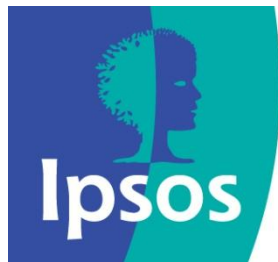


Senate Woes is Grist for Foes

*Seven in Ten (70%) Disapprove of How Prime Minister Harper has
Handled the Wright-Duffy Affair*

Public Release Date: Sunday, July 7, 2013, 10:00 PM EDT



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Toronto, ON – Amid new reports that the Conservative Party of Canada was initially going to repay Senator Mike Duffy's illegitimate expenses – until the Party learned that the tally was three-times higher than what they were expecting – and that more top-ranking Conservative staffers knew about the payment from then Chief of Staff Nigel Wright to Senator Duffy, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for CTV News reveals that 70% of Canadians have yet to change their minds on disapproving of how the Prime Minister has handled the Senate imbroglio. Just 30% -- the same proportion of Canadians who believe the Harper government deserves re-election – approve of the way the Prime Minister has handled the fallout from the Wright-Duffy Affair.

With stalwart Conservative Senate Leader Hon. Marjory LeBreton stepping down from cabinet with an eye to retirement in the same year as the next election (2015), and with other cabinet ministers indicating that they won't seek re-election, it's clear that the Conservatives are preparing to shuffle the deck chairs in an attempt to change the channel and put themselves in a stronger position in preparation for the next election.

Specifically, only three in ten (30%) Canadians 'approve' (6% strongly/23% somewhat) of how Prime Minister Harper handled the recent Senate expense scandal, compared to seven in ten (70%) who 'disapprove' (41% strongly/30% somewhat) of how it was handled.

- Six in ten (62%) Conservative supporters approve of how Harper handled the Senate expense scandal (meaning 38% of the Prime Minister's own supporters disapprove), compared to just two in ten Liberal (17%) and NDP (19%) supporters who approve of the way Prime Minister Harper has handled things.
- Residents of Alberta (34%) are most likely to approve, followed by those living in British Columbia (32%) Ontario (31%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (31%), Quebec (25%) and Atlantic Canada (22%).

To put these figures into perspective, a recent Ipsos poll conducted in late May revealed that two-thirds (66%) of Canadians indicated that the involvement of the Prime Minister's Office in the Senate expense scandal, namely former Chief of Staff Nigel Wright who resigned in wake of the incident, represents a serious ethical breach by the Prime Minister and his government, and only one in ten (13%) believed that the Prime Minister knew nothing about the donation to Senator Mike Duffy that led to Wright's resignation.

Despite this, a poll released Thursday has the Harper Tories jockeying for position in a three-way race for support among Canadian voters, predominantly due to the Liberals losing ground, indicating that while the Conservatives haven't made any significant gains back from the initial loss of support, they are still well within the realm for re-election come 2015.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between June 21st to 25th, 2013, on behalf of CTV News. For this survey, a sample of 1,177 Canadians from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the

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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 within +/-3.3 percentage points had all Canadians adults 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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