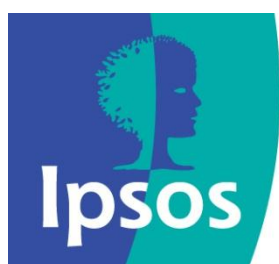


Canadians Oppose Firing Public Servants Wearing Religious Symbols

Two-Thirds (62%) in Quebec Don't Support Where Values Charter Being Pushed

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Toronto, ON – While the Parti Quebecois is trying to push their controversial 'values charter' despite rampant public outcry from multi-cultural and other opposing Quebecers, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of CTV News reveals that a majority of Canadians, and Quebecers, aren't in agreement with the major focus of this proposed plan.

The 'values charter' brought forth earlier this month by the Marois PQ government would prohibit public employees from wearing obvious and apparent religious symbols.

Only three in ten (28%) Canadians 'agree' (9% strongly/19% somewhat) that 'public servants like teachers, healthcare workers and others should be fired from their jobs if they insist on wearing religious symbols and clothing at work'. The vast majority (72%) of Canadians, however, 'disagree' (46% strongly/25% somewhat) with this position.

Even in Quebec, where sentiment is the strongest, only 38% 'agree' (13% strongly/25% somewhat) with this position, compared to 62% (29% strongly/33% somewhat) who 'disagree' with it.

When looking at the rest of Canada's regions, 'agreement' with this principle is led by Alberta (28%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (28%), followed by Ontario (27%), British Columbia (22%), and Atlantic Canada (16%).

Interestingly, the data also reveal that foreign-born Canadians are less likely to oppose the idea of public servants losing their jobs for wearing religious materials in the workplace.

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Nearly two in five (35%) foreign-born Canadians 'agree' (11% strongly/24% somewhat) with this principle, up 7 points from the national average and the proportion of Canadian-born respondents (28%) who similarly 'agree'. Two in three (65%) foreign-born Canadians, however, still 'disagree' (44% strongly/21% somewhat) with this proposal.

No matter how you dress it up, the critical issue about the values charter is it non conformist consequence--something the PQ and others have, so far, not addressed. What the poll reveals is that a full majority, even in Quebec, believe that while the values charter may have some bark it should have no bite.

Other Findings...

- Women (78%) are more likely than men (65%) to 'disagree' with the idea of firing public servants for insisting on wearing religious symbols or clothing at work, with men (35%) being more likely to 'agree' with it than women (22%)
- Middle-aged Canadians (32%, ages 35-54) are most in 'agreement' with public employees being let go from their jobs for non-compliance with a ban on wearing religious symbols or clothing in the work place, ahead of Canadian seniors (30%, ages 55+) and younger Canadians (22%, ages 18-34)

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between September 18 to 20, 2013, on behalf of CTV News. For this survey, a sample of 1,035 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 within +/-3.5 percentage points had all

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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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