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More Canadians Approve of Provincial Premiers' Handling of Pandemic (80%, -4) Than Prime Minister's (72%, -2)

Though Supportive of Aid Measures, Fewer Canadians Willing to Give Prime Minister Blank Cheque to Fix Crisis (69%, -15)

Toronto, ON, May 13, 2020 – Justin Trudeau may be enjoying favourable approval numbers at the polls in recent weeks, but at least for the time being, he may have to share the spotlight with his provincial counterparts. A recent Ipsos poll carried out on behalf of Global News has found that more Canadians still approve of the way their provincial premiers are responding to COVID-19 than the way Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has been handling the crisis. Furthermore, while Canadians are supportive of the various government programmes being put in place to support those who are experiencing difficulties during the pandemic, they are also less willing to give the Prime Minister *carte blanche* to spend as he pleases. Patience may be starting to erode as the country wonders just how much the rescue effort will cost and for just how long they will be paying for it.

Approve of Prime Minister's and Provincial Premiers' Responses, Disapprove of Trump's

Canadians remain supportive of how the Prime Minister has been handling the pandemic; seven in ten (72%) approve (28% strongly/44% somewhat) of Justin Trudeau's performance in response to the COVID-19 crisis. This level of approval remains roughly unchanged since last month's wave (-2). Atlantic Canadians are the most likely to say they approve in some way of the job the Prime Minister is doing (84%), while those in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (57%) and Alberta (62%) are less likely to agree. Furthermore, women (78%) are more likely to approve of Trudeau's performance than men (65%).

Trudeau's level of approval is particularly interesting, given that less than 4 in 10 (38%) agree (5% strongly/33% somewhat) that Canada was well-prepared to manage COVID-19 before the pandemic struck. While last month saw Canadians approve more of their provincial premier's response to the pandemic when compared to that of the Prime Minister, this month Justin Trudeau is about as popular as the provincial premier in Alberta and the Atlantic Provinces. In the former case, this is due to approval of the provincial premier falling by three points since last month and in the latter case, due to approval of the Prime Minister's response surging sixteen points. However, the fact remains that Canadians across the country generally have a more favourable opinion of their province's response to the pandemic than the Federal Government.

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Approval of Prime Minister v. Provincial Premier's Handling of COVID-19 Crisis (% Strongly/Somewhat Agree)

Region	Provincial Premier	Prime Minister
British Columbia	84%	71%
Alberta	64%	62%
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	73%	57%
Ontario	82%	75%
Quebec	83%	72%
Atlantic Canada	85%	84%
Overall	80%	72%

In addition, Canadians generally approve of how their provincial premier is handling their province's coronavirus response. Across the country, support for provincial premiers stands at 80% overall (32% strongly/48% somewhat). However, this is a four-point decrease from last month, perhaps reflecting a certain impatience among Canadians to get on with their lives. While the premiers of Atlantic Canada (85%), British Columbia (84%), Quebec (83%), and Ontario (82%) enjoy high levels of approval from their residents regarding their response to COVID-19, those in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (73%) and Alberta (64%) are the least favoured. The biggest fluctuations in approval can be found in Quebec, where François Legault has seen a thirteen-point decrease in the proportion of Quebecers who approve of how he has been handling the pandemic. Collectively, the premiers of the four Atlantic provinces have seen their approval rise by eight points since last month.

Approval of Provincial Premier's Handling of COVID-19 Crisis (% Strongly/Somewhat Agree)

Region	May 2020	April 2020	Difference
British Columbia	84%	83%	+1
Alberta	64%	67%	-3
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	73%	78%	-5
Ontario	82%	83%	-1
Quebec	83%	96%	-13
Atlantic Canada	85%	77%	+8
Overall	80%	84%	-4

By contrast, Canadians are less positive when it comes to US President Donald Trump's handling of the current situation. Less than 2 in 10 Canadians (16%) agree (4% strongly/12% somewhat) that Trump is handling the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this is a rather scathing assessment of how President Trump has been handling coronavirus, it is at least stable from last month. As with last month, men (21%) are more likely than women (11%) to approve of Trump's handling of the crisis, along with those under the age of 55 years (23%, 18-34 years; 17%, 35-54 years; 11%, 55+ years).

Supportive of Aid Packages, But Starting to Eye their Cost

In response to this most extraordinary crisis, the Federal Government has implemented a raft of programs intended to help stabilize the economy, such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). It seems that Canadians largely



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support these measures; seven in ten believe that the amount of financial support given to individuals who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 is about right (71%), as is the amount given to businesses to help keep Canadians employed (70%).

However, no large-scale response to a crisis can be perfect and there are still pockets of discontent in the current state of public opinion that sometimes contract each other. For instance, while one in four (25%) Ontarians say the financial support given by the Federal Government to Canadians who have lost their jobs to COVID-19 is *too little*, 20% of Quebecers think that the amount is *too much*. In addition, whereas 24% of Ontarians believe that the Federal Government's financial support to businesses to help keep Canadians employed does not go far enough, 15% of Quebecers say that it is too much.

As it stands, seven in ten (69%) Canadians are supportive (19% strongly/50% somewhat) of the Prime Minister running whatever size budget deficit necessary to get the country through the current crisis. This is a fifteen-point decrease from last month (84%) and is perhaps a sign that the longer the pandemic continues to disrupt the economy, more Canadians will start to add up the sums of money being spent to shore up the economy. In particular, those in Atlantic Canada (74%), British Columbia (72%), Ontario (71%), and Quebec (69%) are generally more supportive of running a deficit to get Canada through the COVID-19 crisis, whereas those in Alberta (66%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (52%) are less supportive.

Still Support Protective Measures

Different parts of the country are progressing at different speeds when it comes to re-opening businesses, schools, and a return to some kind of normalcy. However, coronavirus is still very much on the minds of many Canadians, especially when it comes to testing and vaccinating against the virus once things start to re-open. More specifically,

- Almost 8 in 10 (78%) agree (32% strongly/46% somewhat) that we need the ability and capacity to *test widely* for COVID-19 before opening businesses and society again.
- Two-thirds (67%) agree (24% strongly/42% somewhat) that we need the ability to *vaccinate against* COVID-19 before opening again.
- Nearly six in ten (57%) support (19% strongly/37% somewhat) using cellphone data to monitor the movement of those who are supposed to be quarantining.

As provinces are implementing plans for when to re-open businesses and school, it seems that similar proportions of Canadians believe that provincial plans to re-open business and schools are proceeding at just the right speed. For example, six in ten (58%) Canadians think that the speed at which their province is re-opening businesses is just right, with 3 in 10 (30%) thinking that businesses are re-opening too quickly. Regionally speaking, those in Alberta are more likely to believe that things are going too quickly to re-open businesses (43%); those in Atlantic Canada are the least likely (14%) to believe so, instead mostly thinking that things are moving along at just the right speed (70%).

Similarly, 60% of Canadians think that the speed at which schools are re-opening in their province is just right, with 3 in 10 (27%) thinking that the speed has been too fast. While there is no difference in terms of whether there is a child under 18 years in the household, those in Quebec are significantly





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more likely to believe that things are going too fast (47%). The virus is still not completely under control, particularly in the Greater Montreal area and this state of opinion in the province was most likely influential in forcing François Legault to push back his proposed date to re-open some schools from mid-May to the end of May.

Speed of Re-Opening Places, By Region (% “Too Fast”)

Region	Businesses	Schools
British Columbia	32%	26%
Alberta	43%	15%
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	19%	11%
Ontario	31%	24%
Quebec	29%	47%
Atlantic	14%	19%
Overall	30%	27%

But, schools and businesses aside, it seems that COVID-19 cannot dampen the enthusiasm of a country with millions of die-hard hockey fans. Almost 4 in 10 (38%) agree (10% strongly/27% somewhat) that the NHL should finish the season this fall. Men (41%) are more likely to agree than women (34%), as are younger Canadians (42%, 18-34 years; 40%, 35-54 years vs, 32% 55+ years). Winnipeg Jets may want to put the current season behind them; only 16% of those living in Saskatchewan/Manitoba agree that the season should be finished come fall.



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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between May 8 and 11, 2020, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,000 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed online. Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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