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Ipsos Reid

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3,675,000 Canadian "Separatists" Cross-Country: Quebec (35%), Alberta (18%) and Atlantic Canada (14%) Most Motivated to Opt Out of Canada while Manitoba/Saskatchewan (98%), Ontario (91%) and BC (90%) Most Committed to Stay and Strengthen the Confederated Country

Ottawa, ON –A new Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for CanWest News Service and Global Television has found that 15% of Canadian adults (approximately 3,675,000 individuals) are “separatists” who would, if they had a choice, have their province declare its independence from Canada and have its own stand-alone country with its own passport, laws and institutions (12%) or opt out of Canada and join the United States as a new state (3%).

A full majority (83%) of Canadians indicated that if given a choice they would stay within Canada and strengthen the confederated country. Another 2% said they “don’t know” what choice they would opt for.

Separatist support is, not unexpectedly, most pronounced in Quebec where just over one-third (35%) of respondents indicated that if given a choice they would want their province to opt out of Canada, either by forming its own stand-alone country with its own passport, laws and institutions (31%) or by joining the United States as a new state (4%). Still, though,

two thirds (64%) of Quebecers would opt to remain in Canada and strengthen the confederated country. To put this in some historical context, a poll conducted by Ipsos Reid on this topic in late 2005 indicated that 35% of Quebecers, the same as in this assessment, would vote for a sovereign Quebec if it meant "an independent nation".

In 1999, three in ten (28%) Quebecers said they'd vote yes in a referendum for becoming an independent country, separate from Canada. This was a slight decrease from August 1998 when 31% of Quebecers said they would vote for Quebec independence.

But it's two other regions of the country, that have some head turning separatist numbers (this is the first time Ipsos Reid has put the question this way to those inside and outside of Quebec)—both buoyed by growing oil and gas resource wealth, and with some residents who have felt regionally neglected over time:

- One in five (18%) Albertans say that if given the choice they would opt for having their province declare its independence from Canada and have its own stand-alone country with its own passport, laws and institutions (10%) or by joining the United States (7%) as a new state compared with eight in ten (80%) Albertans who indicate that the best course would be to remain a part of Canada and strengthen the confederated country.
- One in seven (14%) Atlantic Canadians say that if given the choice they would opt for having their province declare its independence from Canada and have its own stand-alone country with its own passport, laws and institutions (11%) or by joining the United States (3%) as a new state, compared to the vast majority (85%) who would opt to remain a part of Canada and strengthen the confederated country.

On the west coast, nine in ten (90%) residents of British Columbia indicate that if given a choice they would stay within Canada and strengthen the confederated country. However, one in ten (9%) residents would, if given the choice, have their province either declare its independence from Canada and have its own stand-alone country with its own passport, laws and institutions (8%) or join the United States as another state (1%).

Similarly, in Ontario, if given a choice, nine in ten (91%) residents would opt for their province to stay within Canada and strengthen the confederated country, compared with only 5% who would opt out of the country (3% as a stand-alone country or 2% who would join the United States as another state).

And finally, in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, residents leave no question as to which option they would prefer: fully 98% of the Prairie Provinces' citizens believe that staying within Canada and strengthen the confederated country is the best choice for their province, while those who say they should leave Canada (2%), either by forming a stand-alone country (1%) or joining the United States as a new state (1%), are few and far between.

There is no significant gender or other demographically noticeable differences. There is a slightly greater tendency to opt out of Canada among lower as compared with higher income respondents.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of CanWest News Service and Global Television from July 8 to July 10, 2008. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1002 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone. 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 weighted to ensure that

the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.

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