

SENATE REFORM

Canadians Welcome Saskatchewan's Proposal to Elect Senators

Support drops for abolishing the Senate altogether

[VANCOUVER – May 28, 2008] – While Canadians back a provincial government's plan to elect members of the Senate, fewer are voicing support for abolishing the country's upper house altogether, an Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 53 per cent of respondents agree with an idea recently proposed by the Government of Saskatchewan to introduce legislation that would allow the province to hold elections to the Senate, with the winning candidates of these elections being appointed by the Prime Minister as seats become available.

Support for the Saskatchewan proposal is highest in Alberta (71%)—a province that has held "Senate elections" in the past—and British Columbia (62%).

While at least three-in-five respondents want to limit appointed Canadian senators to eight-year terms (64%) and allow Canadians to directly elect their upper house members (60%), support for abolishing the Senate stands at 30 per cent. A plan to create a panel of distinguished Canadians to choose senators, instead of the Prime Minister, is supported by one-in-three Canadians (32%).

The survey shows some noticeable changes since January. In all, 29 per cent of respondents (-4) believe Canada does not need a Senate, and would be satisfied with all legislation being reviewed and authorized by the House of Commons; while 45 per cent (+5) think Canada needs a Senate and a system to allow Canadians to take part in the process to choose senators. Only 10 per cent of respondents (+1) believe the current guidelines that call for appointed senators should not be modified.

KEY FINDINGS

- » **53% agree with Saskatchewan's plan to hold elections to the Senate, with the PM appointing the winners**
- » **64% want to limit appointed Canadian senators to eight-year terms**
- » **60% would allow Canadians to directly elect their senators**
- » **66% (-8) would hold referendum to decide the future of the Senate**
- » **32% (-8) would vote to abolish the Senate**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From May 21 to May 22, 2008 Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,005 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.

Support for holding a referendum to decide the future of the Senate of Canada stands at 66 per cent nationally, an eight-point drop since January. When asked to assess a possible ballot question, a third of Canadians (32%, -8) would vote to abolish the Senate, while two-in-five (41%, +4) would keep it. One-in-five respondents are undecided on this matter.

Quebec clearly emerges as the region where respondents hold the lowest level of support for the Senate, with 51 per cent of Quebecers willing to vote for the abolition of the lower house in a referendum, and 52 per cent believing that all legislation should be handled by the House of Commons..

Related Releases:

02.11.08

Angus Reid Poll: Canadians Clearly Urge for Senate Reform, Back Referendum

<http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=163>

11.08.07

Angus Reid Poll: Canadians yearn for Senate reform

<http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=139>

Senate Reform

As you may know, the Government of Saskatchewan is expected to introduce legislation that would allow the province to hold elections to the Senate. The winning candidates of these elections would be appointed by the Prime Minister to serve in the Senate, as seats become available. Do you agree or disagree with this idea?

	Total	Region					
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
Agree	53%	62%	71%	56%	52%	48%	41%
Disagree	29%	20%	13%	26%	32%	32%	34%
Not sure	18%	18%	16%	19%	17%	20%	25%

Senate Reform

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 answers only)

	Total	Region					
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
Limiting appointed Canadian senators to eight-year terms	64%	68%	71%	58%	67%	56%	72%
Allowing Canadians to directly elect their senators	60%	67%	75%	56%	59%	53%	66%
Abolishing the Senate of Canada altogether	30%	29%	18%	20%	20%	50%	25%
Creating a panel of distinguished Canadians to choose senators, instead of the Prime Minister	32%	26%	27%	26%	35%	35%	25%

Senate Reform							
Which of these statements comes closest to your own point of view?							
	Total	Region					
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
Canada does not need a Senate, all legislation should be reviewed and authorized by the House of Commons	29%	25%	20%	21%	20%	52%	21%
Canada needs a Senate, but Canadians should be allowed to take part in the process to choose senators	45%	54%	56%	57%	48%	28%	54%
Canada needs a Senate, and the current guidelines that call for appointed senators should not be modified	10%	8%	9%	12%	14%	4%	9%
Not sure	16%	12%	15%	10%	18%	17%	15%

Senate Reform			
TREND - Which of these statements comes closest to your own point of view?			
	TREND		
	May 2008	Jan. 2008	Nov. 2007
Canada does not need a Senate, all legislation should be reviewed and authorized by the House of Commons	29%	33%	32%
Canada needs a Senate, but Canadians should be allowed to take part in the process to choose senators	45%	40%	47%
Canada needs a Senate, and the current guidelines that call for appointed senators should not be modified	10%	9%	5%
Not sure	16%	17%	15%

Senate Reform							
Would you support or oppose holding a nationwide referendum to decide the future of the Senate of Canada?							
	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
Support	66%	72%	67%	62%	65%	68%	64%
Oppose	16%	13%	14%	18%	16%	16%	16%
Not Sure	18%	15%	18%	20%	19%	16%	20%

Senate Reform			
TREND - Would you support or oppose holding a nationwide referendum to decide the future of the Senate of Canada?			
	TREND		
	May 2008	Jan. 2008	Nov. 2007
Support	66%	74%	77%
Oppose	16%	12%	12%
Not Sure	18%	14%	12%

Senate Reform							
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						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL
Yes	32%	29%	24%	21%	25%	51%	25%
No	41%	42%	56%	54%	47%	22%	49%
Would Spoil Ballot	2%	1%	0%	0%	2%	2%	0%
Would abstain from voting	4%	2%	5%	0%	4%	5%	8%
Not sure	21%	25%	15%	24%	22%	20%	17%

Senate Reform			
TREND - 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?			
	TREND		
	May 2008	Jan. 2008	Nov. 2007
Yes	32%	40%	36%
No	41%	37%	39%
Would spoil ballot	2%	1%	1%
Would abstain from voting	4%	3%	6%
Not sure	21%	19%	19%

Angus Reid Strategies is a 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.

Angus Reid Strategies, along with its sister company, Vision Critical, is now the largest Canadian-owned market research enterprise. In addition to its four offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices San Francisco, New York and London, England. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

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.

Over the last year, Angus Reid has covered five elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes. <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=194>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.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**