

HOUSE OF COMMONS CHANGES

# Canadians See No Benefits in Adding Seats to the House of Commons

*Almost half of respondents in the country oppose the proposal to increase the number of representatives from 308 to 338.*

[TORONTO – Apr. 7, 2010] – Few people in Canada are welcoming recently announced plans to increase the number of seats in the House of Commons, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

The federal government has proposed increasing the seats in the lower house of Parliament from 308 to 338. Under the plan, Ontario would get 18 new seats, while British Columbia and Alberta would gain an extra seven and five seats, respectively.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,006 Canadian adults, 37 per cent of Canadians support this proposal, whereas 45 per cent oppose it.

## Regional Differences

The plan to increase the number of seats in the House of Commons is more popular in the three provinces that would gain more Members of Parliament: Alberta (58%), British Columbia (49%) and Ontario (49%).

In contrast, most people in Quebec (71%), Manitoba and Saskatchewan (57%), and Atlantic Canada (54%) oppose the plan.

## KEY FINDINGS

- **45% of Canadians oppose plan to increase number of Commons seats**
- **Most opposed are those in Quebec (71%), Manitoba and Sask. (57%), and Atlantic Canada (54%)**
- **39% say Tories will benefit the most with the changes**
- **Only 17% think adding representatives to the lower house will be good for Canada**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

*From April 6 to April 7, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,006 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.*

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## Benefits

About two-in-five Canadians (39%) share the view that the governing Conservative Party will be the one to benefit the most with this proposed measure, while only 19 per cent think the opposition Liberal Party will gain. Less than five per cent of Canadians foresee either the New Democratic Party (NDP) or the Greens being the big winners under the proposed guidelines.

Overall, barely 17 per cent of Canadians think increasing the number of legislators would be good for the country. Three-in-ten (31%) say the plan would actually be bad for Canada, and the same proportion (31%) believe the proposal will make no difference at all.

Quebec holds the highest number of respondents (41%) who believe that the proposed changes will be bad for the country. In contrast, Alberta (26%) and Ontario (23%) are home to relatively large groups of people who think the idea will be beneficial.

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### House of Commons Changes

As you may know, the federal government has introduced legislation to increase the number of seats in the House of Commons from 308 to 338. Ontario will get 18 new seats, British Columbia would get seven new seats, and Alberta will get five new seats. No other Canadian provinces will get more seats. The new riding boundaries will not be drawn until 2011 and are unlikely to come into force until at least 2012. Overall, do you support or oppose this legislation?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
<b>Strongly support</b>	10%	12%	15%	8%	13%	4%	3%
<b>Moderately support</b>	28%	37%	43%	11%	36%	11%	26%
<b>Moderately oppose</b>	16%	19%	10%	25%	15%	15%	16%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	29%	12%	13%	33%	17%	56%	38%
<b>Not sure</b>	18%	19%	19%	24%	19%	14%	17%
<b>Support – net</b>	37%	49%	58%	19%	49%	15%	29%
<b>Oppose – net</b>	45%	32%	23%	57%	32%	71%	54%

### House of Commons Changes

Which party do you think will benefit the most from the proposed legislation that seeks to increase the number of seats in the House of Commons?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
<b>Conservative Party</b>	39%	33%	33%	44%	36%	48%	37%
<b>Liberal Party</b>	16%	19%	21%	9%	15%	18%	15%
<b>New Democratic Party (NDP)</b>	4%	6%	5%	2%	4%	2%	6%
<b>Green Party</b>	2%	2%	1%	0%	3%	1%	1%
<b>Not sure</b>	39%	40%	41%	45%	42%	32%	41%

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**House of Commons Changes**

Do you think having more MPs in the House of Commons will be good for Canada or bad for Canada?

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
<b>Good for Canada</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Bad for Canada</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>It will have no effect</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>36%</b>

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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 Public Opinion 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](http://www.angusreidforum.com)), Springboard America ([www.springboardamerica.com](http://www.springboardamerica.com)) and Springboard UK ([www.springboarduk.com](http://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:*  
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*More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at*  
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**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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