure	15%	20%	8%	18%	14%	17%	13%	8%	22%

Angus Reid Strategies is a North American full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995. Located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal, our team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

Angus Reid Strategies has been successful in predicting the outcome of this year's provincial elections in:

Quebec: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=37>

Manitoba: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=56>

Ontario: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=129>

Saskatchewan: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=138>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF%20WHITE%20PAPER.pdf>

- 30 -

**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
www.angusreidstrategies.com**