

Senate selection process April 2017

Today, we're asking Canadians about a variety of topics that have been in the news recently, beginning with some questions about the Canadian Senate.

Q1. Last year, the federal government set up a new way to select Senators to replace the old system where the Prime Minister and his Office appointed their own choices for the Senate.

Now, when there are vacancies to be filled in the Senate, anyone can apply to become a Senator by filling out a detailed application online. A new independent advisory board then reviews the public's applications and recommends who should be selected for the Senate. New Senators sit as Independents, rather than members of a political party.

How familiar are you, if at all, with this new Senate appointment process?

Have not heard of it until just now

Have heard of it, but don't really know anything about it

Know a bit about it

Know quite a lot about it

Q2. Based on whatever you may have seen or heard about this new process for selecting Senators, would you say it is better or worse than the old process, in which the Prime Minister and his office appointed their own choices to the Senate?

Better than the old process

About the same

Worse than the old process

Q3. And, which of the following, if any, do you think **will improve over the long term** as a result of having this new process for selecting Senators?

The quality of Senators

Diversity/representativeness of the Senate

The independence of Senators

[ANCHORED]The overall functioning of the Senate

[ANCHORED][EXCLUSIVE] None of these will improve

Expelling Senators

Changing topics slightly ...

Q4. [T] There are three broad choices in terms of the future of the Canadian Senate. Overall, which of the following would you say would be the best outcome? Would you say the Senate should be:

Abolished

Reformed
Left as is

Q5. As you may be aware, Senators are appointed on a permanent basis, until they reach the mandatory retirement age of 75.

The constitution outlines only five reasons for which a Senator can be permanently expelled from the Senate, which are: an absence for more than two consecutive sessions; allegiance to a foreign power; bankruptcy; treason or conviction of a felony; or if the Senator no longer meets the Senate's property-ownership requirement.

Overall, what are your views on this? Would you say:

[ROTATE]

There should be other reasons Senators can get fired

This current list of reasons is about right

[ANCHORED] Don't know/Can't say

Q6. More specifically, which of the following situations, if any, do you think should be cause for permanently expelling a Senator from the Senate?

[CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY – KEEP THIS ORDER]

Making public statements that some would find offensive

Being involved in a highly-publicized scandal involving money or morality, but not convicted of a crime

Being convicted of a crime not already on the list of reasons Senators can be fired (i.e. NOT treason or a felony, but a less serious crime such as shoplifting or simple assault)

[EXCLUSIVE] None of these should cause a Senator to be fired

[ASK ALL]

Q7. [T] One of the difficulties of reforming or abolishing the Senate is that it requires changing the Canadian constitution, which requires the approval of a least seven provinces representing 50 per cent of the population. With this in mind, which is closest to your point of view?

Senate reform/abolition is important enough that we should try to change the constitution

Senate reform/abolition is not enough of a priority that we should try to change the constitution