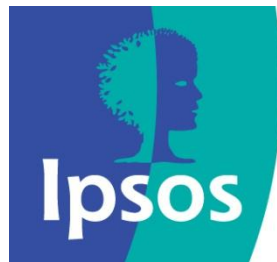


**Canadians Split on Whether Federal Budget Should Tackle
Deficit (53%) or Spend to Stimulate Economy (47%)
*Canadians Equally as Likely to say Tories (34%), Grits (34%) or
NDP (33%) Would Produce the Best Budget***

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Canadians Split on Whether Federal Budget Should Tackle Deficit (53%) or Spend to Stimulate Economy (47%)

*Canadians Equally as Likely to say Tories (34%), Grits (34%) or
NDP (33%) Would Produce the Best Budget*

Toronto, ON – Finance Minister Jim Flaherty may have had a hair cut in preparation for his presentation of the budget on Tuesday, but a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of CTV news shows that Canadians are split on whether that hair cut should be extended to the federal budget or not.

Thinking about the federal budget, half (53%) believe ‘the government should focus on spending less to tackle the deficit’, while the other half (47%) think Flaherty should ‘focus on spending more to stimulate the economy’. The desire to stimulate the economy through spending is up 5 points from two years ago, while the proportion who says the deficit should be tackled is down 5 points from two years ago.

Tories Losing Their Fiscal Advantage...

While the economy and finances have generally been seen as a strength for the Conservatives, when it comes to delivering a budget that would be best for individual Canadians, no party has the advantage – one in three (34%) say Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservatives would produce the best budget, while equal proportions choose Justin Trudeau and the Liberals (34%) or Thomas Mulcair and the NDP (33%).

A slim majority (54%) of Canadians ‘disapprove’ (16% strongly/37% somewhat) of ‘the federal government’s overall management of the Canadian economy’, compared to 46% who

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‘approve’ (7% strongly/40% somewhat) of the government’s performance on the economy. By comparison, in late 2012, nearly equal proportions of Canadians approved (49%) as disapproved (51%).

However, just one in three (34%) ‘agree’ (10% strongly/24% somewhat) that they ‘trust Stephen Harper and the Conservatives to make the right choices to ensure the next Federal Budget is fair and reasonable, and in the best interest of Canadians’. Two in three (66%) Canadians ‘disagree’ (36% strongly/30% somewhat) that they trust the Prime Minister to do this.

Canadians Rate Their Budget Priorities...

Canadians were given a list of 12 possible budget priorities, and could designate 4 as a high priority, 4 as a moderate priority, and 4 as a low priority. Healthcare (69%) and the economy and jobs (61%) were rated as a high priority by a majority of Canadians – but the rest of the policy areas aren’t so clear cut. Below outlines these twelve policy areas and the degree of priority that Canadians assigned to each:

Policy	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority
Healthcare	69%	23%	8%
The economy and jobs	61%	29%	10%
Lowering taxes	40%	30%	30%
Support for Seniors	35%	42%	23%
Balancing the budget/deficit reduction	33%	37%	30%
Reducing the income gap between Canada’s richest and the middle class	32%	32%	36%

Social programs and poverty reduction	31%	39%	30%
Infrastructure spending (transit, roads, bridges, etc)	30%	39%	31%
The environment	28%	38%	34%
Support for veterans and soldiers	23%	40%	37%
Increasing transfers to the provinces	9%	23%	68%
Military and defence	8%	28%	64%

Attitudes and Expectations for the Budget...

Thinking about what they expect from the Federal budget, most (84%) Canadians ‘agree’ (36% strongly/48% somewhat) that ‘the #1 priority of Canada’s government needs to be prosperity – that is, economic growth and job creation’. Just two in ten (16%) ‘disagree’ (3% strongly/14% somewhat) that economic prosperity should be the #1 priority.

The treatment of veterans and soldiers suffering from PTSD has frequently been in the news recently. Likely as a result of this heightened attention, most (85%) ‘agree’ (32% strongly/53% somewhat) that ‘more resources should be allocated for veterans and soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder’, while few (15%) ‘disagree’ (4% strongly/11% somewhat) with increased resourcing for these support services.

One half (48%) of Canadians ‘agree’ (20% strongly/28% somewhat) that they ‘expect to pay lower taxes as a result of the next Federal budget’, while the other half (52%) ‘disagrees’ (14% strongly/38% somewhat) that they have this expectation. By comparison, ahead of the 2012 Federal budget, 27% of Canadians expected to pay lower taxes as a result of the budget,

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while most (73%) did not have this expectation – highlighting a dramatic shift in Canadians' expectations over the last two years.

A major focus for the Harper Government has been to increase trade ties with other countries, and this effort appears to be resonating with Canadians. A majority (55%) 'agrees' (8% strongly/47% somewhat) that 'the Government's efforts to increase trade ties with other countries is paying off', while a minority (45%) 'disagrees' (11% strongly/34% somewhat).

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between February 4th to 7th, 2014 on behalf of CTV News. For this survey, a sample of 1,025 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 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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