



Canadian Attitudes to Electoral Reform and the Need for Representativeness

REPORT

Submitted to:

Fair Vote Canada

EKOS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES INC.

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Key Findings

Survey results reveal that Canadians clearly believe that the composition of Parliament should reflect how the people voted: fully 90 per cent say the composition of Parliament should accurately reflect voting patterns, while 87 per cent say important legislation should reflect the will of over 50 per cent of Canadian voters. Eight in ten (78 per cent) believe majority governments should only be possible when a party receives a majority of votes.

Results also reveal broad public support for a National Citizens' Assembly, a non-partisan group of ordinary citizens selected to study electoral reform issues, conduct public consultations, and submit recommendations to the federal government about a new or updated voting system in Canada.

Canadians disagree with the idea that decisions on electoral reform should be made by a single political party acting unilaterally.

1. Methodology

This survey was conducted using EKOS' probability-based panel, *Probit*. *Probit* offers complete coverage of the Canadian population (i.e., Internet, phone, cell phone), random recruitment (in other words, participants are recruited randomly, they do not opt themselves into our panel), and equal probability sampling. All respondents to our panel are recruited by telephone using random digit dialling (RDD) and are confirmed by live interviews. Survey results from our panel are generalizable to the broader Canadian population and allow for margins of error to be associated with results.

The field dates for this survey were December 14-19, 2022. In total, a random sample of 1,229 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/- 2.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., for sub-groups such as region, gender and age). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the sample's composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.

Note that due to rounding, figures may not add up to 100 per cent.

2. Detailed results

2.1 VIEWS ON REPRESENTATIVENESS

Survey results reveal that Canadians clearly believe that the composition of Parliament should reflect how the people voted: fully 90 per cent say the composition of Parliament should accurately reflect voting patterns (compared to just eight per cent who disagree with this idea), while 87 per cent say important legislation should reflect the will of over 50 per cent of Canadian voters (compared to just 10 per cent who disagree). In addition, eight in ten (78 per cent) agree that a majority of the popular vote should be required for a political party to form a majority government, and only one in five (19 per cent) disagree with this idea.

- › Women are slightly – but consistently – more likely to favour the notion that Parliament should reflect more than half of voters. For example, 83% say a majority of popular support should be a prerequisite for a majority government, compared to 74% of men.
- › B.C. residents are particularly likely to feel the overall composition of Parliament should reflect how people voted (96 per cent).
- › Clear majorities of supporters of all parties express support for a representative Parliament, though NDP supporters are consistently more likely to do so. For instance, 85 per cent of NDP voters say majorities should be contingent on receiving more than 50 per cent of the vote (compared to 78 per cent nationally). Liberal supporters are somewhat more likely to *disagree* that this 50-per-cent threshold should be needed for a majority government (28 per cent, compared to 19 per cent nationally). People's Party and Conservative supporters are comparatively more likely to reject the notion that compromise and co-operation should be encouraged (25 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively, compared to 10 per cent nationally).

Views on representativeness

Q. Please agree or disagree with the following statements:

The overall composition of Parliament should be an accurate reflection of how people voted



An electoral system should encourage parties to co-operate and compromise so that the most important policies that are passed in Parliament reflect the support of over 50% of Canadian voters



In order for a political party to form a majority government, it should have the support of over 50% of Canadian voters



□ DK/NR ■ Disagree (1-2) ■ Agree (3-4)

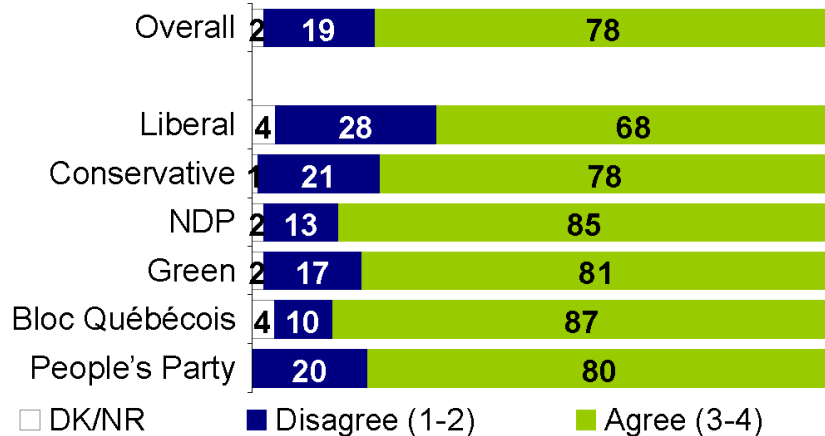
BASE: Canadians December 14-19, 2022, n=1,229, MOE +/- 2.8%, 19 times out of 20

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Perceived need for majority of popular vote

Q. Please agree or disagree with the following statement:

In order for a political party to form a majority government, it should have the support of over 50% of Canadian voters



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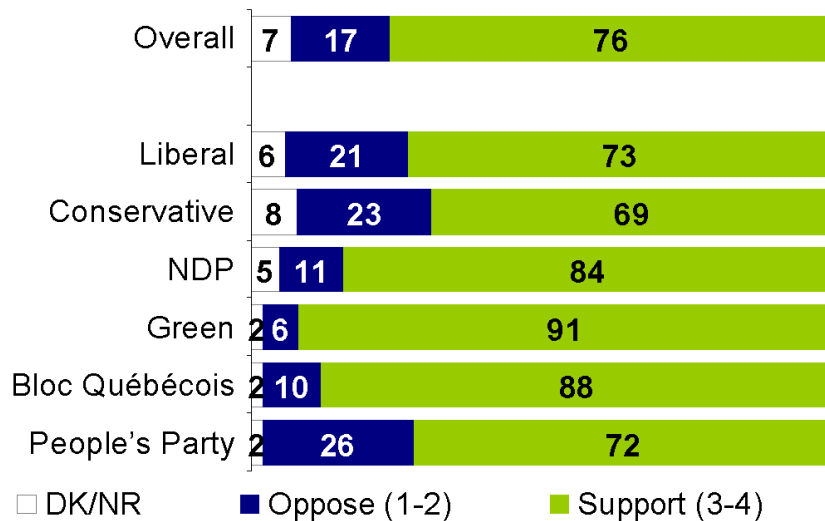
2.2 SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

Results also reveal support for a National Citizens' Assembly on electoral reform, a non-partisan group of ordinary citizens, selected to represent the public to study electoral reform issues, conduct public consultations, and submit recommendations to the federal government about a new or updated voting system in Canada. Three-quarters of Canadians (76 per cent) say they would support a National Citizens' Assembly, compared to just one in six (17 per cent) who are opposed.

- › The concept of a National Citizen's Assembly receives broad support from across the political spectrum, however, support is comparatively higher among Green Party, Bloc Québécois, and NDP voters (91 per cent, 88 per cent, and 84 per cent, respectively, compared to 69 to 73 per cent among Liberal, People's Party, and Conservative supporters).
- › Support for a National Citizen's Assembly is lower among residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (64 per cent).

Support for National Citizens' Assembly

Q. Do you support or oppose the implementation of a National Citizens' Assembly on electoral reform?



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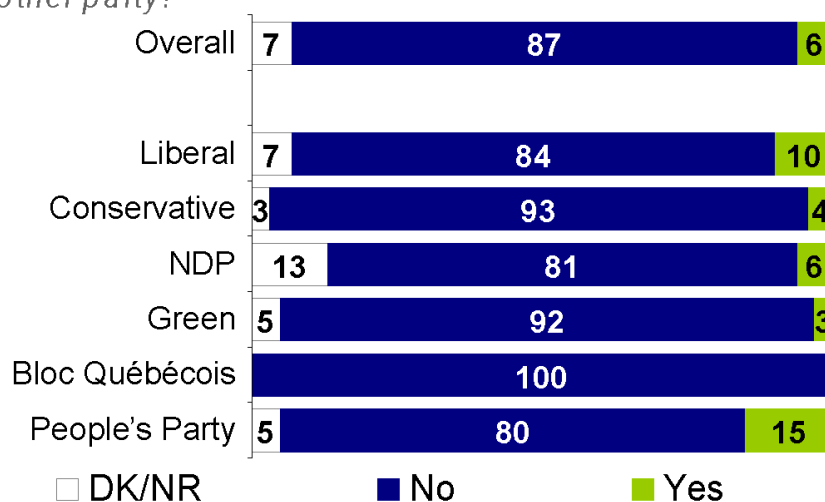
2.3 VIEWS ON UNILATERAL ELECTORAL REFORM

Results also reveal that Canadians largely reject the idea that it is acceptable for a single political party to reform Canada's electoral system without the consent of any other party. Fully 87 per cent disagree that it would be acceptable if a party unilaterally changed Canada's electoral system, compared to just six per cent who agree with this idea.

- › Opposition to unilateral action by a single party rises progressively with age (from 83 per cent among those under the age of 35 to 94 per cent among seniors).
- › Bloc Québécois, Conservative, and Green voters are particularly likely to find one-party decision making unacceptable.

Views on unilateral electoral reform

Q. Do you think it's okay if a party changes the electoral system to one they prefer, without the agreement of any other party?



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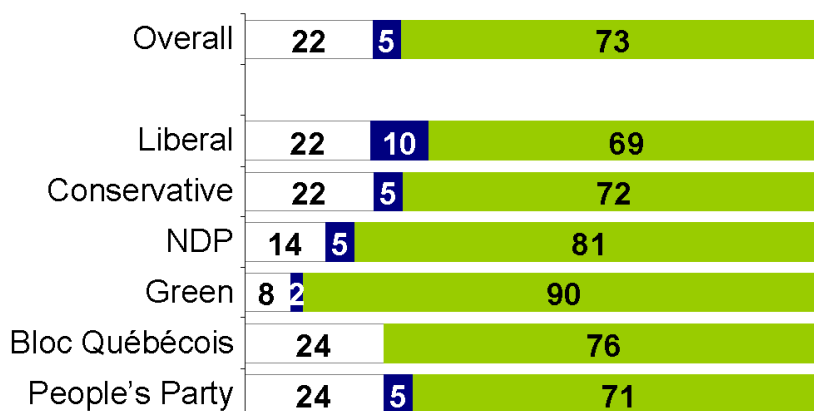
2.4 PREFERRED PROCESS OF ELECTORAL REFORM

Given the choice between a National Citizen's Assembly and leaving decisions regarding electoral reform to the governing party, the public express a clear preference for a Citizen's Assembly. Three-quarters of Canadians (73 per cent) say they would prefer a National Citizen's Assembly over unilateral action, while just five per cent say the decision be left to whichever party is in power. However, one in five (22 per cent) did not provide a response to this question, suggesting a sizeable number of Canadians would prefer some other option.

- › Support for a non-partisan National Citizens' Assembly is higher among Green and NDP voters (90 per cent and 81 per cent, respectively, compared to 73 per cent nationally).

Preferred process of electoral reform

Q. Which process for electoral reform would you be most supportive of?



□ Don't know/No response

■ A governing party brings in the system they prefer

■ A non-partisan National Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

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APPENDIX QUESTIONNAIRE

WINTRO

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey. This will only take 3 minutes of your time.

Please rest assured that your answers are completely confidential (this means that no individual will be associated with the survey's results - rather, they will be rolled up into large categories to protect the confidentiality of each respondent) and that this survey is voluntary.

INSTRUCTIONS Please consider the questions and your answers carefully.

On each screen, after selecting your answer, click on the "Continue" button at the bottom of the screen to move forward in the questionnaire.

If you leave the survey before completing it, you can return to the survey URL later, and you will be returned to the page where you left off. Your answers up to that point in the survey will be saved.

If you have any questions about how to complete the survey, please call EKOS at 1-866-211-8881 or email us at online@ekos.com. Thank you in advance for your participation.

PREQ1

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Q1A

In order for a political party to form a majority government, it should have the support of over 50% of Canadian voters.

Strongly disagree	1
Somewhat disagree	2
Somewhat agree	3
Strongly agree	4
Don't know/ No response	99 S

Q1B

An electoral system should encourage parties to cooperate and compromise so that the most important policies that are passed in Parliament reflect the support of over 50% of Canadian voters.

Strongly disagree	1
Somewhat disagree	2
Somewhat agree	3
Strongly agree	4
Don't know/ No response	99 S

Q1C

The overall composition of Parliament should be an accurate reflection of how people voted.

Strongly disagree	1
Somewhat disagree	2
Somewhat agree	3
Strongly agree	4
Don't know/ No response	99 S

Q4

Questions have been raised about the best way to make an informed decision about electoral reform. One proposal is to hold a **national citizens' assembly**. A citizens' assembly is a non-partisan group of ordinary citizens, selected like a jury, to represent the public. They would be given the time and resources to: Learn about electoral reform issues from experts from Canada and around the world;

Consult with Canadians in communities across the country;

Take what they have learned and make a recommendation to the federal government about a new or updated voting system in Canada.

Do you support or oppose the implementation of a national citizens' assembly on electoral reform?

Strongly oppose	1
Somewhat oppose	2
Somewhat support	3
Strongly support	4
Don't know/No response	99 XB

Q5

Do you think it's okay if a party changes the electoral system to one they prefer, without the agreement of any other party?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/No response	9 B

Q6

Which process for electoral reform would you be most supportive of?

A non-partisan National Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform	1
A governing party brings in the system they prefer	2
Don't know/No response	9 B

QGENDR

The following questions will be used for statistical purposes only.

Are you...?

Male	1
Female	2
A transgender male	4 B
A transgender female	5 B
Non-binary	6 B
No response	99 B

QAGE

In what year were you born?

002-22

Note: answer the full year, i.e. 1977 as "1977"
Year

77

No response

99

QAGEY

Hesitant, QAGE

If... QAGE = 99

May we place your age into one of the following general age categories?

18-24 years

1

25-34 years

2

35-44 years

3

45-54 years

4

55-64 years

5

65 years or older

6

Prefer not to answer

99

QEDUC

What is the highest level of schooling that you have completed?

Grade 8 or less

1

Some high school	2
High School diploma or equivalent	3
Registered Apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma	4
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	5
University certificate or diploma below bachelor's level	6
Bachelor's degree	7
Post graduate degree above bachelor's level	8
No response	99

QPROV

In which province or territory do you live?

British Columbia	1
Alberta	2
Saskatchewan	3
Manitoba	4

002-22

Ontario	5
Quebec	6
New Brunswick	7
Nova Scotia	8
Prince Edward Island	9
Newfoundland and Labrador	10
Yukon	11
Northwest Territories	12
Nunavut	13
No response	99

QVOTEA

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

Liberal Party	1
Conservative Party	2

New Democratic Party	3
Green Party	4
QPROV = 6 The Bloc Quebecois	5
People's Party	6
Another party not listed here	7 B
Undecided	8 B
Not eligible to vote	9 B
Don't know/No response	99 B

QVOTE B

If... QVOTE A = 8

Even if you do not have a firm idea, are you leaning towards a party?

002-22

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/No response	9 B

QVOTEC

If... QVOTEB = 1

As it stands, towards which party are you leaning?

Liberal Party	1
Conservative Party	2
New Democratic Party	3
Green Party	4
QPROV = 6 The Bloc Quebecois	5
People's Party	6
Another party not listed here	7 B
Undecided	8 B
Don't know/No response	99 B

QEND

Total

Total

1