
THE NATIONAL ANGUS REID/SOUTHAM NEWS POLL

**- CANADIANS APPRAISE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S
ETHICAL STANDARDS -**



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This National Angus Reid/Southam News Poll was conducted by telephone between November 26th and December 2nd, 1996 among a representative cross-section of 1,520 Canadian adults.

The actual number of completed interviews in each region was as follows: B.C. - 200; Alberta - 150; Manitoba/Saskatchewan - 123; Ontario - 526; Quebec - 401; Atlantic - 120. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1991 Census data.

With a national sample of 1,520, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within ± 2.5 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

CANADIANS APPRAISE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S ETHICAL STANDARDS

Canadians give the Chretien Liberal government a passing grade for its overall performance in terms of honesty and ethics, and many make a favourable comparison against previous federal and current provincial governments.

These findings emerged from a National Angus Reid/Southam News Poll conducted among a representative cross-section of 1,520 Canadian adults between November 26th and December 2nd, 1996. The poll highlights:

- Overall, six in ten (59%) Canadians surveyed provided a positive rating of the federal Liberal government's performance in terms of honesty and ethics – only 4 percent described it as "very good" but another 55 percent described this record as "good". This compares to four in ten (39%) who said this current federal government has performed poorly in this regard (8% "very poor", 31% "poor"). The regional findings point to a similar overall appraisal in all major regions of the country – the most favourable assessment is provided by residents of Manitoba/Saskatchewan (64% positive versus 36% negative) and the most negative from Quebec (51% versus 45%). (Table 1)
- Asked how they would compare the current federal Liberal government's ethical standards to those followed by previous federal governments, the Canadians surveyed were much more likely to say that the current government is better than its predecessors than they were to say it is worse (34% versus 7%), although a full majority (57%) saw no substantive difference. Regionally, British Columbians make the most favourable comparisons for the Chretien Liberals (45% better than earlier governments versus 5% worse) while Quebecers are least convinced on this point (20% versus 10% with 69% seeing no difference). (Table 2)

- Asked how they think the federal Liberal government's ethical standards compare to those of their own current provincial government, again a full majority of 56 percent saw no substantive difference but those who did were somewhat more likely to perceive the current federal government as the more ethical (26% versus 16% nationally). It is British Columbians who offer by far the most positive comparison for the federal Liberal government – fully one-half (49%) of British Columbians surveyed said they believe the federal government has higher ethical standards than their provincial government against only one in twenty (6%) who took the opposite view. Ontarians and Atlantic Canadians also tended to make a positive comparison, though a more modest one. Quebecers and residents of Manitoba/Saskatchewan, meanwhile, were split as to which government has higher ethical standards. In all four of these regions, a full majority saw no substantive difference. Albertans, meanwhile, were more likely to say the federal Liberal government's ethical standards are lower than those of their provincial government (33% versus 19%, with 46% seeing no difference). (Table 2)

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