

**CARP Financial Issues Poll Report  
December 5, 2014**

**Key Findings**

**Most members think the promised budget surplus should be used to pay the national debt, while many think it should not be spent at all, but saved for adverse economic cycles. Other priorities are income supports and pharmacare. They agree the surplus, if it must be spent, should be spent in one grand plan that helps everyone, rather than as a series of targeted tax breaks.**

**Income splitting is not seen as a worthwhile way to spend any surplus, nor is the increase in the Child Care Tax Benefit; income splitting is seen to benefit only well off single income families, and the Quebec child care model is preferred to the CCTB. Both these items are seen chiefly as election ploys, and indicative of an early writ.**

**Most members don't share the government's rosy outlook for the economy, and most say it has not improved for them, and if it had, the government couldn't take credit.**

**The Liberals and Conservatives have closed their gap, with the Liberals still in first place, and the NDP in distant third. While more people will vote Liberal than Conservative, there is a disconnect, and members are equally likely to believe either of these two parties will win the next election.**

## Detailed Findings

Twice as many members think the surplus should be used to pay down Canada's debt (39%) as select the next option, increasing income supports (15%). Others think it should pay for a national pharmacare plan or think it should not be spent at all (10% each). Very few agree with the largest item it is being spent on, the income splitting scheme (3%).

***The government has announced an anticipated budget surplus of almost \$2 billion in 2015, rising to \$4 billion in 2016 and \$5 billion in 2016. How would this budget surplus best be spent?***

Pay down national debt	39%
Increase income supports (GIS, OAS, WFB)	15%
National pharmacare program	10%
Surplus should not be spent, saved for rainy day	10%
National home care strategy	9%
National childcare program	5%
Affordable housing	4%
Income splitting for families with children	3%
Job training for the new economy	2%
OTHER/DON'T KNOW	3%

More than half our members think the surplus should be spent on one grand unified plan which benefits all (51%), while half this proportion prefers targeted tax benefits (24%). One quarter don't want the surplus spent at all (22%).

***Overall, is it better to spend the surplus on one comprehensive plan that benefits everyone, such as pharmacare or paying the national debt, or should it be spent on a number of individual programs, each targeting a specific group?***

Comprehensive plan to benefit all	51%
Individual benefits targeting specific groups	24%
Neither, surplus should not be spent	22%
OTHER/DON'T KNOW	3%

More than half of members don't think the government should use the surplus to address interprovincial inequality (54%), while just one third think it should (34%).

***Alberta's recent economic statement was very positive, despite depending on oil prices staying high. Ontario's recent economic statement was less positive, reflecting the decline of the manufacturing sector. Should the federal government be addressing these inequities with the surplus?***

<b>Yes</b>	34%
<b>No</b>	54%
<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	13%

Seven in ten members disagree that income splitting is a good way to spend the surplus (70%) and just less than a quarter think it is (22%).

***The government has announced it will introduce income splitting capped at \$2000 for two parent families with children under 18. This will cost \$2.8 billion the first year and \$2 billion a year after that. Do you agree or disagree this is a good way to spend the surplus?***

<b>AGREE</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Agree strongly</b>	5%
<b>Agree</b>	17%
<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Disagree</b>	29%
<b>Disagree strongly</b>	41%
<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	7%

The wide majority of members believe income splitting will benefit wealthy families with children (60%), followed by those who specify families with one income (21%), Very few think it benefits all (2%).

***Who will family income splitting benefit the most?***

<b>Well off families with one wage-earner</b>	60%
<b>Families with one income</b>	21%
<b>All families</b>	7%
<b>Everyone</b>	2%
<b>Single parent families</b>	1%
<b>OTHER</b>	1%
<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	8%

There is an even split in opinion on whether the government should increase the Child Care Tax Benefit, or CCTB (46%) or should not (45%).

***The government has announced they will increase the Child Care Tax Benefit (CCTB) from \$100 to \$160 per child under six, and children between 7 and 17 will now receive \$60 a month. Do you agree or disagree this is a good way to spend the surplus?***

<b>AGREE</b>	<b>46%</b>
Agree strongly	7%
Agree	39%
<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>45%</b>
Disagree	30%
Disagree strongly	15%
<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>8%</b>

The Quebec day care model is strongly preferred three to one (45%) to the CCTB (15%), while a fifth think neither solution is good (20%).

***In Quebec, all parents are guaranteed a place in day care for \$7 per day. Which is a better child care benefit, the CCTB or the Quebec child care model?***

<b>Quebec model</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>CCTB</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Neither</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>21%</b>

Two thirds of members think recent policy announcements are election fodder (67%) rather than genuine benefits for the middle class (21%). Few don't have an opinion or think neither is the case (6% each).

***Do the policies we have just discussed have a genuine benefit for the middle class or are they just pre-election ploys?***

<b>Election ploys</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Genuine benefits for middle class</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Neither</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>6%</b>

Most members think decisions on spending the surplus should be made through consultation with citizens and stakeholders (28%), followed by half this proportion who think a first ministers' conference (14%) or an election (10%) is the answer.

***How should decisions on how to spend the surplus be made?***

<b>Consult with stakeholders and citizens</b>	28%
<b>First ministers' conference</b>	14%
<b>Call an election and run on plans</b>	10%
<b>Majority government can do as it pleases</b>	9%
<b>Finance minister's decision alone</b>	3%
<b>SURPLUS SHOULD NOT BE SPENT/SAVE IT</b>	28%
<b>OTHER/DON'T KNOW</b>	8%

The plurality doesn't believe the economy is growing in Canada (47%), compared to just more than a third who believe it is (37%).

***Do you believe job growth is now occurring in Canada?***

<b>Yes</b>	37%
<b>No</b>	47%
<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	16%

The plurality thinks the government can partially take credit for job creation (44%), while just fewer think it cannot (39%). Few think the government can take credit (14%).

***Can the current government take credit for the improvement in the economy?***

<b>Yes</b>	14%
<b>Partially</b>	44%
<b>No</b>	39%
<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	3%

More than half think the private sector has the biggest role in job creation (55%), compared to a third who see both government and the private sector as equal players (36%). Few think the government fills this role alone (4%).

***Which sector plays a bigger role in job creation, the government or the private sector?***

<b>Government</b>	4%
<b>Private sector</b>	55%
<b>Both</b>	36%
<b>Neither</b>	2%
<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	2%

There is an even split in opinion between those who think the current government is heading in the right direction (35%) or wrong direction (33%), while one fifth see neither happening (21%).

***Is the current government guiding Canada's economy in the right direction or in the wrong direction?***

<b>Right direction</b>	35%
<b>Wrong direction</b>	33%
<b>Neither</b>	21%
<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	11%

Equal proportions say the economy has grown worse for them (40%) or hasn't changed (37%), while about half this proportion thinks it has (22%). Very few think the economy has gotten "a great deal better" (3%).

***The federal minister of finance's economic update was relatively positive, predicting steady growth in the surplus over the next 5 years. In your experience, has the economy improved for you?***

<b>YES</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>A great deal</b>	3%
<b>Somewhat</b>	19%
<b>Hasn't changed</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Not much</b>	21%
<b>Not at all</b>	19%
<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	1%

There is an even split in opinion on whether the Ontario government will be successful in wringing revenue from the grey economy (42%) and those who think it will not (43%).

***Ontario's finance minister released his economic statement this week. The government of Ontario intends to crack down on the underground economy, including online and offshore betting and contraband cigarettes. Do you agree or disagree this will be successful?***

<b>AGREE</b>	<b>42%</b>
Agree strongly	12%
Agree	30%
<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>43%</b>
Disagree	33%
Disagree strongly	10%
<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>15%</b>

Slightly more believe a spring election is in the offing (44%) than think not (31%), while as many as a quarter don't know (26%).

***As far as you know, does the government's announcement of a surplus, income splitting for families and the economic update lead you to believe they will call an early election in the spring?***

<b>Yes</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>26%</b>

While the same percentage believe the Liberals will win the next election (48%) as will vote for them (46%), far fewer will vote Conservative (36%) than think the Conservatives will actually win (49%). The converse is true with the New Democrats; a tenth will vote for them (11%) but very few expect them to win (2%).

***If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party's candidate would you support/And which party do you EXPECT to win the next election?***

	<b>Will Vote For...</b>	<b>Expect to win</b>
<b>Liberal</b>	46%	48%
<b>Conservative</b>	36%	49%
<b>NDP</b>	11%	2%
<b>Green</b>	6%	-

## **Electoral Preference**

The Liberals are in first place with a ten point lead (46%) over the Conservatives in second (36%) The NDP (11%) remain in third place.

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decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

***More than 2200 CARP Poll™ online panel members responded to this poll between November 28 and 30, 2014. The margin of error for a probability sample this size is about plus or minus 2%, 19 times out of 20***