

SENATE REFORM

Seven-in-Ten Canadians Call for Elections to Choose Senators

One third of Canadians believe that citizens will never get a chance to directly elect the members of the upper house.

[TORONTO – Jul. 22, 2010] – Many Canadians want to play an active role in choosing the members of the upper house, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,003 Canadian adults, half of respondents (50%) believe Canada needs a Senate, but Canadians should be allowed to take part in the process to choose senators.

One-in-four Canadians (25%) think the Senate is not necessary, and would prefer for all legislation to be reviewed and authorized by the House of Commons. Only nine per cent of respondents are satisfied with the current guidelines that call for appointed senators.

The idea of holding a nationwide referendum to decide the future of the Senate of Canada is backed by 71 per cent of Canadians, including four-in-five respondents in British Columbia (79%) and Alberta (80%).

Reforming the Senate

The notion of allowing Canadians to directly elect their senators remains popular. Seven-in-ten respondents (70%) agree with this course of action, a 10-point increase since May 2008. Another idea that has been discussed in the past—limiting appointed Canadian senators to eight-year terms—is also supported by 70 per cent of Canadians.

KEY FINDINGS

- **70% (+10 since May 2008) would allow Canadians to directly elect their senators**
- **62% think PM Harper is being hypocritical for appointing new senators**
- **34% think Canadians will “never” be able to directly elect their senators**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From July 14 to July 15, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,003 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

CONTACT:

Jodi Shanoff, Senior Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com

The outright abolition of the Senate is backed by 31 per cent of respondents, while the idea of establishing a panel of distinguished Canadians to choose senators, instead of the Prime Minister, is supported by 36 per cent of Canadians.

The Prime Minister

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Stephen Harper appointed Salma Ataullahjan to the Senate. The Conservatives now control 52 seats in the upper house, followed by the Liberals with 49 members and four independent senators.

A majority of Canadians (62%) believe Harper is being hypocritical because he is appointing senators despite his long-standing opposition to the Senate in its current form. Conversely, 38 per cent of respondents state that the Prime Minister is not being hypocritical because he is appointing senators who agree with his views on Senate reform.

The Future

Despite all of the recent discussions about the Senate, Canadians are not confident that change will come soon. One third of respondents (34%) believe that Canadians will never be able to directly elect their senators, while 32 per cent expect this to happen in the next five years.

Our previous poll on the Senate in Canada, conducted in February 2010, is available [here](#).

For all our polls, go to our [website](#) / Follow us on [Twitter](#)

CONTACT:

Jodi Shanoff, Senior Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com

Senate Reform							
Which of these statements comes closest to your own point of view?							
	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Canada does not need a Senate, all legislation should be reviewed and authorized by the House of Commons	25%	22%	11%	29%	20%	36%	25%
Canada needs a Senate, but Canadians should be allowed to take part in the process to choose senators	50%	63%	67%	62%	47%	39%	53%
Canada needs a Senate, and the current guidelines that call for appointed senators should not be modified	9%	3%	4%	5%	13%	8%	4%
Not sure	16%	12%	17%	4%	19%	17%	18%

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	ON	PQ	ATL
Support	71%	79%	80%	76%	66%	69%	72%
Oppose	10%	5%	4%	4%	13%	13%	8%
Not sure	19%	16%	16%	20%	21%	17%	20%

CONTACT:

Jodi Shanoff, Senior Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com

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? –

Limiting appointed Canadian senators to eight-year terms

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Support	70%	73%	66%	70%	70%	71%	66%
Oppose	12%	12%	13%	14%	9%	12%	18%
Not sure	18%	14%	21%	16%	21%	17%	15%

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? –

Allowing Canadians to directly elect their senators

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Support	70%	80%	78%	76%	67%	66%	73%
Oppose	13%	8%	5%	8%	16%	17%	9%
Not sure	16%	12%	17%	16%	17%	17%	18%

CONTACT:

Jodi Shanoff, Senior Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com

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? –

Abolishing the Senate of Canada altogether

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Support	31%	25%	14%	33%	24%	48%	28%
Oppose	39%	43%	58%	42%	42%	26%	42%
Not sure	30%	31%	28%	25%	34%	25%	31%

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? –

Creating a panel of distinguished Canadians to choose senators, instead of the Prime Minister

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Support	36%	32%	24%	19%	35%	47%	30%
Oppose	38%	44%	38%	41%	39%	34%	39%
Not sure	26%	24%	38%	40%	26%	19%	31%

CONTACT:

Jodi Shanoff, Senior Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com

Senate Reform

Some people think that Prime Minister Stephen Harper is being hypocritical because he is appointing senators despite his long-standing opposition to the Senate in its current form. Other people think Prime Minister Stephen Harper is not being hypocritical because he is appointing senators who agree with his views on Senate reform. Which of these statements comes closest to your own point of view?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Stephen Harper is being hypocritical	62%	54%	60%	48%	59%	71%	68%
Stephen Harper is not being hypocritical	38%	46%	40%	52%	41%	29%	32%

Senate Reform

When do you expect Canadians to directly elect their senators?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
In the next two years	12%	10%	15%	8%	13%	9%	14%
Three to five years from now	20%	22%	25%	25%	18%	19%	18%
Six to ten years from now	19%	24%	27%	18%	17%	17%	20%
More than ten years from now	15%	13%	12%	23%	18%	11%	15%
Never	34%	31%	20%	26%	34%	42%	33%

CONTACT:

Jodi Shanoff, Senior Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com

Senate Reform - TREND

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” listed

	Jul. 2010	Feb. 2010	Aug. 2009	May 2008
Allowing Canadians to directly elect their senators	70%	67%	68%	60%
Limiting appointed Canadian senators to eight-year terms	70%	65%	66%	64%
Creating a panel of distinguished Canadians to choose senators, instead of the prime minister	36%	34%	36%	32%
Abolishing the Senate of Canada altogether	31%	29%	33%	30%

CONTACT:

Jodi Shanoff, Senior Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com

Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical 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

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election.

<http://bit.ly/4zxf1S>

Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial 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.

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://bit.ly/3z0u1l>

- 30 -

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

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>**

CONTACT:

Jodi Shanoff, Senior Vice President, Public Affairs, 416-712-5498, jodi.shanoff@angus-reid.com