

PRESS RELEASE

A Quarter (24%) of Canadians Do Not Feel Safe Going to a Polling Station

Majority Agrees (68%) that All Polling Station Workers Should be Vaccinated

Toronto, ON, August 30, 2021 — As COVID-19 case counts rise, and Canada being officially in the fourth wave of the pandemic, a quarter (24%) of Canadians disagree (16% somewhat/8% strongly) that they would feel safe going to a polling station to cast their ballot, according to a recent Ipsos poll. Notably, those aged 18-34 are more likely to *disagree* than older Canadians (30% 18-34 vs 25% 35-54, 19% 55+). This could pose some challenges for voter turnout, particularly among the NDP who have a stronger 18-34 base.

Regionally, those residing in BC and Saskatchewan/Manitoba are *more likely* to disagree that they would feel safe going to a polling station to cast their vote compared to the other regions (29% BC, 29% SK/MB vs 25% Ontario, 25% Atlantic, 21% Quebec, 17% Alberta).

Green party voters are more likely to *disagree* that they feel safe going to a polling station to cast their ballot compared to the other party voters (37% Green vs 26% NDP, 22% Cons, 22% Libs, 22% BQ). As well, there is a slightly higher proportion of NDP voters who disagree that they feel safe, compared to the Conservative, Liberal, and Bloc Quebecois party voters, thus reiterating the potential challenge in voter turnout for the party.

In an effort to increase comfort levels, a majority (68%) of Canadians agree (43% strongly/26% somewhat) that it should be mandatory for poll workers to be vaccinated. Those aged 55+ are more likely to agree than the other age groups (81% 55+, 63% 35-54, 58% 18-34). Notably, Conservative Party voters are the *least likely* among the parties to agree (55% vs 83% Libs, 78% NDP, 84% BQ, 70% Green).

More mail-in votes could pose opportunities, or challenges, for parties

Slightly under one in five (16%) Canadians say they will vote by mail for this election, with those residing in BC more likely to agree to this statement (25% BC vs 18% SK/MB, 15% Ontario, 14% Atlantic, 13% Alberta, 12% Quebec). This is a bit of an unknown, since for many Canadians this will be their first time casting a ballot by this method. It is difficult to know at this point whether this could lead to a firming up of votes due to advance voting, or whether people will not put in the additional effort that might be required to cast their ballot by mail, and ultimately won't end up voting. Given that Liberal (19%) and NDP (18%) voters are more likely to say they'll cast their ballot by mail, this could represent a disproportionate opportunity or challenge for these parties.

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One in five (21%) say they are unsure whether they will vote in person or by mail as it will be dependent on the case count closer to the election, and very few (2%) Canadians say they are considering not voting at all due to the rising case counts. The lack of a clear plan to vote could result in apathy and a lower turnout election. As well, the uncertainty around *when* and *how* voters will vote could pose challenges for campaign strategies for parties.

A majority (62%) remains who say they will still vote in person, whether that is on election day, advance voting, or at a returning office. Those aged 55+ are more likely to agree to this statement (66% 55+ vs 61% 35-54, 57% 18-34), as well as Conservative party voters (67% vs 59% Liberal, 55% the NDP, 66% BQ, 54% Green).

Agreement about voting, by Stated Vote Intention

	Total	Cons.	Lib.	NDP	BQ	Green
We should not be having an election during a pandemic	58%	57%	53%	63%	87%	60%
I feel safe going to a polling place to cast my ballot	67%	74%	72%	67%	76%	63%
It should be mandatory for poll workers to be vaccinated	68%	55%	83%	78%	84%	70%

Agreement about voting, by Region

	Total	BC	AB	SK/MB	Ont	Quebec	Atlantic
We should not be having an election during a pandemic	58%	61%	49%	59%	54%	69%	44%
I feel safe going to a polling place to cast my ballot	67%	61%	73%	60%	68%	69%	67%
It should be mandatory for poll workers to be vaccinated	68%	72%	52%	70%	67%	74%	71%

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Campaign Having an Impact After Just One Week

As the election rolls into week two, four in ten (41%) Canadians agree (14% strongly/28% somewhat) that the campaign announcements that have been made so far have solidified their vote choice. This leaves a third (35%) of Canadians who disagree with this statement, and a quarter (24%) who say they do not know. A majority (52%, respectively) of Conservative party voters and Liberal party voters agree their vote has been solidified, whereas NDP (39%) and Green party voters (35%) are less likely to say so. This gap could be detrimental for the NDP and the Greens if they don't solidify more of their voters in the coming weeks with campaign announcements, if voters make a move to back one of the two leading horses.

When it comes to changing their vote, slightly under one in five (16%) Canadians agree (4% strongly/12% somewhat) the campaign announcements that have been made so far have changed their intended vote. Those aged 18-34 are more likely to agree that their intended vote has changed with the campaign announcements made so far compared to the other age groups (25% 18-34 vs 17% 35-54, 10% 55+). As well, those with a household income under \$40k are more likely to agree (23% <\$40k vs 16% \$40-\$60k, 14% \$60k-\$100k, 13% \$100k+).

Those who say they will vote by mail are *directionally more likely* to say the current campaign announcements that have been made so far have changed their intended vote (23% by mail, 22% wait and see, 16% in person). This could pose a challenge for parties as there will be less time to influence and gain these voters through campaign announcements.

Current Tory and NDP voters appear slightly more likely to have said that campaign dynamics have changed their vote, which underscores the momentum that they appear to be building, detracting from the Liberals.

Agreement about voting, by Stated Vote Intention

	Total	Cons.	Lib.	NDP	BQ	Green
Campaign announcements made so far have solidified my vote choice	41%	52%	52%	39%	48%	35%
Campaign announcements made so far have changed my intended vote	16%	20%	18%	21%	12%	15%

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Majority of Canadians Remain on the Fence about the Election Called

A majority of Canadians continue to believe that now is not the time for an election, according to a recent Ipsos poll. A majority (58%, +2 points) of Canadians agree (28% strongly/30% somewhat) that we should not be having an election during a pandemic, which is more pronounced among those aged 55+ compared to the other age groups (67% 55+ vs 57% 35-54, 46% 18-34). This feeling likely helps to explain Liberal troubles during the first week of the campaign, given that Canadians don't appear convinced by the Prime Minister's rationale for calling an election.

When looking at the regional breakdown, those in Quebec are more likely to agree that now is not the time for an election compared to the other regions, which could raise the risk factor for the incumbent Liberals within *la belle province* (69% Quebec vs 61% BC, 59% SK/MB, 54% Ontario, 49% Alberta, 44% Atlantic).

About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between August 20 and 23, on behalf of Global News. A sample of n = 1,500 was interviewed online, via the Ipsos I-Say panel and non-panel sources, and respondents earn a nominal incentive for their participation. Quotas and weighting were employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos polls which include non-probability sampling is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians 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. Ipsos abides by the disclosure standards established by the CRIC, found here:

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<https://ipsosintelligence.ca/canadiancontext/>

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