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Majority of Canadians Believe ex-Governor-General Payette Should Not be Entitled to Pension (80%) or Benefits (72%)

Support for Ending Ties to Monarchy Once Queen Elizabeth's Reign Ends Highest in a Decade (60%); Yet Over Half (55%) Also Agree Monarchy is Part of Canadian Identity

Toronto, ON, February 12, 2021 – A large majority of Canadians believe a governor-general who resigns before the end of their term should be entitled to neither their pension nor allowance related to their former position as viceroy, according to a new Ipsos poll conducted exclusively for Global News. The poll also found that while support for ending ties with the monarchy is at its highest levels in a decade, Canadians also see the monarchy as an important part of Canadian identity.

Majority Believe Governor-General Who Resigns Should Not Be Entitled to Pension or Benefits

With Julie Payette being the second governor-general to resign (after Roméo Leblanc had to do so for health reasons in the late 1990s), her abrupt departure following a scathing independent investigation into her workplace behaviour has raised questions over whether she should be entitled to collect her six-digit government pension after leaving the position. A large majority of Canadians (80%) agree that a governor-general who resigns before the end of their term should not be entitled to their pension, with nearly half (46%) saying they 'strongly agree'. This sentiment is strongest among older Canadians, where 92% of those aged 55+ years say they agree and two-thirds (67%) say they 'strongly agree'.

Another perk available to former governors-general is an allowance for ongoing expenses related to one's former position as the Queen's representative in Canada, such as travelling to give speeches. Just over a quarter of Canadians (28%) agree (6% agree/22% somewhat) that it is appropriate for former governors-general to have these expenses covered by taxpayers. Younger Canadians are significantly more likely to support this extra benefit, with 4 in 10 (40%) of those aged 18-34 years saying they approve (versus 16% among those aged 55+ years). However, the fact remains that the remaining three-quarters (72%) of Canadians believe it is not appropriate to cover these types of expenses.

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Though More Support Ending Ties to Monarchy, Canadians No More Likely to Embrace Republic

The controversy surrounding the governor-general's resignation has once again sparked the debate over the future of the monarchy in Canada. Six in ten (60%) Canadians agree that when Queen Elizabeth's reign ends, Canada should end its formal ties to the British monarchy, with a quarter (25%) saying that they 'strongly agree'. This is the highest level of support Ipsos has recorded for ending formal ties to the monarchy in the past decade, up seven points from February last year (when Harry and Meghan announced that they would be stepping back from their royal duties), and up twelve points from June 2011 (shortly after Prince William and Catherine Middleton's much-awaited wedding).

	% agree ending ties to monarchy <i>(strongly/somewhat)</i>
February 2021	60%
February 2020	53%
February 2019	52%
April 2016	45%
June 2012	47%
July 2011	44%
June 2011	48%
June 2010	58%

Quebecers are most likely to say that they'd like to end ties to the monarchy; just over 8 in 10 (82%) say they agree that ties to the monarchy should end. Even in Ontario, the province with the most pro-monarchy attitudes, half (49%) believe that Canada's formal relationship with the British monarchy should come to an end after Queen Elizabeth's reign.

But what would replace the current system? Canadians' opinions are split when asked if they would prefer switching from a constitutional monarchy to a republic, like the United States. Even with the recent turmoil south of the border, half (51%) agree (18% strongly/33% somewhat) they would like Canada to become a republic. This level of support is unchanged from February 2019 (+1) and consistent with the pattern of opinion for the last two decades.

	% agree with switching to a republic, similar to the US <i>(strongly/somewhat)</i>
February 2021	51%
February 2019	50%
June 2012	46%
November 2010	53%
June 2010	54%
October 2009	49%
February 2002	48%

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Older Canadians are less likely to be on board with republicanism (42% among 55+ years v. 58% among 18-34 years and 56% among 35-54 years). Quebecers, on top of being the most likely to say they would like to end formal ties to the British monarchy, are also more likely to say they 'strongly agree' with the idea of switching to an American-style republic (28% in Quebec v. 18% nationally).

Over Half Agree Monarchy Defines Canadian Identity, Offers Political Stability

Even if a majority of Canadians would like to see formal ties to the monarchy end after the current monarch, a similarly large (but shrinking) proportion also still see the value in the current system of government being a pillar of Canadian identity, perhaps serving as a convenient point of differentiation between Canada and the US. Over half (55%) agree (13% strongly/42% somewhat) that the constitutional monarchy helps define Canadian identity and should continue as the country's form of government. This is down five points from two years ago and some of the lowest levels of agreement seen in the past decade.

	% agree monarchy helps define Canadian identity <i>(strongly/somewhat)</i>
February 2021	55%
February 2019	60%
April 2016	61%
June 2012	61%
November 2010	57%
June 2010	53%
October 2009	54%
February 2002	62%

These trends are consistent across the country, with one (predictable) exception; support for continuing our current form of government is weakest in Quebec, where nearly two-thirds (63%) *disagree* with this idea (and 29% go so far as to say they 'strongly disagree').

One often-cited reason for continuing the monarchy in Canada is that it acts as a stabilizing influence that allows for the maintenance of 'peace, order, and good government'. Nearly 6 in 10 (57%) Canadians agree that having a governor-general helps to ensure the peaceful transition of power between governments in Canada. However, very few feel strongly about this, with only 9% saying they 'strongly agree' with this sentiment. A quarter of older Canadians *disagree* that the governor-general ensures political stability and continuity (24% among 55+ years v. 13% among 18-34 years), and regionally, Quebecers are more likely to disagree (61% disagree, with 31% saying they 'strongly disagree').



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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between February 1-3, 2021, 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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