

What Canadians Think about Elections and the Fair Elections Act

18% THINK CANADIAN ELECTIONS ARE UNFAIR

60% THINK FAIR ELECTIONS ACT WILL HAVE NO IMPACT ON ELECTIONS

National Survey, Online
n=1,164; March 19-23, 2014

A new national survey (March 19 to 23, 2014) shows that 18% of Canadians think elections in this country have been unfair, while more than twice as many think they have been fair (48%). Among Conservative Party voters, 12% think Canadian elections are unfair.

When asked if the rules that govern Canadian elections have “been working well or not” 43% say they have been working well, compared to 29% who say they have not been working well. Among Conservative voters 54% say the rules have been working well, more than twice as many as say they opposite (21%).

When asked if the proposed Fair Elections Act will change things for the better or for the worse, opinions are split, and uncertain. Nineteen percent expect things to change for the better, 21% expect things to change for the worse, but the majority expect the Act will have no real effect.

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Finally, when asked whether the Fair Elections Act would improve election fairness, the results reflect mixed opinion and some indifference. Eighteen percent (18%) expect more fairness, 23% less fairness, and 59% expect no impact. While 2011 Conservative Party voters are more supportive of the bill, only 24% expect it to result in fairer elections, compared to 16% who expect less fair elections, and 60% no impact.

Bruce Anderson comment:

"This bill has been controversial within the House of Commons and has generated criticism from many political scientists and editorialists. To date, the public seems neither enthusiastic about the bill nor hostile towards it.

For the political capital the government is investing in the FEA, there is little apparent appreciation for the policy, even among the party's base supporters. At the same time, for the effort expended by opposition parties, so far, there is also little to show. Most people don't seem to feel this initiative was needed, and few think it will make much of a difference in how elections are conducted in Canada."

David Coletto comment:

"If you used the newspaper editorial pages or the #cdnpoli twitter feed as a barometer for public opinion you would think that Canadians are upset about the Fair Elections Act. But that's not the case.

Most Canadians don't think there's much wrong with how we conduct elections and they don't think they the Fair Elections Act will do much to make them fairer. Basically, the average Canadian's assessment of the Fair Elections Act is that we have an ineffective bill that will solve a problem they don't think exists."

METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted online with 1,164 respondents. A random sample of panelists was invited to complete the survey from a large representative panel of Canadians, recruited and managed by Research Now, one of the world's leading provider of online research samples. The survey was conducted from March 19 to 23, 2014.

The Marketing Research and Intelligence Association policy limits statements about margins of sampling error for most online surveys. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/- 3.0%, 19 times out of 20.

The data were weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched Canada's population according to age, gender, educational attainment, and region. Totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding. For more information please contact David Coletto, CEO at david@abacusdata.ca or at 613-232-2806 or Bruce Anderson at banderson@abacusdata.ca

ABOUT ABACUS DATA

Abacus Data is an innovative, fast growing public opinion and marketing research consultancy. We use the latest technology, sound science, and deep experience to generate top-flight research based advice to our clients. We offer global research capacity with a strong focus on customer service, attention to detail and exceptional value.

Our team combines the experience of our Chairman Bruce Anderson, one of Canada's leading research executives for two decades, with the energy, creativity and research expertise of CEO David Coletto, PhD. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.abacusdata.ca/>

Thinking about the rules that govern federal elections in Canada, would you say that they are fair, or unfair?

Sample size: 564 [split sample]

Comparable MoE: $\pm 4.2\%$, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: March 19 to 23, 2014

		Fair	Unfair	Don't know	Raw	Weighted
Gender	Canada	48%	18%	34%	564	551
	Male	50%	24%	26%	283	275
	Female	46%	12%	42%	281	277
Age	18 - 29	40%	10%	50%	60	105
	30 - 44	42%	15%	43%	166	140
	45 - 59	54%	22%	24%	194	169
	60 and over	54%	22%	24%	144	137
Region	BC	44%	20%	36%	90	78
	Prairies	54%	21%	25%	112	91
	ON	47%	19%	34%	187	207
	QC	51%	16%	33%	126	135
	ATL	42%	8%	50%	49	40
2011 Federal Vote	Conservative Party	61%	12%	27%	192	165
	Liberal Party	48%	18%	34%	111	96
	NDP	52%	21%	27%	126	143
	Green Party	35%	33%	32%	32	33
	Bloc Quebecois	52%	27%	21%	19	21
	Another party	13%	54%	32%	14	16
	Did not vote	28%	8%	64%	70	78

Thinking about the rules that govern federal elections in Canada, would you say that they have been working well or have not been working well?

Sample size: 600 [split sample]

Comparable MoE: $\pm 4.1\%$, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: March 19 to 23, 2014

		Working well	Not working well	Don't know	Raw	Weighted
Gender	Canada	43%	29%	28%	600	594
	Male	51%	28%	22%	281	271
	Female	37%	30%	34%	319	323
Age	18 - 29	35%	28%	37%	54	99
	30 - 44	41%	30%	30%	184	154
	45 - 59	44%	30%	26%	206	191
	60 and over	49%	27%	24%	156	151
Region	BC	47%	28%	26%	85	71
	Prairies	46%	23%	31%	133	111
	ON	39%	35%	26%	193	238
	QC	46%	22%	33%	133	135
	ATL	42%	34%	24%	56	39
2011 Federal Vote	Conservative Party	54%	21%	24%	214	204
	Liberal Party	45%	33%	22%	116	107
	NDP	40%	33%	27%	129	137
	Green Party	35%	44%	21%	20	14
	Bloc Quebecois	29%	31%	40%	25	29
	Another party	40%	26%	33%	8	8
	Did not vote	26%	31%	44%	88	95

As you may know the federal government has introduced a bill to change some of the rules and procedures for federal elections.

Based on what you have read or heard about this bill, do you think it will change things for the better, change things for the worse, or not have any real effect?

Sample size: 1,164

Comparable MoE: $\pm 2.9\%$, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: March 19 to 23, 2014

		Change for the better	Change for the worse	Have no real effect	Raw	Weighted
Gender	Canada	19%	21%	60%	1164	1145
	Male	22%	24%	54%	564	546
	Female	17%	17%	66%	600	600
Age	18 - 29	13%	20%	67%	114	203
	30 - 44	22%	17%	61%	350	295
	45 - 59	16%	21%	63%	400	360
	60 and over	26%	23%	51%	300	288
Region	BC	19%	25%	55%	175	149
	Prairies	22%	18%	60%	245	202
	ON	18%	20%	62%	380	444
	QC	21%	20%	59%	259	270
	ATL	16%	20%	64%	105	79
2011 Federal Vote	Conservative Party	27%	12%	60%	406	370
	Liberal Party	19%	29%	51%	227	203
	NDP	16%	26%	59%	255	280
	Green Party	14%	23%	63%	52	47
	Bloc Quebecois	12%	33%	55%	44	49
	Another party	23%	37%	39%	22	24
	Did not vote	13%	13%	74%	158	173

Do you think if this bill becomes law, it will make elections in Canada fairer, less fair or have no impact on how fair elections are?

Sample size: 1,164

Comparable MoE: $\pm 2.9\%$, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: March 19 to 23, 2014

		Fairer	Less fair	Have no impact	Raw	Weighted
Gender	Canada	18%	23%	59%	1164	1145
	Male	18%	26%	55%	564	546
	Female	18%	19%	63%	600	600
Age	18 - 29	12%	27%	61%	114	203
	30 - 44	20%	18%	62%	350	295
	45 - 59	16%	22%	62%	400	360
	60 and over	23%	25%	52%	300	288
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	NDP	15%	28%	57%	255	280
	Green Party	16%	22%	62%	52	47
	Bloc Quebecois	12%	30%	58%	44	49
	Another party	34%	36%	29%	22	24
	Did not vote	10%	16%	73%	158	173