

CANADIANS AGREE WITH PRIME MINISTER ON RESTRICTING PENSIONS FOR FEDERAL PRISONERS

[Ottawa – April 8, 2010] - This week, we examined public response to the possibility of eliminating federal pension benefits to those in federal prisons. The question asked whether respondents favoured eliminating these benefits altogether, eliminating them for only those prisoners serving life sentences, or continuing to allow all federal inmates to collect pensions.

Even without mentioning the nefarious Clifford Olson, the results show scant willingness for the public to consider the legal or human rights of federal prisoners to receive their federal pensions. Only 17% support the status quo, where prisoners are entitled to receive their federal pensions. Of those who want restrictions, 59% support eliminating these benefits for all federal inmates. The remainder (25%) would only impose these restrictions on those serving life sentences.

The idea that pensions should be withdrawn is more strongly supported amongst CPC supporters but there is limited sympathy for the prisoner rights in any portions of the population. The strength of the public response is a vivid indicator of the "tougher" zeitgeist. It also may reveal the political acumen of the Prime Minister in his ability to raise a previously hidden issue which hits such a resonant chord with the electorate.

HIGHLIGHTS

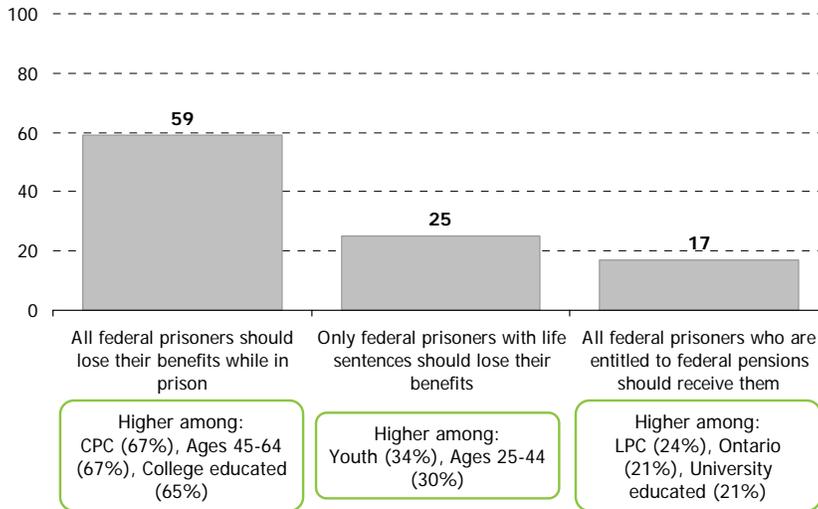
- **Entitlement to federal pensions while in federal prison:**
 - ▣ **59% all federal prisoners should lose their benefits while in prison**
 - ▣ **25% only prisoners serving life sentences should lose their benefits while in prison**
 - ▣ **17% all federal prisoners who are entitled to federal pensions should receive them**

Please note that the methodology is provided at the end of this document.

Top Line Results:

Entitlement to old age benefits while in federal prison

Q. The issue of whether inmates in federal prisons should be eligible for federal pensions has been in the news. Currently, federal prisoners 65 years and over are entitled to federal pensions. Which of the following statements comes closest to your point of view: 1) All inmates in federal prisons should lose their benefits to federal pensions while in prison; 2) Only federal prisoners with life sentences should lose their benefits to federal pensions while in prison; or 3) All federal prisoners who are entitled to receive federal pensions should continue to do so.



Copyright 2010. No reproduction without permission

BASE: Canadians; March 31 – April 6 (n=909)

Detailed Tables:

Entitlement to Old Age Benefits while in Federal Prison

Q. The issue of whether inmates in federal prisons should be eligible for federal pensions has been in the news. Currently, federal prisoners 65 years and over are entitled to federal pensions. Which of the following statements comes closest to your point of view?

	All inmates in federal prisons should lose their benefits to federal pensions while in prison	Only federal prisoners with life sentences should lose their benefits to federal pensions while in prison	All federal prisoners who are entitled to receive federal pensions should continue to do so	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	59%	25%	17%	909	3.3
REGION					
British Columbia	58%	26%	16%	207	6.8
Alberta	61%	29%	10%	104	9.6
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	69%	21%	11%	76	11.2
Ontario	57%	22%	21%	249	6.2
Quebec	55%	29%	16%	174	7.4
Atlantic Canada	65%	22%	13%	99	9.9
GENDER					
Male	56%	26%	18%	453	4.6
Female	61%	23%	15%	456	4.6
AGE					
<25	45%	34%	21%	75	11.3
25-44	53%	30%	18%	265	6.0
45-64	67%	21%	12%	355	5.2
65+	63%	17%	20%	214	6.7
EDUCATION					
High school or less	57%	25%	18%	272	5.9
College or CEGEP	65%	24%	11%	291	5.7
University or higher	54%	25%	21%	346	5.3
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	67%	21%	12%	278	5.9
Liberal Party of Canada	49%	26%	24%	221	6.6
NDP	54%	26%	20%	132	8.5
Green Party	48%	33%	19%	88	10.5
Bloc Quebecois	58%	28%	14%	60	12.7
Undecided	80%	14%	6%	18	23.1

Methodology:

EKOS' weekly tracking polls are conducted using Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) technology, which allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator.

In an effort to reduce the coverage bias of landline only RDD, we created a dual land-line/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with both a landline and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and landline only households. This dual frame yields a near perfect unweighted distribution on age group and gender, something almost never seen with traditional landline RDD sample or interviewer-administered surveys.

The field dates for this survey are March 31 – April 6, 2010.¹ In total, a random sample of 909 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-3.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.

¹ Please note that these dates are not inclusive of the weekends or holidays, as we do not survey on Saturday or Sunday, nor do we survey on Good Friday or Easter Monday.