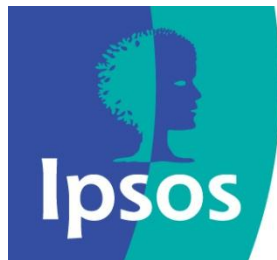


Majority (55%) of Canadians Who Have Accessed the Legal System Did Not Hire a Lawyer to Represent Them

Expensive Legal Costs (63%) Top List of Reasons for Not Consulting Legal Experts; Half (45%) of Canadians Know Someone Who Has Gone into Debt Trying to Resolve a Legal Dispute

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Ipsos Reid

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Experts; Half (45%) of Canadians Know Someone Who Has Gone into Debt
Trying to Resolve a Legal Dispute*

Toronto, ON – With the Canadian justice system being accessed by a million Canadians each year, a new study conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of DAS Canada reveals that those using the legal system are not using legal representation to defend them.

The survey reveals that a majority (55%) of Canadians did not have a lawyer present with them when they last accessed the Canadian legal system, compared with a minority (45%) who say they did have such representation.

This raises concern as approximately 4.25 million Canadians have accessed Canada's legal system within the last five years including:

- 2.2 million Canadians who have accessed traffic court
- 1.4 million Canadians who have accessed family court
- 1.1 million Canadians who have accessed small claims court
- 1.1 million Canadians who have accessed civil court
- 834,000 Canadians who have accessed tribunals

The fact that many Canadians going through the country's court systems are not hiring legal representation is not a reflection of the lack of desire to have legal representation, but the barriers to access that prevent them doing so. In fact, more than six in ten (62%) Canadians

‘agree’ (10% strongly/52% somewhat) that regardless of the outcome, they believe they get or would get value out of hiring a lawyer to help them resolve their dispute.

Looking at Canadians who have faced a legal situation and wanted to hire a lawyer but decided not to, the thought that legal fees would be too expensive (63%) rises to the top of a list of potential barriers for accessing legal representation. Other reasons include:

- Taking too much time and effort for an uncertain outcome – 19%
- Having the case drag out although Canadians would want them over quickly – 15%
- Not knowing what resources were available to access a lawyer – 13%
- Not thinking there was a reasonable chance of winning, so why bother – 11%
- Thinking the other party would have better lawyers – 6%
- Other – 22%

Having to take on additional expenses for legal costs can be straining for Canadians and their financial situation, and putting Canadians in a hypothetical situation where they’re asked how they would finance a legal dispute reveals they would be equally as likely to use savings (39%) or credit (37%). Other ways they would expense a legal dispute are:

- Liquidating their investments or assets – 29%
- Reducing their lifestyle expenses (like traveling, eating out, etc.) – 16%
- Other – 15%

Many Canadians have even seen, first hand, the effects legal expenses can have on someone’s personal financial situation, as half (45%) ‘agree’ (20% strongly/25% somewhat) that they have known someone, personally, that has put themselves in debt trying a dispute in the legal system, while the remaining half (55%) ‘disagree’ (33% strongly/22% somewhat).

One way Canadians can protect themselves against mounting legal expenses is to be covered under legal expense insurance. In fact, half (50%) of Canadians who have accessed the justice



system in the last five years indicate that having (or not having) insurance to cover the cost of legal expenses is an important factor for them in once again accessing the legal system to resolve a dispute.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted from March 5th to 10th on behalf of DAS Canada. For this survey, a sample of 2,851 Canadian adults was surveyed online via the Ipsos I-Say Panel. 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 are measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 2.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had all Canadians 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.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

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