

Canadians Split on How Federal Government Should Be Elected

Three-in-five are satisfied with the current parliamentary system, where the prime minister and cabinet exercise power.

[CALGARY – Oct. 3, 2008] - Less than two weeks before Canadians renew the House of Commons, the country remains at odds when pondering the best way to elect the federal government, a new Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,000 adults, one-third of respondents (32%) say they prefer the current first-past-the-post system for federal elections, where candidates win seats by getting more votes than any other rival in a specific constituency

One-in-four Canadians (25%) would prefer to implement a proportional representation system, where parties win seats in accordance with their share of the national vote. One-in-five (19%) prefer a mixed-member proportional voting system, which would allocate some seats on a constituency basis, and others by proportional representation.

The views of Canadians on this issue vary dramatically depending on which party they intend to vote for on Oct. 14. Conservative Party supporters (45%) and Bloc Québécois voters (38%) clearly favour the current system, while Green Party voters (36%) are more likely than all others to voice support for the implementation of a proportional representation model.

Despite the evident division on which electoral system is best for Canada, the rejection rate for any major changes in the political system was particularly high. Three-in-five respondents (60%) believe the current parliamentary system, with the prime minister and cabinet exercising power, is the best one for Canada

KEY FINDINGS

- **32% prefer first-past-the-post system; 25% favour proportional representation; 19% want mixed-member voting**
- **60% satisfied with the current parliamentary system; low support for presidential or semi-presidential systems**

Full topline results are at the end of this release

From October 1 to October 2, 2008 Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,000 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.

CONTACTS:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

Only 12 per cent of respondents argue in favour of a presidential system, with an executive branch that is separate from the legislature, while nine per cent prefer a semi-presidential system, with a president in charge of foreign policy and a prime minister in charge of domestic policy.

While a majority of supporters of the Conservatives (68%), Liberals (67%), New Democratic Party (NDP) (67%) and Greens (57%) prefer the parliamentary system, only 26 per cent of Bloc Québécois voters concur. More than a third of Bloc supporters (36%) would choose a semi-presidential system, similar to the one currently in place in France.

CONTACTS:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

Electoral Systems – Options for Canada

Which of these electoral systems would you prefer to use for federal elections in Canada?

	Canada Total	Con.	Lib.	NDP	BQ	Grn.
The current first-past-the-post system, where candidates win seats by getting more votes than any other rival in a specific constituency	32%	45%	30%	26%	38%	9%
A proportional representation system, where parties win seats in accordance with their share of the national vote	25%	22%	30%	30%	16%	36%
A mixed-member proportional voting system, which would allocate some seats on a constituency basis, and others by proportional representation	19%	16%	20%	25%	11%	29%
Not sure	24%	16%	21%	21%	33%	26%

CONTACTS:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
 Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

Political Systems – Options for Canada

Which of these political systems do you think would be best for Canada?

	Canada Total	Con.	Lib.	NDP	BQ	Grn.
The current parliamentary system, with the prime minister and cabinet exercising power	60%	68%	67%	67%	26%	57%
A semi-presidential system, with a president in charge of foreign policy and a prime minister in charge of domestic policy	9%	5%	11%	4%	36%	6%
A presidential system, with an executive branch that is separate from the legislature	12%	16%	10%	11%	14%	14%
Not sure	19%	11%	12%	19%	24%	23%

CONTACTS:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
 Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

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**

CONTACTS:

Tim Olafson, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, 403-543-1088, tim.olafson@angus-reid.com
Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com