

ELECTION SPENDING

Americans Reject Supreme Court Ruling on Election Spending by Corporations

Majority of respondents support legislation that would regulate how corporations spend money on political advertising.

[NEW YORK – Feb. 1, 2010] – Most Americans disagree with a recent United States Supreme Court decision that allows corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money supporting federal political candidates, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

On Jan. 21, the Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision that the federal government cannot ban corporations from spending in federal elections.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,003 American adults, 32 per cent of Americans say they have followed this story in the news moderately or very closely, while 68 per cent either have not followed it closely or not followed it at all.

Overall, almost two thirds of Americans (65%) disagree—44 per cent strongly—with the Supreme Court's decision on campaign spending by corporations. Only 17 per cent of respondents agree with the ruling.

Two Views on the Issue

A large majority of Americans (68%) believe the Supreme Court's decision hands more influence to lobbyists and special interest groups to tip the outcome of elections—an opinion first expressed by U.S. President Barack Obama in the immediate aftermath of the ruling.

KEY FINDINGS

- **65% disagree with the Supreme Court's decision to allow corporations to spend freely on campaign ads**
- **68% say the ruling empowers lobbyists and interest groups to influence elections**
- **More than 70% would regulate how corporations spend money on political ads**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From January 27 to January 28, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,003 American adults who are Springboard America 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 a sample representative of the entire adult population of the United States.

CONTACT:

Mario Canseco, Vice President, Public Affairs, 604-647-3570, mario.canseco@angus-reid.com

On the other hand, 45 per cent of respondents agree with a statement issued by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, who claimed that corporations should have the right to express themselves about political candidates and issues up until election day. Forty-two per cent of Americans disagree with this notion.

Regulating Spending

About three quarters of respondents across the country are in favour of legislation that would regulate the way corporations can spend in political advertising, such as requiring the approval of a majority of shareholders before a corporation can run a political ad (74%); requiring that the chief executive of the corporation appear at the end of the ad so the public knows who is behind it (75%), and limiting the advertising of corporations that have received federal bailout money or that are awarded federal contracts (75%).

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Election Spending

As you may know, the U.S. Supreme Court recently decided to allow corporations to spend freely to support candidates in federal elections. Have you followed this story in the media?

	Total	Party ID		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes, very closely	10%	13%	11%	11%
Yes, moderately closely	22%	24%	25%	22%
Yes, but not too closely	27%	26%	24%	30%
No, I have not followed this story at all	41%	37%	40%	38%

Election Spending

From what you have seen, read or heard, do you agree or disagree with the Supreme Court's decision to allow corporations to spend freely to support candidates in federal elections?

	Total	Party ID		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	6%	4%	10%	5%
Moderately agree	11%	11%	14%	11%
Moderately disagree	21%	22%	19%	23%
Strongly disagree	44%	44%	44%	49%
Not sure	18%	19%	12%	13%
Agree – net	17%	15%	24%	16%
Disagree – net	65%	67%	63%	72%

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For Immediate Release
United States Public Opinion Poll

Page 4 of 8

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Election Spending

Here are some proposals that have been outlined to deal with political ads financed by corporations. Do you agree or disagree with each one of the following proposals? - **Requiring the approval of a majority of shareholders before a corporation can run a political ad**

	Party ID			
	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	44% 15%	45% 15%	47% 18%	46% 13%
Moderately agree	30% 25%	33% 23%	31% 24%	28% 27%
Moderately disagree	30% 8%	28% 6%	34% 9%	39% 9%
Strongly disagree	11% 20%	10% 20%	13% 23%	12% 18%
Not sure	16% 28%	18% 28%	8% 17%	18% 28%
Agree – net	74% 13%	78% 12%	79% 8%	74% 10%
Disagree – net	11% 68%	9% 72%	15% 68%	12% 73%
Agree – net	45%	44%	52%	44%
Disagree – net	17% 42%	15% 44%	23% 40%	17% 46%

Election Spending

Here are some proposals that have been outlined to deal with political ads financed by corporations. Do you agree or disagree with each one of the following proposals? - **Requiring the chief executive of the corporation to appear at the end of the ad so the public knows who is behind it**

	Party ID			
	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	45%	47%	47%	50%
Moderately agree	31%	34%	33%	24%
Moderately disagree	7%	5%	9%	9%
Strongly disagree	4%	2%	4%	4%
Not sure	14%	11%	7%	13%
Agree – net	75%	81%	80%	74%

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Disagree – net	11%	8%	13%	13%
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Election Spending

Here are some proposals that have been outlined to deal with political ads financed by corporations. Do you agree or disagree with each one of the following proposals? - **Limiting the ad-spending of corporations that have received federal bailout money or that are awarded federal contracts**

	Total	Party ID		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	54%	58%	53%	59%
Moderately agree	22%	22%	26%	18%
Moderately disagree	8%	7%	7%	9%
Strongly disagree	5%	2%	8%	5%
Not sure	12%	12%	5%	9%
Agree – net	75%	79%	79%	77%
Disagree – net	13%	9%	15%	14%

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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.

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.

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. More information on our electoral record can be found at:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/record-of-accuracy>

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at
<http://www.visioncritical.com/what-we-do/practices/angus-reid-public-opinion/>

- 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>

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