

Canadians Say Parliament's Focus Should be on Healthcare (68%), Job Creation (66%) and Scaling Back MP Pensions (56%) as Top Priorities

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Toronto, ON – With Parliament having resumed from its summer break, two in three (68%) Canadians believe that a top priority of Parliament should be to improve the quality of the health care system, placing it tops on the list of priorities, according to a new poll conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of Postmedia News and Global Television.

Improvement in the quality of the health care system is not the only major priority Canadians want Parliament focusing on in the coming months. Following closely behind health care is reducing unemployment as two in three (66%) Canadians want job creation to be a top priority of Parliament. Rounding out the top three of what Canadians believe should be Parliament's primary focus in the coming months is the debate over MP pensions. With the Harper government making splashes about reforming MP pensions, a majority (56%) believe that scaling back pensions for Members of Parliament needs to be a top priority for the fall session. Senior Canadians (70%) overwhelmingly believe this is a top priority compared to middle-aged (59%) and younger (35%) Canadians.

Other Key Concerns for the Agenda...

Four in ten (42%) Canadians believe that a top priority for Parliament this fall should be on cutting taxes. Another four in ten (40%) say that providing more mental health services to Canadians soldiers who have served in Afghanistan should be one of Parliament's top priorities. One-third (32%) of Canadians also believe that issues dealing with the environment should be a top priority of Parliament looking forward.

Parliament Should Focus Elsewhere

When it comes to several of the other issues dominating media headlines, however, many Canadians just don't believe they are a top priority. This summer saw a huge media focus on a proposed takeover deal of Canadian oil producer Nexen Inc. by the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), and although many are protesting the proposal, only two in ten (22%) Canadians believe that foreign investment or ownership of the energy sector by countries like China should be one of Parliament's top priorities.

With the ongoing government cuts to public sector jobs, many Canadians believe that Parliament could be focused on more important issues. Only two in ten (18%) believe that cutting back on jobs in the public sector should be a top priority for Parliament in the fall session.

For all the controversy consistently in the news surrounding the Keystone XL project, many Canadians don't really believe this is much of a priority either. Two in ten (16%) believe that pipelines used to carry oil from Alberta to foreign markets should be a top Parliamentary priority. Albertans (29%) most believe this should be a top priority of Parliament, followed by British Columbians (24%), residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (17%), Ontarians (16%), while Atlantic Canadians (12%) and Quebecers (6%), who are the furthest away from these pipelines, are least likely to believe this issue should be a top priority for Parliament.

Despite the move to a new government which has already ramped up for re-opening the idea of Quebec sovereignty, only one in ten (11%) Canadians believe that national unity or separatism should be a top priority of the fall session. Interestingly, Quebecers (12%) are not the most likely to believe that the issue of national unity/separatism should be a top priority for Parliament, as Canadians from the Prairie Provinces (Saskatchewan and Manitoba – 15%

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and Alberta – 13%) are most likely to believe this issue should be a top priority, while Ontarians (11%) and Atlantic Canadians (11%) and British Columbians (5%) are the least likely to believe national unity should be a top priority for Parliament.

With the Free Syrian Army continuing its battle against the armed government forces of President Bashar al-Assad, only one in ten (8%) of Canadians believe the civil war uprising in Syria should be a top priority.

Only 4% of Canadians believe the issue of the F35 fighter planes should be a top priority for Parliament going forward, making it the lowest priority of all current issues on the list provided. The table below outlines the complete list of issues and what proportion of Canadians believe they should be a top priority for Parliament going into the fall session:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>%</u>
Improving the quality of our health care system	68%
Creating jobs	66%
Scaling back pensions for Members of Parliament	56%
Cutting taxes	42%
Providing more mental health services to Canadian Soldiers who have served in Afghanistan	40%
Issues dealing with the Environment	32%



Foreign investment or ownership of our energy sector by countries like China	22%
Cutting back on jobs in the public service	18%
Pipelines to carry oil from Alberta to foreign markets	16%
National Unity/Separatism	11%
The civil war uprising in Syria	8%
The F35 fighter plane	4%

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between September 25 and 26, 2012, on behalf of Postmedia News and Global Television. For the survey, a sample of 1,014 Canadians from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, respectively, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.



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- 5 -

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