

## CENSUS

# Majority of Canadians Support Move to Reinstate Long Form Census

*Half of respondents believe the federal government should reverse its decision, and only one-in-four think long form is intrusive.*

[MONTREAL – Oct. 6, 2010] – A majority of Canadians welcome an opposition proposal to reinstate the abandoned mandatory long form census, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative sample of 1,012 Canadian adults, 49 per cent of respondents (-5 since August) think the federal government should reverse its decision and keep the mandatory long form census.

Conversely, 29 per cent of respondents (-2) believe the federal government should stick by its decision and carry on with its proposed voluntary survey.

Alberta (42%) boasts the highest proportion of respondents who want the government to stand by its decision to scrap the mandatory long form census, while majorities of Ontarians (53%) and Quebecers (54%) call for Ottawa to reverse its decision.

The federal government's argument that the long form census is intrusive and Canadians should not be forced to answer it is supported by 26 per cent of respondents (+2). Conversely, 53 per cent (-5) think the long form census yields data that is important to make policy decisions in all areas of public service, and should remain mandatory.

### KEY FINDINGS

- **49% want the federal government to reverse its decision and keep the mandatory long form census**
- **53% think the long form census yields data that is important to make policy decisions in all areas of public service, and should remain mandatory**
- **54% support the opposition's move to amend the Statistics Act to include the long-form census that was scrapped by the current government**

*Full topline results are at the end of this release.*

*From October 4 to October 5, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,012 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

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The opposition parties are contemplating whether to amend the Statistics Act to include the long-form census that was scrapped by the current government. More than half of respondents (54%) support this course of action, while one-in-four (23%) oppose it.

### **Political Allegiance**

Respondents who voted for the Conservative Party in the 2008 federal election are more likely to want the government to stick by its decision to scrap the mandatory long form census (47%, compared to the national average of 29%), more likely to oppose the opposition's plan to amend the Statistics Act (43%, compared to the national average of 23%), and more likely to claim that the long form census is intrusive (39%, compared to the national average of 26%).

At least 70 per cent of respondents who voted for the Liberal Party, the New Democratic Party (NDP) or the Green Party in the 2008 federal election believe the long form census should remain mandatory, call on the government to reverse its decision, and support the move to amend the Statistics Act.

### **Analysis**

The level of support for keeping the mandatory long form census was high in July and August (at 58%), and remains above the 50 per cent mark in October. There is also some fluctuation in the demands for the government to reverse its controversial decision (52% in July, 54% in August, 49% in October).

For the most part, Tory voters are standing by the federal government. The opposition reacted in harmony against the decision to scrap the mandatory long form census, and now has a unifying factor in the private member's bill tabled by Liberal MP Carolyn Bennet. The bill would specify that a long-form questionnaire must be administered every five years and would also remove the existing threat of jail time for people who fail to answer the census.

*Our previous surveys on the census controversy can be accessed here: [July 2010](#) / [August 2010](#)*

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## Census

Thinking about the census situation, which of the two following statements comes closest to your own point of view?

	Region							Party supported in the 2008 election				
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL	Con	Lib	NDP	BQ	Green
<b>The long form census is intrusive and Canadians should not be forced to answer it</b>	26%	24%	34%	46%	21%	22%	35%	39%	16%	11%	24%	8%
<b>The long form census yields data that is important to make policy decisions in all areas of public service, and should remain mandatory</b>	53%	57%	46%	44%	56%	58%	40%	49%	77%	79%	60%	74%
<b>Not sure</b>	21%	19%	20%	10%	24%	20%	25%	12%	8%	10%	16%	18%

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## Census

As you may know, some provincial premiers have criticized the federal government's decision to eliminate the mandatory long form census, and the head of Statistics Canada has quit his post. Thinking about this, what do you think the federal government should do?

	Region							Party supported in the 2008 election				
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL	Con	Lib	NDP	BQ	Green
<b>Reverse its decision and keep the mandatory long form census</b>	49%	48%	40%	42%	53%	54%	41%	41%	74%	76%	56%	72%
<b>Stick by its decision and carry on with the voluntary survey</b>	29%	29%	42%	27%	27%	28%	28%	47%	15%	12%	31%	20%
<b>Not sure</b>	22%	23%	19%	31%	20%	19%	31%	12%	11%	12%	13%	8%

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### Census

As you may know, the opposition parties are contemplating whether to amend the Statistics Act to include the long-form census that was scrapped by the current government. Do you support or oppose this idea?

	Region							Party supported in the 2008 election				
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL	Con	Lib	NDP	BQ	Green
<b>Support</b>	54%	53%	49%	62%	53%	59%	46%	43%	82%	76%	61%	70%
<b>Oppose</b>	23%	21%	34%	23%	23%	19%	25%	43%	11%	8%	25%	18%
<b>Not sure</b>	23%	26%	18%	15%	24%	22%	29%	14%	8%	16%	14%	12%

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*Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995*

*Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.*

*Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum ([www.angusreidforum.com](http://www.angusreidforum.com)), Springboard America ([www.springboardamerica.com](http://www.springboardamerica.com)) and Springboard UK ([www.springboarduk.com](http://www.springboarduk.com)) online panels, which are recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a high-quality, multi-streamed approach and an in-depth screening procedure.*

*The panels are highly engaged communities with industry leading response rates and are researched with state-of-the-art sampling techniques, combined with deep profiling on demographic, behavioural and attitudinal characteristics. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.*

*Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.*

*Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election. More information on our electoral record can be found at:*

*<http://www.visioncritical.com/record-of-accuracy>*

*More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.visioncritical.com/what-we-do/practices/angus-reid-public-opinion/>*

- 30 -

**For more information, please contact  
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:  
<http://www.visioncritical.com>**

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