

**To the Senate of Canada: Your 15 Minutes Are Up as
Eight in Ten (78%) Want Senate Reformed (42%) or
Abolished (36%) in Wake of Current Scandals
*Just Two in Ten (22%) Want Senate Kept As Is***

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Toronto, ON – The Canadian Senate has been the focus of numerous scandals the past few weeks, ranging from charges against Conservative Senator Patrick Brazeau and his resulting leave-of-absence, to questionable housing and travel expenses that have led to an externally-led audit of numerous Senators' expense claims.

In the wake of these scandals, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Postmedia News and Global Television has reveals that the vast majority (78%) of Canadians want the senate reformed or abolished, while few are content with the status quo (22%).

Nearly four in ten (36%) believe that the Senate 'should be done away with completely', up 3 points since 2011, and up a significant 10 points since 2007. Four in ten (42%) would 'prefer to see the Senate reformed to make it, for example, an elected body' – down 7 points since 2011 and down 15 points since 2007. While still the most popular option, the decrease in support for reformation is largely due to the increasing support for abolition.

Just two in ten (22%) maintain that the Senate should be 'left the way it is now' (up 4 points since 2011 and 5 points since 2007).

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has long wanted reform, and with the recent scandals and controversy there is an even greater impetus for it. The fast-tracked Reference to the Supreme Court will provide greater clarity on the process involving provincial consent and the role of

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the constitution in Senate reform. But what is clear is that Prime Minister Harper has public sentiment on his side – right where he needs it – and the differences in opinion are now almost evenly split between abolishing it all together and reforming the Senate.

Certain regions of the country favour different directions, and if the Supreme Court rules that provinces must consent to any changes, these differences of opinion will likely make reform of the Senate a politically-difficult manoeuvre:

- Atlantic Canadians (52%) are most likely to believe the **senate should be done away with completely**, followed by those living in Quebec (48%), Alberta (39%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (37%), British Columbia (30%) and Ontario (27%).
- British Columbians (52%) most want **reform**, followed by those living in Ontario (46%), Alberta (44%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (37%), Atlantic Canada (35%) and Quebec (33%).
- While a small minority in every region of the country wants to **keep the senate the way it is**, Ontarians (27%) are most likely to think so, followed by residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (25%), Quebec (19%), British Columbia (18%), Alberta (17%) and Atlantic Canada (13%).

The data also reveal a generational divide when it comes to attitudes on the future of the Senate:

- Older Canadians, aged 55+, are most likely (45%) to believe **the senate should be done away with completely**, while those aged 35 to 54 (38%) and 18 to 34 (22%) are considerably less inclined to believe this is the best course of action.



- When it comes to **keeping the Senate the way it is**, younger (35%) adults are most likely to believe nothing should be done, while middle-aged (25%) and older (8%) Canadians are less likely to believe nothing should be done.
- There is less variation on the matter of **reform**, with support for reform among older (47%), younger (43%) and middle-aged (38%) Canadians more closely aligned.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between February 13th to 15th, 2013, on behalf of Postmedia News and Global Television. For this survey, a sample of 1,009 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. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case the poll is accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points of the entire Canadian adult population. 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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