

CARP Older Workers Poll Report December 6, 2011

KEY FINDINGS

Among those of our members no longer working, reduced hours and flexible work arrangements would have allowed them to work longer (had they wanted to), and phased retirement, more age-appropriate tasks and less physically demanding workplaces are also seen to be helpful. There is agreement these developments should be incentivized through tax credits to employers of older workers.

Just more than one quarter of members are in the workforce, either full or part time. Among those still working, the main reasons they haven't retired are that they need the paycheque and because it's important to keep busy. Among those who no longer work, the main reasons are because they were tired of working or wanted to travel and relax. Those no longer working said reduced hours is the one policy that would have allowed them to continue working.

One quarter of members have themselves or know someone who has suffered age discrimination in the workplace and about one half of members think this kind of discrimination is common.

One half of members say it is important the government move immediately on its promise to end mandatory retirement in federally regulated industries.

When members are asked how older workers can best be accommodated in the workforce, they are most apt to cite flexible work arrangements like telework, short weeks and job sharing, or phased retirement, involving increasingly shorter hours and pay. Subsidized health and dental insurance and strengthened legal sanctions for workplace age discrimination are also preferred. Many members agree tax credits to employers of older workers are the best way to incentivize these programs.

There is substantial agreement that there should be a formal mentoring process whereby older employees can pass on their knowledge and experience.

A relatively small minority of members have a caregiver in the home, and many of these say they had to juggle caregiving and work, or retire early as a result.

While two thirds of members agree with the general aims of the Occupy Wall Street movement, very few think they should be allowed to keep their tent cities in public parks.

Four-in-ten members belong to a CARP chapter, which means almost two thirds do not, which is a tremendous recruiting opportunity. One tenth of members are veterans, and very few receive veterans' benefits.

The Conservative party is the choice of about half the membership, about a quarter choose the Liberals and about a fifth opt for the NDP. Recent polls reporting the Liberals taking over second place from the NDP were reflected weeks ago among CARP members.

Detailed Findings

Close to three quarters of our members are not working at all (70%), and most are fully retired (66%). Less than one third are working (29%), and the largest group are retired and working part time (12%).

What is your employment status?

NOT WORKING	70%
Fully retired	68%
Not employed/looking for work	2%
WORKING	29%
Retired/working part time	12%
Working full time	8%
Self employed	6%
Working part time	3%
OTHER	1%

In total, just fewer than 3-in-10 members have a household member in the workforce (28%).

Is anyone in your household employed in the workforce?

Yes	28%
No	72%

Among those who are retired and not working anymore, the most common reasons for retiring are being tired of working (30%) and wanting to travel and enjoy oneself (24%), followed by poor health (10%).

If you are retired, and no longer work, please choose the answer closest to the reason for this decision to stop working.

Tired of working/had enough	30%
Wanted to travel/enjoy myself	24%
Poor health	10%
Mandatory retirement	6%
Laid off	6%
Didn't need the money	5%
Pension required I retire	3%
Ageism/age discrimination at work	3%
OTHER	14%

Among the retired group, the factor which would have allowed them to keep working is most likely to be reduced hours (24%), followed by a change in government or company policy (13%), a workplace more open to older workers (12%) or more age appropriate tasks (11%).

Which of the following would most have allowed you to decide to keep working if you had wanted to?

Reduced hours	24%
Change in company/government policy	13%
Workplace environment more open to older workers	12%
More age appropriate task/lighter work	11%
Job sharing	6%
Assistance with caregiving	4%
Retraining for new job	4%
OTHER	26%

Among the group which is still working, one third say this is because they need the paycheque (36%), followed by about a quarter who say it's important to keep busy (22%). About one tenth enjoy their job (13%) or their work environment (10%).

If you are still working, even just part-time, please choose the answer closest to the reason for this decision to keep working.

Need the paycheque	36%
Important to keep busy	22%
Enjoy my job	13%
Enjoy company/work environment	10%
Too young to retire	7%
Will retire soon	4%
Don't plan to retire	3%
OTHER	5%

About one quarter of members say they or someone they know has suffered age discrimination in the workplace (27%), and this is equally likely to be manifested as lack of opportunity for advancement (7%), laid off early or first (6%) or given undesirable work assignments (4%).

Have you or has anyone you know ever encountered age discrimination in your treatment in the workplace?

YES	27%
Not given same opportunity for advancement	7%
Laid off/laid off early/first	6%
Given undesirable work assignments	4%
Denied promotion	1%
Given impossible hours	1%
Given too few hours	1%
OTHER	8%
NO	60%
DON'T KNOW	13%

About one half of members think age discrimination in the workplace is common (47%), but relatively few think it “very common” (14%).

How common do you think age discrimination of this kind is in the workplace?

COMMON	47%
Very common	14%
Common	33%
NOT COMMON	26%
Not very common	22%
Not at all common	5%
DON'T KNOW	27%

One half of members say it is important for the government to move immediately on their promise to ban mandatory retirement in federally regulated industries (51%), and one quarter say it is “extremely/very important” (27%). However, there continues to be a significant minority of members who are not in disagreement with mandatory retirement legislation (44%, 21% “not at all important”).

In the Throne Speech, the current government promised to repeal the clause in the Human Rights Act that allows mandatory retirement in federally regulated industries. How important is it to you, personally, that the government fulfills this promise immediately?

IMPORTANT	51%
Extremely important	10%
Very important	17%
Important	25%
NOT IMPORTANT	44%
Not very important	23%
Not at all important	21%
DON'T KNOW	5%

When members are asked which solutions to older workers’ needs are most effective, one third pick flexible work arrangements, such as telework, job sharing and short weeks (36%), while a quarter suggest phased retirement (progressively shorter hours, smaller paycheques - 23%). About a tenth want to see more education of employers on the benefits of older workers (11%), a national online database of jobs for older workers (10%) or lifelong learning and training programs (8%).

Which of the following strategies do you think would be most effective in allowing older Canadians to continue to participate in the labour force if they want to?

Flex work (telework, job share, short weeks)	36%
Phased retirement (increasingly shorter hours/pay)	23%
More educating employers on benefits	11%
National online jobs database for older workers	10%
Lifelong learning/retraining programs	8%
More physically age-friendly workplaces	4%
On the job experience/internships	2%
More research and consultation	2%
Government assistance with resumé prep/job searches	1%
OTHER	5%

When members are asked to focus on more action-oriented solutions, most opt for the general category of “programs to hire long term unemployed older workers” (17%) and subsidized health and dental insurance for older workers (15%), while just fewer want to see some combination of caregiver leave/job sharing/retraining (12%).

Some experts have suggested more immediate solutions for the issue of older workers who want to continue to participate in the labour force. Which of the following do you think would do the most to achieve this?

Programs to hire long-term unemployed older workers	17%
Subsidized health & dental for older workers	15%
Caregiver leave/job-sharing/retraining	12%
Strengthened legal sanctions for age discrimination	9%
Supplemental income for those taking low paid jobs	8%
Job fairs/on the job training programs	6%
Family long term care insurance to allow employment	4%
Extended disability insurance for older workers	3%
OTHER	6%
DON'T KNOW	21%

As these solutions all cost money, members are asked how to fund them. One third say tax credits to employers of older workers (37%) as the dominant response, followed by a tenth who want to see bridged CPP payments for older unemployed workers (10%).

What is the best way to fund or provide an incentive for such measures ?

Tax credits to employ/insure older workers	37%
“Bridge” CPP payments as wage supplement	10%
Mandatory wage insurance paid by boss/employees	6%
Expanded EI as wage supplement	6%
Mandatory public long term care insurance	6%
Govt sponsorship of job fairs/on the job training	4%
Private long term care insurance	2%
Private voluntary wage insurance	2%
Best employer awards	1%
NO PROGRAMS/EXPENDITURES NECESSARY	25%

Members are relatively equally likely to say that their adult children in the workforce (among those who have them) have it better now than they did (22%), have it worse (25%) or have not experienced changes (28%).

If you have children 50 or older in the labour force, how do you think conditions for older workers compare to when you were in the same position?

Have it better now	22%
About the same as before	28%
Have it worse now	25%
MARGIN IN FAVOUR OF “BETTER”	-3
DON'T KNOW	15%

The vast majority of members agree it is important to have some formalized program of mentorship where older workers can pass on their experience and knowledge (89%), and this is evenly split between those who see it as “very important” (44%) and just important (46%).

Older workers have valuable information and knowledge about their jobs and their employers. How important do you think it is to create a bridging or mentorship program whereby retiring workers can pass on their knowledge in an organized way?

IMPORTANT	89%
Very important	44%
Important	46%
NOT IMPORTANT	8%
Not very important	7%
Not at all important	1%
DON'T KNOW	3%

About 1-in-7 members have a full or part time caregiver in the home (14%), primarily for 30 hours a week or less (8%), and primarily the respondent (8%).

Do you or does anyone in your household currently care for another adult, either full or part-time?

YES	14%
30 hours a week or less, someone else	5%
30 hours a week or less, me	4%
More than 30 hours a week, me	4%
More than 30 hours a week, someone else	2%
NO	86%

Among those with a caregiver in the household, about half had already retired when they started caregiving (48%), while about one quarter had to juggle caregiving and work (23%) and about half this proportion had to retire early (11%).

How have these caregiving duties affected your employment or that of another caregiver?

Already retired when caregiving began	48%
Had to juggle work and caregiving	23%
Had to retire early	11%
Had to take unpaid time off work	4%
Had to quit job	4%
OTHER	10%

Two thirds of members agree with the aims of the Occupy Wall Street movement (62%), one quarter strongly (26%).

The “Occupy Wall Street” movement has sprung up in cities across Canada. Its members seek to highlight income inequality and the role of the banks in the recent financial collapse. Their goal is to build a more democratic society. How much do you agree with these aims?

AGREE	62%
Agree strongly	26%
Agree	37%
DISAGREE	32%
Disagree	16%
Disagree strongly	16%
DON'T KNOW	6%

Despite their support for the movement's aims, just one seventh of members believe the Occupy tent encampments should be allowed to stay in public parks (15%).

Do you think the tent encampments of this movement should be allowed to stay in the parks where they are located now?

Yes	15%
No	78%
DON'T KNOW	8%

Four-in-ten CARP members belongs to a chapter (39%).

Do you belong to a CARP chapter?

Yes	39%
No	62%

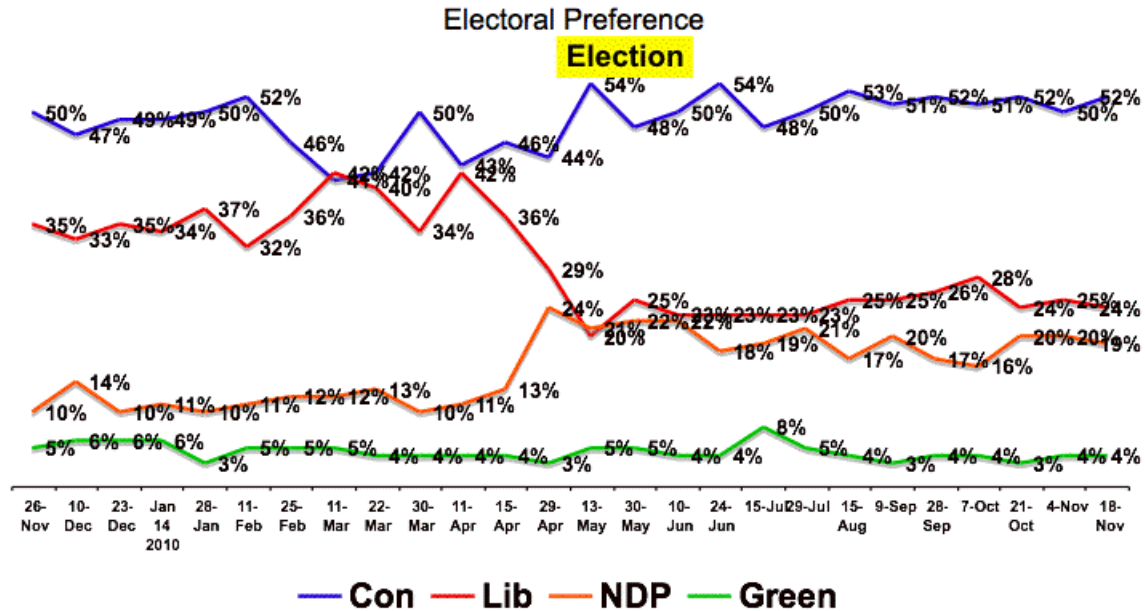
One tenth of members are veterans (10%), and very few (3%) receive veteran's benefits.

Are you a veteran and do you receive veteran's benefits?

YES	10%
Don't receive benefits	7%
Receive benefits	3%
NO	90%

ELECTORAL PREFERENCE

While the Conservative Party remains dominate (52%), the Liberals are still in second place (24%) ahead of the NDP (19%), and this is a situation the national polls are only finding now.



Almost 2900 CARP Poll™ panel members responded to this poll between November 18 and 20. The margin of error for a sample this size is plus or minus 1.8%, 19 times out of 20. That is, if you asked all members of the CARP Poll™ panel the identical questions, their responses would be within 2%, either up or down, of the results shown here, 95% of the time