

Looking Ahead to the Budget, Canadians Most Supportive of Spending Cuts (62%) and Deficits (52%), Not Tax Hikes (18%)

Support for Deficits Up 9 Points, Spending Cuts Down 20 Points
Most Canadians Put Faith in Harper Tories to Manage Economy (44%)

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Toronto, ON – As Canadians await the presentation of the budget on Tuesday, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Canwest News Service and Global Television reveals that Canadians are most supportive of spending cuts (62%) and deficits (52%), but few (18%) support an increase in taxes.

In fact, six in ten (62%) would be ‘supportive’ (27% very/35% somewhat) of the government if it were to include these measures in its budget, while one in three (34%) would not (16% not at all/18% not very).

However, the proportion of Canadians who would support this approach has dropped significantly from 82% in late October of 2008, representing a decrease of 20 points in just three months.

A slim majority (52%, up 9 points) says it would be ‘supportive’ (13% very/39% somewhat) of deficits in this budget, while nearly one half (45%) would not be (21% not at all/24% not very). Just 18% (up 1 point) say they’d be ‘supportive’ (2% very/16% somewhat) of the

government if it raised taxes in this upcoming budget, while most (81%) would not (55% not at all/26% not very).

When it comes to who Canadians have the most confidence in to best manage the national economy, Stephen Harper and the Conservatives continue to lead with 44% of the vote, down 1 point from pre-budget polling in 2008. Michael Ignatieff and the Liberals have received 31% of the vote, up 5 points from where Stephane Dion and the Liberals were a year ago. Jack Layton and the NDP have dropped 2 points to 14%, and 11% are unsure (down 3 points).

Ontario's manufacturing sector has been hit particularly hard by the recession. Despite this, a majority (52%) of Canadians do not think the budget should contain significant financial support exclusively for Ontario's struggling manufacturing sector. While 44% do think the budget should include these measures, support is disproportionately located in Ontario (54%) and Quebec (58%), and those in Atlantic Canada (33%), Alberta (32%), British Columbia (20%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (16%) are much less inclined to agree.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted January 20 to 22, 2009, for Canwest News Service and Global Television. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1,000 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.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

*Darrell Bricker, PhD
President and CEO
Ipsos Reid Public Affairs
(416) 324-2001*

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