

## Most Canadians approve of nomination of Julie Payette to be Governor General

*Payette's nomination is most popular in her native Quebec, and among past Liberal Party voters*

**August 25, 2017** – Canada's next Governor General boasts an impressive background: An astronaut, she was the first Canadian woman to board the International Space Station. She speaks six languages, and has been awarded the Order of Canada and the National Order of Quebec.

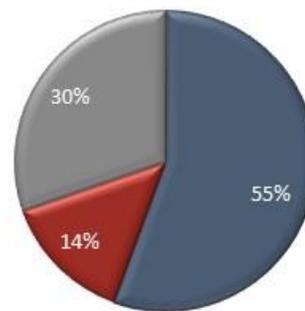
Since Prime Minister Justin Trudeau nominated Julie Payette to be the official representative of Canada's head of state – Queen Elizabeth II – in Canada, media reports have also shown her to have a somewhat troubled past: She was found innocent of any fault after striking and killing a pedestrian with her SUV in 2011. That same year, she was charged with assault in Maryland, but the charge was later dropped and expunged from her record.

Against this backdrop, a new public opinion poll from the Angus Reid Institute finds a small majority of Canadians (55%) approve of Payette's nomination to the viceregal post. Fewer than one-in-six (14%) disapprove, while 30 per cent are unsure.

### Key Findings:

- Canadians are almost four times as likely to strongly approve of Payette's nomination (26% do) as they are to strongly disapprove of it (7%)
- Approval of Payette's nomination is highest among residents of her home province of Quebec (68%), as well as among those who voted for Trudeau's Liberal Party in the 2015 election (72%)
- Disapproval of Trudeau's choice of Payette for the Governor General position, meanwhile, is highest in Alberta (20%) and among past Conservative Party voters (25%)

Based on whatever you may have seen or heard about Julie Payette, would you say you approve or disapprove of her nomination to be Governor General?



■ Approve ■ Disapprove ■ Don't know/Can't say

### METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from August 23 – 24, 2017, among a representative randomized sample of 1,510 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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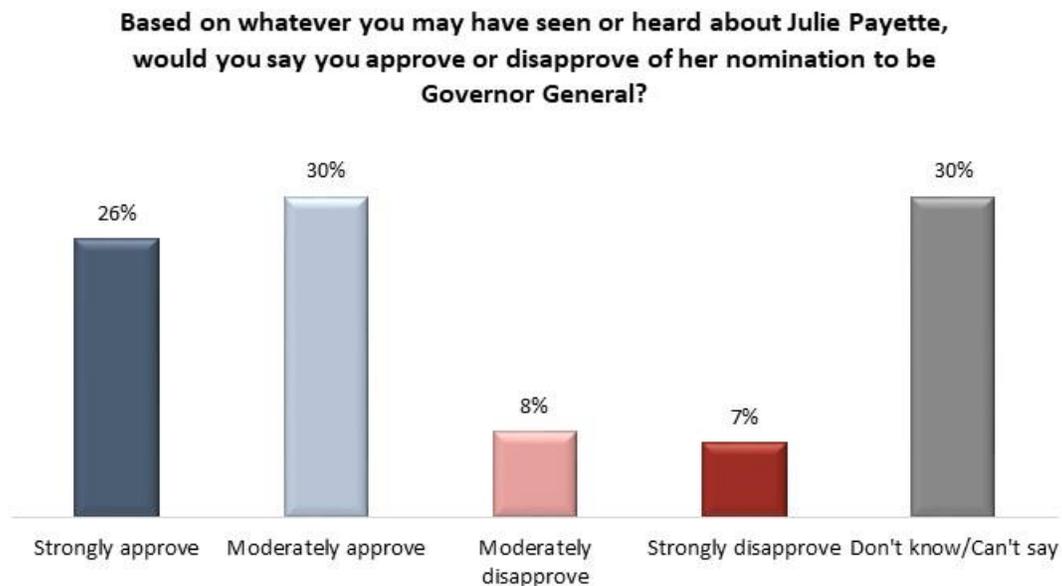
## Approval by region

When Prime Minister Trudeau announced Canada's incoming Governor General, he called her "unquestionably qualified". Julie Payette studied at McGill and the University of Toronto, completing a master's degree in applied science before being hired by IBM as a systems engineer in the late 1980s. In addition to her time as an astronaut, she has served on several executive boards in the non-profit sector, and is a qualified military jet pilot.

Since her nomination, Payette has come under increased media scrutiny, with stories about the 2011 collision and assault charge coming to light in the weeks after Trudeau announced her selection in July. More information about her past may soon be forthcoming.

Lawyers for the soon-to-be Governor General recently [withdrew her request](#) to keep her divorce records sealed. Payette had been petitioning to keep them out of the public record, in the hope that her family would not be forced to "revisit the difficult moments" they had been through during the divorce proceedings.

Though her name has been in the news frequently over the last two months, relatively few Canadians express a strong opinion about her appointment. As seen in the graph that follows, uncertainty and moderate approval are the most common responses to her nomination:



Approval of Payette's nomination is strongest in her native Quebec, where two-thirds (68%) approve overall, and those who strongly approve (37%) outnumber those who moderately approve (31%). Quebec is the only province where this is the case.

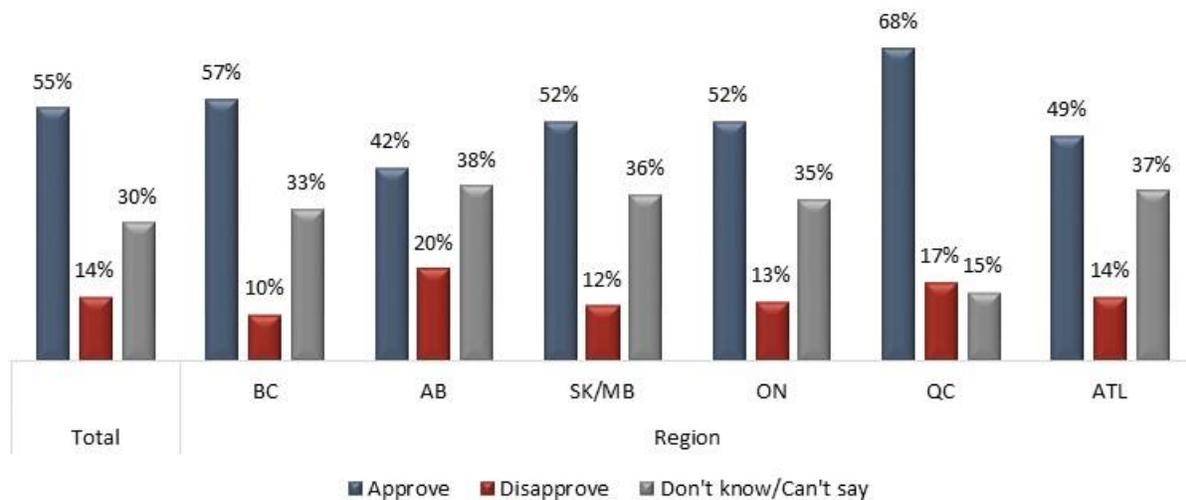
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In most other regions, approval of Payette's nomination hovers closer to 50 per cent, with Albertans notably less enthusiastic:

**Based on whatever you may have seen or heard about Julie Payette, would you say you approve or disapprove of her nomination to be Governor General?**



**Men and older Canadians more likely to approve**

When Payette is installed as Governor General in October, she will become just the fourth woman ever to hold the position.

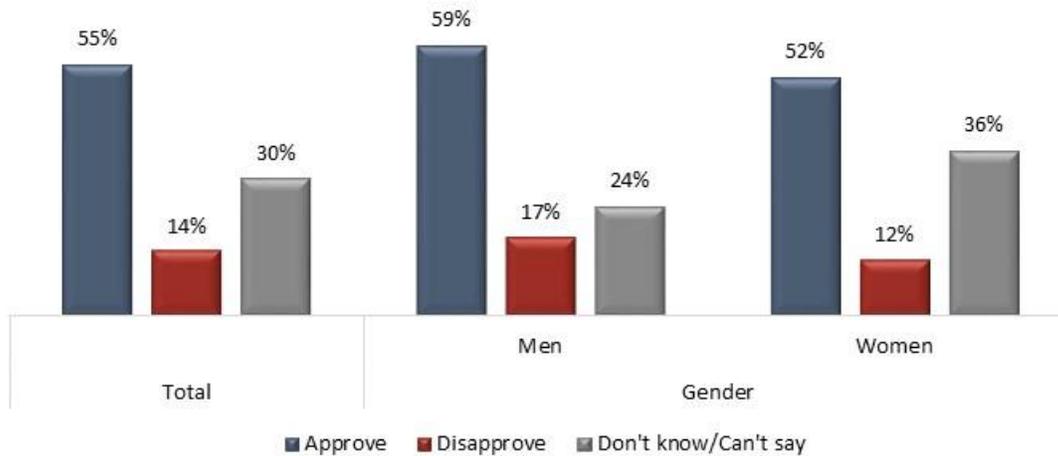
That said, women are more likely than men to express uncertainty about Payette's nomination. This follows a pattern often seen in public opinion: On many subjects, men tend to be more inclined to offer an opinion, either positive or negative, while women are inclined to choose a neutral option. In this case, almost six-in-ten men approve of Payette's nomination, and more than one-in-six disapprove – a larger total than women offering both responses:

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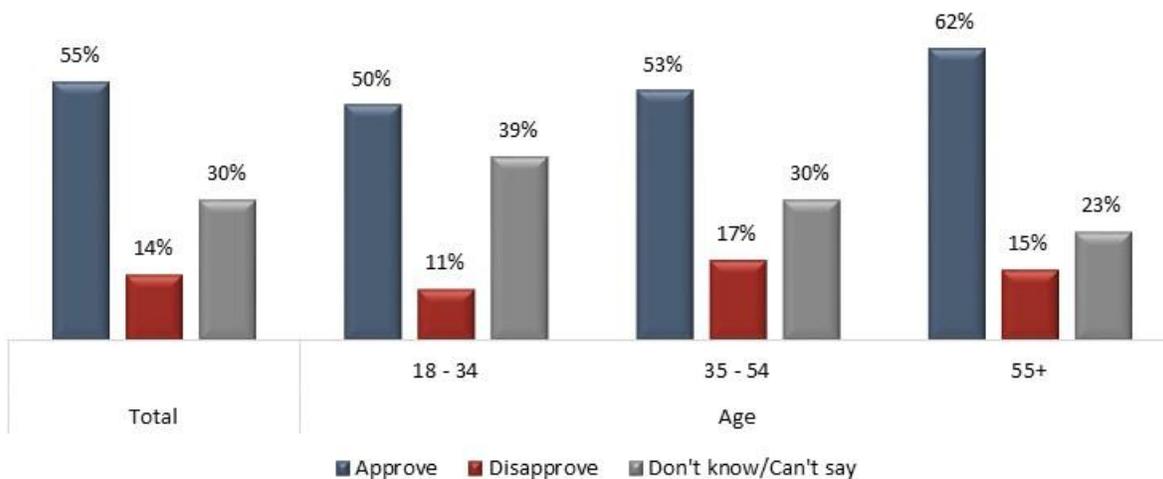
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Younger Canadians (those ages 18 – 34) are also likely to express ambivalence. Nearly four-in-ten (39%) do. Approval is higher – and uncertainty lower – among those ages 55 and older, as seen in the following graph:

**Based on whatever you may have seen or heard about Julie Payette, would you say you approve or disapprove of her nomination to be Governor General?**



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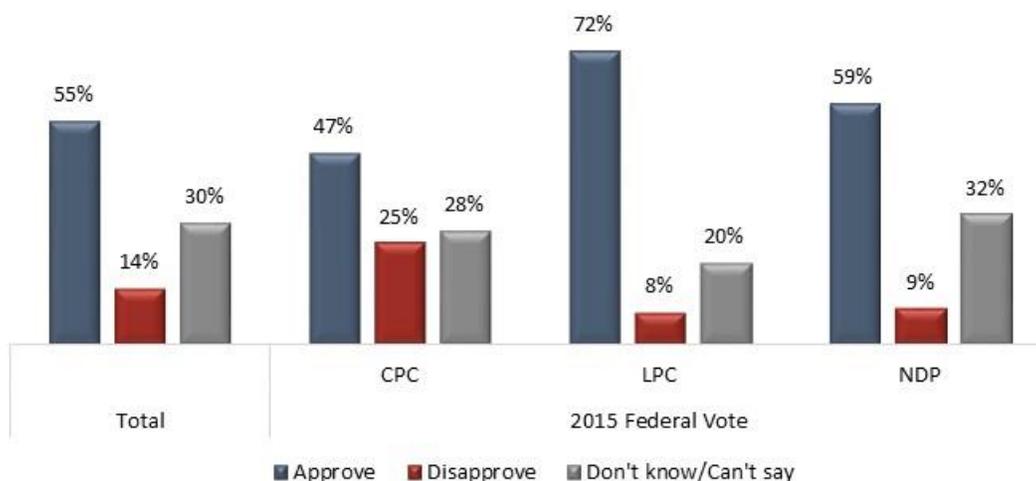
## Partisan differences among the most significant

Though the Governor General is appointed at the recommendation of the Prime Minister, the position is generally viewed as an apolitical one, with the holder of the office expected to refrain from weighing in on the debates of the day.

On one level, this is reflected in the opinions of political partisans on the next holder of the position. Those who voted for each of the three main federal parties on the 2015 election are more likely to approve than to disapprove of Payette's nomination.

That said, those who cast ballots for the Conservative Party of Canada are roughly three times as likely as supporters of the Liberal and New Democratic parties to disapprove, as seen in the graph that follows:

**Based on whatever you may have seen or heard about Julie Payette, would you say you approve or disapprove of her nomination to be Governor General?**



## Should Canada even have a Governor General?

Past Angus Reid Institute [polling has found](#) Canadians divided about the country's future as a constitutional monarchy with the British monarch as the head of state.

While individual members of the royal family – especially Elizabeth II and her grandson William – remain quite popular with the Canadian public, fewer than half of all Canadians (42%) say the country should remain a monarchy “for generations to come.” Almost as many (38%) would prefer Canada to cut its ties to the monarchy, though this wouldn't necessarily entail the abolition of the position of Governor General.

Asked who should be Canada's head of state if the country were to cease recognizing the British monarch, three-in-ten respondents (30%) said they would like to continue having an appointed Governor

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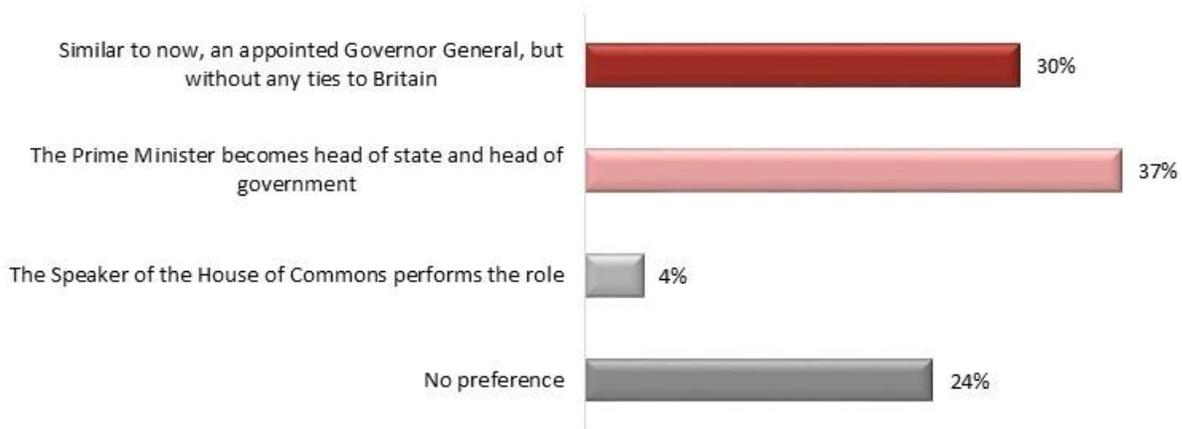
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General, though without any ties to the United Kingdom. This option was only slightly less popular than having the office of the Prime Minister become both head of government and head of state:

**Suppose Canada did not remain a monarchy. Which of these options would you prefer to see replace the monarchy? (Data from April 2016)**



*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

**For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).**

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