

MAJORITY APPROVAL FOR HARPER GOVERNMENT

*Harper Conservative Government Approval (54%) Well Above
Party's Support in Recent Election (36%)
Canadians Split on Recent Cabinet Appointments*



Ipsos Reid

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Canadians Split on Recent Cabinet Appointments

Toronto, ON – As Stephen Harper and the Conservatives move through their first week in office, a new Ipsos Reid/CanWest Global poll shows a majority of Canadians approve of the new government's performance so far. Canadians are somewhat less supportive of the new government's cabinet appointments.

The Conservatives were elected on January 23rd with the support of 36% of Canadian voters. Now, less than three weeks later, a majority (54%) of Canadians say they approve of the new government's performance so far under the leadership of Stephen Harper. This includes two-in-ten (18%) Canadians who "strongly" approve and 36% who "somewhat" approve. One-in-three (32%) Canadians disapprove of the performance of the Conservative government so far (14% "strongly", 18% "somewhat").

- Conservative government approval is above the majority level on the prairies (Alberta 67%, Saskatchewan/Manitoba 57%) and in Quebec (61%).
- Approval of the government's performance is below the majority level, but still above the level of disapproval in Ontario (49% approve vs. 37% disapprove), British Columbia (45% approve vs. 37% disapprove) and Atlantic Canada (49% approve vs. 35% disapprove).
- In fact, government approval is higher than disapproval for both men and women, and across all age, education and income groups.

Canadians are more split when it comes to the new government's cabinet unveiled this past Monday that includes David Emerson, who formerly served as Liberal Cabinet Minister, and Michael Fortier, an unelected member of the Conservative Party. Four-in-ten (40%) Canadians agree more with view that "Prime Minister Harper did what he had to do to build a national government and this is how things normally get accomplished in Ottawa." While less than a majority, the level of support for this viewpoint is still slightly higher than the Conservative's share of the popular vote in the recent federal election (36%).

Meanwhile, slightly less than half (48%) of Canadian side with the more negative view that "Prime Minister Harper was elected largely because he promised to change how the federal government operates and that these cabinet appointments are a 'bad sign' that the old-style of federal politics are not going to change under this new government."

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid telephone poll conducted between February 7th and February 9th, 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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