

CARP Electoral Issues Poll Report
June 4, 2015

Key Findings

While members see problems with First Past The Post (FPTP) and like Alternate Vote (AV) and Proportional Representation (PR) electoral systems, and they find favour with the consensual negotiating implied in a minority or coalition government, they still believe the majority of voters should elect the government.

The majority of CARP members agree Canada's electoral system needs reform, and more prefer a coalition to a majority under the First Past The Post system (FPTP). Despite this, it is important to a third that the government receives a majority of votes.

When rating other electoral systems, both the Alternate Vote (AV) and Proportional Representation (PR) are liked by half or more, and members are relatively equally likely to think the majorities guaranteed by AV and the representation guaranteed by PR are important. When the three main electoral systems are compared directly, both PR and FPTP are well liked, while AV falls behind.

Two thirds favour the NDP victory in Alberta and more than half approve of the majority, with just over 40% of the vote.

The vast majority of members approve of MP Michael Chong's Reform Bill, the plurality agree caucus should hold more power in the party than the leader and that the Senate should pass the bill now, rather than delaying it further. Three quarters want to see the original provisions contained in the bill.

Two thirds of members want to reform the senate while one quarter wants to see it abolished. Very few want it left as it is. Members' opinions of senatorial ethics is very poor.

The Conservatives and the Liberals are now tied, due to the NDP sharply increasing, both in vote share and expectations of victory. The three parties are headed to parity.

Detailed Findings

The majority of members agree Canada's electoral system needs reforming (52%) and these are evenly split between those who see the need for a whole new system (24%) and those who just want reform (28%). Very few think the system works well (9%).

In Canada, our electoral system allows the party with the majority of seats to form the government, whether or not they represent the majority of the voters. Does this system work well for Canada or does it require reform?

YES	52%
System is broken, needs new electoral system	24%
Too many left unrepresented, needs reform	28%
Maybe, could use minor reforms	16%
NO	31%
Not perfect, but better than many	22%
System works well	9%
OTHER/DON'T KNOW	1%

Just one half approve of the majority-producing FPTP electoral system overall (52%), while just fewer disapprove (43%). Of the products of FPTP, a minority government (83%) is preferred to a coalition (77%).

Canada uses the Westminster first-past-the-post electoral system (FPTP) in which the party with the majority of seats forms the government. If no party has a majority, the party that has the confidence of the House forms the government. Do you approve or disapprove of FPTP/ If no party has a majority of seats, the party with the most seats has the first chance to form a minority government. Do you approve or disapprove of a minority government/ If no party has a majority of seats, two or more other parties can form a coalition government, and attempt to gain the confidence of the House. Do you approve or disapprove of coalition governments?

	FPTP	Minority	Coalition
APPROVE	52%	83%	77%
Approve strongly	12%	18%	18%
Approve	40%	65%	59%
DISAPPROVE	43%	15%	20%
Disapprove	28%	13%	15%
Disapprove strongly	15%	2%	5%
DON'T KNOW	5%	3%	3%

It is important to two thirds of members that the government receives a majority of the popular vote (64%), and one quarter see it as “very important” (27%).

In our FPTP electoral system, the government is almost always elected with less than 50% of the popular vote. Is it important to you that a government should receive a majority, or more than 50% of the popular vote?

IMPORTANT	64%
Very important	27%
Important	37%
NOT IMPORTANT	35%
Not important	26%
Not at all important	9%
DON'T KNOW	2%

When comparing the three types of FPTP governments directly, a coalition is preferred (41%) to a majority (34%) or, especially, a minority (15%).

Under FPTP, in a majority, the governing party’s legislation may be amended only at its discretion, the opposition has no power to force amendments or block the legislation. In a coalition government, all legislation is negotiated between the cooperating parties, which can shift and change. In minority government legislation is negotiated, it can be difficult to gain consensus and they often lead to early elections. Which type of first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral outcome do you prefer?

Coalition	41%
Majority	34%
Minority	15%
NONE OF THESE	6%
DON'T KNOW	4%

Proportional Representation (PR) is very slightly preferred (55%) to Alternate Vote (AV - 51%) when the two non-traditional electoral systems are described

There are other tested electoral systems besides FPTP. With the Alternate Vote, or Ranked Ballot (AV), voters indicate their first, second, third, etc, choices. If no candidate wins a majority on the first ballot, second choices are tallied, then third, etc, until a majority is reached. Do you approve or disapprove of AV/Another electoral system is Proportional Representation (PR), where each party wins seats proportionate to its share of the vote, and no party is unrepresented. Do you approve or disapprove of PR?

	AV	PR
APPROVE	51%	55%
Approve strongly	10%	17%
Approve	41%	38%
DISAPPROVE	36%	33%
Disapprove	26%	22%
Disapprove strongly	10%	11%
DON'T KNOW	14%	12%

Members think the full representation implicit in PR is slightly more important (52%) to them than the majorities implied by AV (48%).

Under an AV system, the government always has a majority. Is this important or not important to you/Under PR, every party is represented and the government is frequently a coalition. Is it important or not important to you that every party is represented in the House?

	AV Majority	PR Representation
IMPORTANT	48%	52%
Very important	9%	17%
Important	39%	35%
NOT IMPORTANT	44%	45%
Not important	35%	29%
Not at all important	9%	16%
DON'T KNOW	9%	3%

When the three overall electoral systems are compared, PR and FPTP are equally likely to be preferred (35% and 33%) while AV lags (22%).

FPTP leads to, possibly majorities, possibly minorities and possibly coalitions. AV leads always to majorities. PR leads almost always to coalitions. Which of these three electoral systems do you prefer based on these outcomes?

PR	35%
FPTP	33%
AV	22%
NONE OF THESE	3%
DON'T KNOW	7%

Two thirds approve of the NDP victory in Alberta (67%).

Do you approve or disapprove of the victory of the provincial NDP under Rachel Notley in the recent Alberta election?

APPROVE	67%
Approve strongly	24%
Approve	43%
DISAPPROVE	17%
Disapprove	11%
Disapprove strongly	6%
DON'T KNOW	16%

The majority approve of the 40% “majority” the NDP won the Alberta election with (59%).

The NDP won a large majority with just over 40% of the vote. Do you approve or disapprove of this outcome?

APPROVE	59%
Approve strongly	11%
Approve	48%
DISAPPROVE	30%
Disapprove	24%
Disapprove strongly	6%
DON'T KNOW	12%

The vast majority of members approve of Michael Chong's Reform Bill (81%).

Bill C586, the Reform Act initiated by backbench MP Michael Chong, which is in the Senate for final passage now, allows caucus to choose to set certain limits on party leaders in choosing caucus chairs and candidates and provides mechanisms for caucus members to initiate leadership reviews. Do you approve or disapprove of Bill C586?

APPROVE	81%
Approve strongly	35%
Approve	46%
DISAPPROVE	7%
Disapprove	6%
Disapprove strongly	1%
DON'T KNOW	12%

Members widely prefer caucus having the balance of power (46%) rather than the leader (15%). One third think power should be shared equally (35%).

As far as you know, who should have more power in the party caucus, the leader or the caucus members?

Caucus members	46%
Leader	15%
BOTH EQUALLY	35%
NEITHER	1%
DON'T KNOW	3%

Two thirds find it important the senate allow passage of the Reform Bill during this parliament.

Bill C586 was amended considerably by the government, and is now less definitive and more ambiguous. In addition, the Senate has given the Bill such a low priority it may not be passed before the coming election. How important is it to you the Senate allows passage of Bill C586 during this Parliament?

IMPORTANT	67%
Very important	32%
Important	35%
NOT IMPORTANT	44%
Not important	17%
Not at all important	5%
DON'T KNOW	10%

Two thirds disagree the senate should be able to delay bills passed by parliament (68%).

Do you agree or disagree the current Senate should be able to postpone bills passed by the House?

AGREE	27%
Agree strongly	4%
Agree	23%
DISAGREE	68%
Disagree	37%
Disagree strongly	31%
DON'T KNOW	5%

Three quarters find the original Reform Bill's provisions important to them (76%).

How important to you are the provisions originally contained in Bill C586, including committee chairs being selected by caucus, and caucus being able to initiate leadership reviews?

IMPORTANT	76%
Very important	28%
Important	48%
NOT IMPORTANT	15%
Not important	13%
Not at all important	2%
DON'T KNOW	10%

Two thirds believe the senate can be reformed in some way (67%), while more than a quarter want ti abolished (28%).

What do you think should be done with Canada's Senate?

ABOLISH IT	28%
REFORM IT	67%
Reform it	37%
Triple E	30%
LEAVE IT AS IS	3%
OTHER/DON'T KNOW	2%

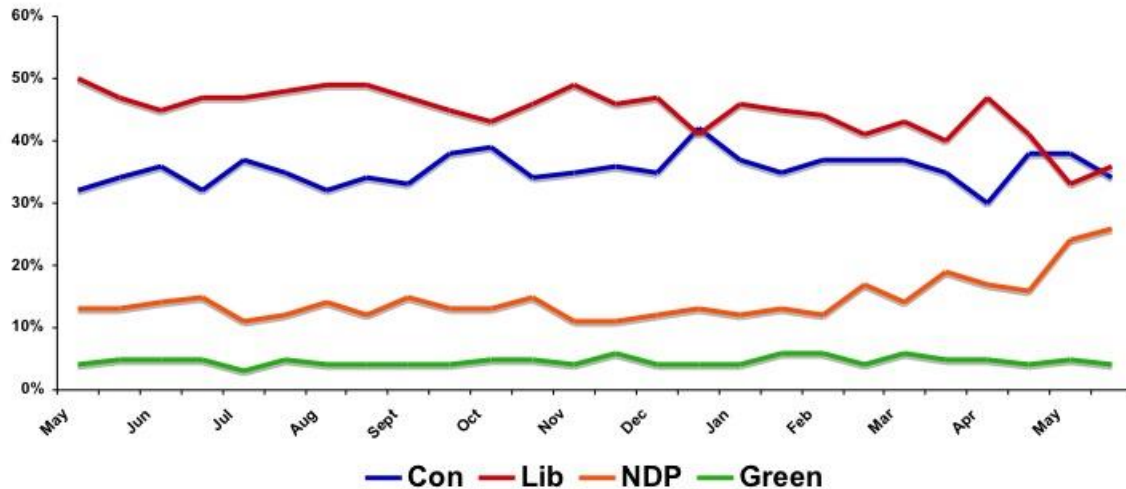
Members have a very low opinion of the ethics of senators, and as many as a third describe them as poor (36%).

What is your personal opinion of the ethics of the average Canadian Senator?

Excellent	1%
Good	21%
Fair	36%
Poor	36%
DON'T KNOW	5%

Electoral Preference

The Liberals (36%) are now tied with the Conservatives (34%), while the NDP have eaten into the Liberal lead (25%). The parties are trending towards parity.



Most members expect the Conservatives to win the next election (48%), followed by the Liberals (32%). The NDP does better on this measure than recently (17%).

Which party do you EXPECT to win the next election?

	Mar 10	Mar 24	Apr 10	Apr 27	May 19	June 4
Liberals	45%	40%	45%	37%	34%	32%
Conservatives	52%	54%	48%	56%	54%	48%
NDP	4%	1%	6%	5%	11%	17%
Green	*	*	*	*	*	*

Almost 1900 CARP Poll™ online panel members responded to this poll between May 24 and 30, 2015. The margin of error for a probability sample this size is about plus or minus 2%, 19 times out of 20