

# FINANCE MINISTER FLAHERTY'S BUDGET BATS IN BIG SCORE FOR CONSERVATIVES

*Tories Enjoy Budget-Boost In Crucial Political Battleground Of Quebec*



**Ipsos Reid**

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## FINANCE MINISTER FLAHERTY'S BUDGET BATS IN BIG SCORE FOR CONSERVATIVES

### *Tories Enjoy Budget-Boost In Crucial Political Battleground Of Quebec*

**Toronto, ON** –Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's first federal budget can be chalked up as a homerun for Stephen Harper and the governing Conservative Party --having delivered a score for the Tories in the crucial battleground of Quebec.

According to the new Ipsos Reid survey conducted on behalf of CanWest News Service/Global News:

- Half (49%) of Canadians indicate that they think this is a "good" budget --nearly doubling the percentage who say it is a "bad" (26%) budget (resulting in a positive gap score of +23 points);<sup>1</sup>
- 44% feel the budget will "personally help them" versus just 22% who feel it will "personally hurt them" (gap score of +22 points); and
- 42% indicate this budget "makes them more likely to vote for the Conservatives" (35% say it makes them less likely to vote Conservative).

Meanwhile approval for the Conservatives remains stable nationally at 60% (-2 points) and a further 59% are of the opinion that the current Conservative government has Canada on the "right track".

But within these numbers there is a compelling story in the province of Quebec, where the Conservatives have made very positive in-roads with their first budget. Specifically residents of Quebec:

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<sup>1</sup> Gap scores are generated by subtracting the percentage who feel it is a "bad" budget from the percentage who feel it is a "good" budget – this score represents overall direction of public opinion.



- Provide the most positive reviews of the budget (with a gap score of +40 points when it comes to “good” vs. “bad” budget measures);
- Are second only to residents of Alberta when asked whether they feel this budget will help or hurt them (gap score of +31 points); and
- Essentially tie with residents of Alberta atop the country when it comes to government approval level (70%, +2 points) and “right track” (69%) measures.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted for CanWest News Service/Global News and fielded from May 2<sup>nd</sup> to May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006. For this survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1001 adult Canadians were interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the aggregate results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within each sub-grouping of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure the sample’s regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2001 Census data.*

## Positive Reviews For Conservative Government's First Budget...

Based on what they may have seen, read, or heard about the budget:

**Good versus bad budget?** -- 49% of Canadians indicate that they think it is a "good" budget, nearly double the percentage who feels it is a "bad" budget (26%) – providing an overall gap score of +23 points.<sup>2</sup> One in ten (10%) answer that it is "neither" a good nor bad budget, and a further 15% "don't know".

	National	British Columbia	Alberta	Sask/Man	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada
Is good	49%	35%	67%	48%	44%	60%	43%
Is bad	26%	36%	17%	25%	28%	20%	28%
Gap Score	23%	-1%	50%	23%	16%	40%	15%

**Based on what you may have seen, read, or heard about the first budget that the Federal Finance Minister, Jim Flaherty has brought down, do you think this budget is good or bad?**

- The most strongly positive reviews of the federal government's budget are from those who live in Alberta (+50 points) and those who live in Quebec (+40 points).

**Make you more or less likely to vote Conservative?** -42% of Canadians indicate that this budget "makes them more likely to vote for the Conservatives in the next election" versus 35% who feel it makes them "less likely to vote for the Conservatives" – representing a positive gap score of +7 points. Twelve percent feel this budget will make them "neither" more nor less likely to vote Conservative, a further 11% "don't know".

	National	British Columbia	Alberta	Sask/Man	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada
Makes you more likely to vote for the Conservatives in the next election	42%	33%	62%	48%	39%	45%	43%
Makes you less likely to vote for the Conservatives in the next election	35%	41%	20%	30%	41%	33%	29%
Gap Score	7%	-8%	42%	18%	-2%	12%	14%

<sup>2</sup> Gap scores are generated by subtracting the percentage who feel it is a "bad" budget from the percentage who feel it is a "good" budget – this score represents overall direction of public opinion.

**Help you or hurt you?** — 44% believe the budget “will personally help” them, while 22% think it “will personally hurt” them – a gap score difference of +22 points. Of remaining Canadians, 22% feel the budget will “neither” hurt nor help them and 12% “don’t know”.

	National	British Columbia	Alberta	Sask/Man	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada
Will personally help you	44%	35%	61%	49%	41%	46%	37%
Will personally hurt you	22%	30%	13%	20%	25%	15%	27%
Gap Score	22%	5%	48%	29%	16%	31%	10%

**Based on what you may have seen, read, or heard about it, do you think this budget...**

- Feelings that the budget will help them personally run most strongly among those in Alberta (+48 points), followed by Quebec (+31 points), and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (+29 points).

## ***Approval For Conservative Government Remains Stable At 60%...***

Approval ratings for the Stephen Harper led Conservative government have remained stable:

- 60% approve (19% strongly approve) – down 2 points from March 21-22<sup>nd</sup>; and
- 31% disapprove (14% strongly disapprove).

Ten percent “don’t know” if they approve or disapprove.

Approval Rating	National	British Columbia	Alberta	Sask/Man	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada
Feb 7-9, '06	54%	45%	67%	57%	49%	61%	49%
Mar 21-23, '06	62%	66%	69%	53%	55%	68%	69%
May 2-4, '06	60%	50%	71%	61%	54%	70%	54%
Movement	-2%	-16%	2%	8%	-1%	2%	-15%

***Thinking about the Conservative government under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, from what you may have seen, read or heard, do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of their performance over the past few months?***



## ***Six In Ten (59%) Feel Conservative Government Has Canada On The “Right Track”...***

Six in ten Canadians (59%) are of the opinion that the current Conservative government has Canada on the “right track” (18% say “strongly on the right track”) – while 31% believe it is on the “wrong track” (13% strongly feel it is on the wrong track). Ten percent “don’t know” when asked this question.

- Opinions that the government has the country on the “right track” run highest in Alberta (70%) and Quebec (69%).
- Residents of British Columbia (37%), Atlantic Canada (35%) and Ontario (34%) are the most likely to feel the government has Canada on the “wrong track”.
- Men are more likely than women to feel the Conservative government has the country on the “right track” (64% vs. 54%).

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