

HARPER HAS ROOM TO GOVERN

Majority of Canadians Would Not Want the Government Defeated Even if Harper Tries to Pass Controversial Legislation



Ipsos Reid

Public Release Date: Monday February 6th, 2006 - 6:00 a.m. (EST)

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Toronto, ON – As Prime Minister elect Stephen Harper prepares to take the reins of power, a new Ipsos Reid/CanWest Global poll shows that, Canadians do not have an appetite for bringing down the minority government even if Harper and the Conservatives try to pass legislation on some of the more controversial issues facing the country.

A majority of Canadians say they would not support the opposition parties voting the Conservatives out if they try to cut the GST or pass legislation banning same sex marriage:

- 57% would not support bringing down the government if they “try to pass a law to cut the GST by 2% over their term” (39% would support bringing the government down if they tried to do this).
- 54% would not support bringing the government down if they “try to pass a law that makes same sex marriages illegal” (41% would support bringing the government down if they tried to do this).

Slim majorities would not support bringing the government down over sending troops to Iraq or limiting access to abortion.

- 51% would not support bringing the government down if they “send Canadian troops to fight in Iraq” (44% would support bringing the government down if they did this).
- 50% would not support bringing the government down if they “try to pass a law that limits a woman’s access to abortion” (45% would support bringing the government down if they tried to do this).

The only exception is on the issue of health care.

- Canadians are divided over whether the government should be brought down if it “moves to give private for-profit health care a bigger role in Canada”. Forty-six percent say the government should not be brought down while a slightly higher number (48%) say it should.

While this does not mean that Canadians would support legislation on these issues, it does suggest that the Conservatives have some room to govern. Even in the face of the most controversial issues, a majority of Canadians do not want to see the government defeated and another election.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid telephone poll conducted between January 31st and February 2nd, 2006. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1000 adult Canadians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population of Canada been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. 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 2001 Census data.

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