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CANADIANS WANT SPENDING CUTS, DEFICIT REDUCTION, NOT TAX HIKES

QUEBECKERS STRONGEST ADVOCATES OF SPENDING CUTS

[Ottawa – February 11, 2010] – Canadians seem to want the federal government to take on the deficit, and to do it through spending cuts.

In response to a viewer-suggested question on the CBC program Power and Politics, EKOS surveyed more than three thousand Canadians on the question, which will be on the top of the political agenda when the government introduces its budget after the Olympics.

First, the viewer wanted us to ask Canadians whether they had heard of the recent report by the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Kevin Page, which projected Canada would run a deficit in the order of \$19 billion by the 2013 fiscal year if measures were not taken to avert it. This is the so-called “structural deficit”, which will not be eliminated simply through natural growth in the economy.

About two-thirds of Canadians claimed to have heard of the report: just over a third said they recalled the report “clearly”.

Then we asked Canadians how they would choose between the options open to the government this year: i.e., continue to run a large deficit, raise taxes, or cut services and spending.

It is a tribute to how sternly Canadians hold to their recent governmental tradition of avoiding deficits that running one next year was the least favoured option. In many countries (and in this country in past decades) people have often preferred the easy way out of running a deficit.

Some Canadians even prefer to see taxes raised than see the deficit continue as it is.

The most favoured option in this poll is to see cuts to services and government spending. It is not surprising that a majority of Conservative supporters take this view; but the feeling is even strong among BQ supporters. Even among supporters of the other opposition parties, cutting services and spending is the preferred route, though this view is held much more weakly.

“This presents an opportunity for the Conservatives,” said EKOS President Frank Graves. “The public is quite closely aligned to traditional Conservative ideology on these issues – if not its actual

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Awareness of Canada’s structural deficit:**
 - ▣ **36% clearly aware**
 - ▣ **31% vaguely aware**
 - ▣ **34% not aware**
- **Preferred government approach to deficits:**
 - ▣ **10% continue to run deficits**
 - ▣ **14% raise taxes**
 - ▣ **46% cut services and spending**
 - ▣ **30% do not know/no response**

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

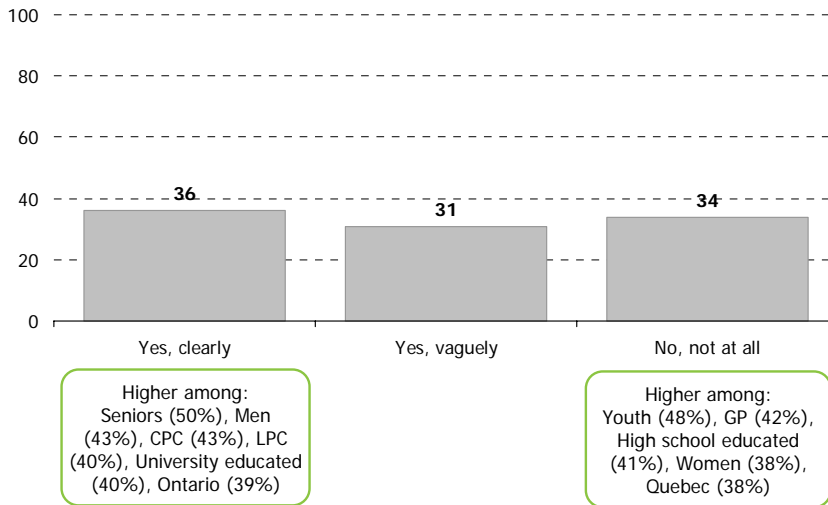
policies in recent years.”

“However, it would be a mistake to make too much of this result. Years of tracking have shown that Canadians are happy to support unspecified spending cuts, but less sanguine when the cuts affect them directly,” he said. “Moreover, deficit spending, or even tax increases, may seem more palatable if they are explicitly directed towards a shared goal, such as job creation.”

Top Line Results:

Awareness of Canada's deficit

Q. As you may have heard, the Parliamentary Budget Officer recently projected that Canada will have a deficit of nearly \$19 billion by 2013, unless the government cuts spending or raises taxes. Before today, were you aware of this projection?

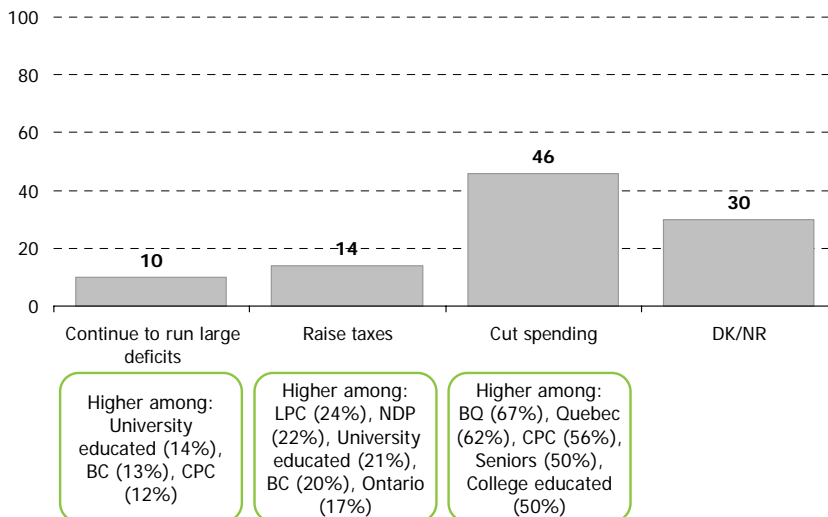


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BASE: Canadians; Feb. 3-9 (n=3006)

Preferred government approach to the deficit

Q. In your opinion, what should the Government of Canada's main approach to the deficit be for the coming year?



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Detailed Tables:

Awareness of Canada's Structural Deficit

Q. As you may have heard, the Parliamentary Budget Officer recently projected that Canada will have a deficit of nearly \$19 billion by 2013, unless the government cuts spending or raises taxes. Before today, were you aware of this projection?

	Yes, clearly	Yes, vaguely	No, not at all	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	35%	31%	33%	3006	1.8
REGION					
British Columbia	35%	34%	31%	396	4.9
Alberta	36%	27%	37%	257	6.1
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	34%	30%	36%	212	6.7
Ontario	39%	31%	29%	1147	2.9
Quebec	30%	32%	38%	742	3.6
Atlantic Canada	37%	27%	35%	252	6.2
GENDER					
Male	43%	29%	28%	1474	2.6
Female	28%	33%	38%	1532	2.5
AGE					
<25	26%	26%	48%	239	6.3
25-44	27%	32%	40%	953	3.2
45-64	40%	32%	28%	1190	2.8
65+	50%	29%	21%	624	3.9
EDUCATION					
High school or less	31%	28%	41%	869	3.3
College or CEGEP	33%	31%	35%	974	3.1
University or higher	40%	34%	26%	1163	2.9
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	43%	30%	27%	836	3.4
Liberal Party of Canada	40%	31%	29%	771	3.5
NDP	32%	33%	35%	408	4.9
Green Party	27%	31%	42%	279	5.9
Bloc Quebecois	35%	33%	32%	264	6.0
Undecided	32%	29%	39%	74	11.4

Preferred Government Approach to the Deficit

Q. In your opinion, what should the Government of Canada's main approach to the deficit be for the coming year?

	Continue to run large deficits	Raise taxes	Cut services and spending	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	10%	14%	46%	30%	3006	1.8
REGION						
British Columbia	13%	20%	34%	32%	396	4.9
Alberta	10%	15%	45%	30%	257	6.1
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	10%	15%	41%	34%	212	6.7
Ontario	12%	17%	41%	31%	1147	2.9
Quebec	7%	7%	62%	24%	742	3.6
Atlantic Canada	11%	10%	44%	34%	252	6.2
GENDER						
Male	12%	17%	47%	23%	1474	2.6
Female	9%	11%	45%	35%	1532	2.5
AGE						
<25	10%	18%	39%	33%	239	6.3
25-44	11%	14%	44%	32%	953	3.2
45-64	10%	14%	49%	27%	1190	2.8
65+	9%	13%	50%	28%	624	3.9
EDUCATION						
High school or less	7%	9%	46%	37%	869	3.3
College or CEGEP	9%	10%	50%	31%	974	3.1
University or higher	14%	21%	42%	23%	1163	2.9
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION						
Conservative Party of Canada	12%	7%	56%	24%	836	3.4
Liberal Party of Canada	9%	24%	38%	29%	771	3.5
NDP	12%	22%	36%	30%	408	4.9
Green Party	11%	14%	42%	33%	279	5.9
Bloc Quebecois	5%	8%	67%	21%	264	6.0
Undecided	9%	7%	55%	28%	74	11.4

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 February 3 – February 9, 2010.¹ In total, a random sample of 3,006 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-1.8 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, as we do not survey on Saturday or Sunday.