

FACTUM

Eight in Ten Canadians (82%, +4) Say to Win Their Vote at Election Time, Parties Must Aim for Balanced Budget – But Rising Majority Support Running Deficit to Get Through Pandemic (66%, +9)

Days Before Budget Release, Canadians Want Lower Taxes on the Middle Class, Higher Taxes on the Wealthy

Toronto, ON, April 12, 2021 – A year into the pandemic, Canada has spent hundreds of billions of dollars on measures to fight COVID-19. With an election on the horizon before the end of the year, many are wondering when and how the government will balance the books. The latest Ipsos polling exclusively for Global News reveals that this concern could well be a critical issue at the ballot box: eight in ten Canadians (82%) agree (20% strongly/62% somewhat) that in order for them to consider voting for a political party in the next election, the party must have a reasonable plan to get back to balanced budgets in a timely manner.

Agreement is up 4 points since the last time Ipsos asked this question in September 2020, suggesting the issue is gaining in importance for Canadians. A majority agree across party lines, whether Canadians intend to vote for the Tories (90%), Liberals (79%), NDP (71%), Bloc Québécois (100%), or Greens (72%).

Despite this, economic stimulus packages like CERB have been highly popular across the country, and a majority appear to be at least somewhat willing to tolerate running a deficit to survive the unprecedented circumstances of the pandemic. Nationally, two in three (66%) agree (16% strongly/50% somewhat) they support running whatever size federal deficit the Prime Minister says is necessary to get Canada through this crisis – up 9 points since September. Unchecked deficits are highly politicized and agreement varies widely by party allegiance, peaking at 84% among Liberal supporters compared to just 42% of Conservatives.

Support for creating a universal basic income – where all Canadians would receive a guaranteed amount of money from the government regardless of whether they work or not – has held steady at 57%. However, less than half of Canadians agree with paying more taxes as a means to fund this or any other government programs. Six in ten (59%) disagree (19% strongly/39% somewhat) that it's acceptable that the government increase the amount they personally pay in taxes, given all that we need to do to get Canada's economy back on track, leaving 41% who agree that they don't mind paying more taxes under the circumstances. Even among Liberal supporters, willingness to pay taxes is just at 52%.

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To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Agree (Strongly/Somewhat)							
	Total	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Bloc	Green	Undecided
In order for me to consider voting for a political party in the next election, they must have a reasonable plan to get back to balanced budgets in a timely manner	82%	90%	79%	71%	100%	72%	79%
I support running whatever size federal deficit the Prime Minister says is necessary to get Canada through this crisis	66%	42%	84%	75%	81%	39%	69%
Canada should create a basic universal income for all Canadians. That means all of us would receive a guaranteed amount of money from the government regardless of whether we work or not	57%	39%	64%	75%	51%	79%	64%
Given all that we need to do to get Canada's economy back on track it is acceptable that the government increases the amount I personally pay in taxes	41%	35%	52%	40%	35%	47%	39%

Tax Reform, Poverty Reduction Top Budget Wish List

With just days to go before Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland presents the Budget for 2021, Ipsos polling paints a picture of a nation divided along socio-economic lines. Taxes are top-of-mind for many, but the real question is who should be taxed more and who less.

The survey asked Canadians what they would like to see included in this year's Budget, and were able to choose up to three items from a comprehensive list. Taxes make up two of the top three answers: more than four in ten (43%) say taxes should be reduced for middle-to-low income Canadians, while nearly four in ten (38%) say taxes should be increased on Canada's wealthiest people.

Nearly one in four (23%) want the Budget to increase spending on programs to reduce poverty. More fiscally conservative measures round out the top five: two in ten (21%) say the Budget should aim to reduce the deficit, and 19% want a reduction in overall government spending.

Seen as less of an immediate priority – scoring much lower down on the budget agenda – are items like a national childcare system (8%) and increased spending on programs to support Indigenous Canadians (6%) or racialized groups (4%), all of which were key Liberal planks prior to the pandemic. Today, they are seen as a budget priority by fewer than one in ten, including among committed Liberal voters.

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What Canadians want from their federal Budget depends greatly on their age, income, and where they live. Some key themes emerging from the data include:

- **Deficit resonates most with Tories, Bloc:** 39% of decided Tory voters and 26% of Bloc voters say the Budget should aim to reduce the deficit. By contrast, 13% of Liberal voters, 7% of New Democrats, and 7% of Greens feel the same.
- **Class divide:** Canadians with a household income of \$40K-<\$60K are significantly more likely to say the budget should increase taxes on Canada's wealthiest people (51%). While just 3% nationally say the budget should reduce spending on social programs, this rises to 10% among those with a household income of \$100K or more.
- **Western provinces want industry support:** Alberta (26%) and BC (20%) are more likely to want budgetary spending for key industries that have been hit hardest by the pandemic, like tourism, restaurants, arts and entertainment. Alberta (20%) and the Prairies (20%) lead in wanting policies to help with the recovery of the oil and gas sector – while also being more likely to want government to reduce spending overall (27% and 33%, respectively).

As you may know, Canada's federal budget will be announced on April 19th, 2021. What would you like to see the Federal Government include in the budget?	
Reduce taxes for middle-to-low income Canadians	43%
Increase taxes on Canada's wealthiest people	38%
Increase spending on programs to reduce poverty	23%
Reduce the deficit	21%
Reduce overall government spending	19%
Spending for key industries that have been hit hardest by the pandemic, such as tourism, restaurants, arts and entertainment.	16%
Job training and skill improvement programs for workers	16%
Policies to keep interest rates low	14%
Spending on low carbon industries to help the climate	12%
Policies to help with the recovery of Canada's oil and natural gas producers	11%
Financial support to help women back into the workforce after the pandemic	10%
Lower taxes for businesses	10%
Eliminate Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB)	9%
A new National child-care system	8%
Increase spending on programs to support indigenous Canadians	6%
Increase spending on programs to support racialized groups in Canada	4%
Increase spending on defence and national security	4%
Reduce spending on social programs	3%
Some other priority	9%



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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between April 7-9, 2021, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,001 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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