

As election talk heats up, one-quarter of Canadians cool to voting in person during pandemic

Centre-left voters are more hesitant than Conservatives to head to a polling place this fall

September 10, 2020 – As speculation about the content of a throne speech fuels talk about a fall election, a new study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds a full one-quarter of Canadians (27%) say they would not be comfortable voting during the pandemic in the way they normally would – in person at a local polling station.

Notwithstanding a mail-in ballot option – or assurances from Elections Canada that polling stations would be subject to the same social distancing and cleaning protocols that are the new normal in other public places – in a situation where uncomfortable voters stay home, the Conservative Party may be most likely to benefit.

Just 12 per cent of past CPC voters express discomfort with voting in person, while 35 per cent of past Liberals and 37 per cent of past New Democrats say the same.

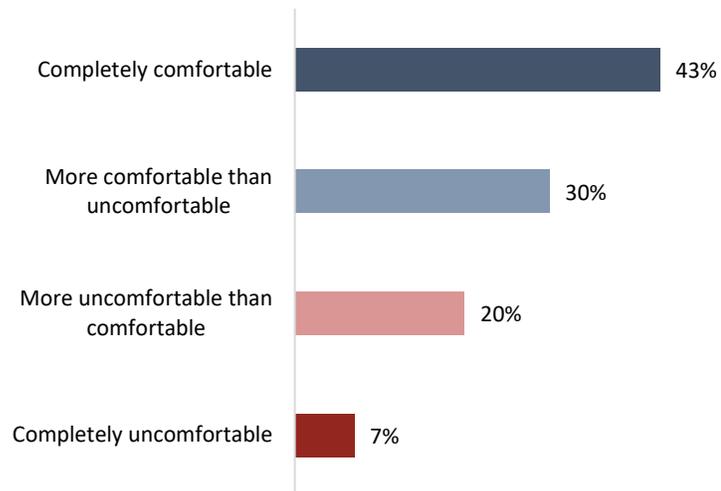
About ARI

*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.

Bloc Québécois leader Yves-François Blanchet threatened to force an election [in August](#) via a vote of non-confidence. He will get his chance on September 23 after the government presents its new long-term priorities for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. New Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole has, thus far, stated that his party is ready to run a campaign if necessary, but is not focused on an election right now. The other major player and primary collaborator with the governing Liberals is Jagmeet Singh's

Suppose some political event triggers a federal election this fall. Given COVID-19, how comfortable would you be going to a polling place to cast your ballot as you normally would? (All respondents, n=5,005)



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from August 26 – 30, 2020 among a representative randomized sample of 5,005 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 1.5 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.

CONTACT:

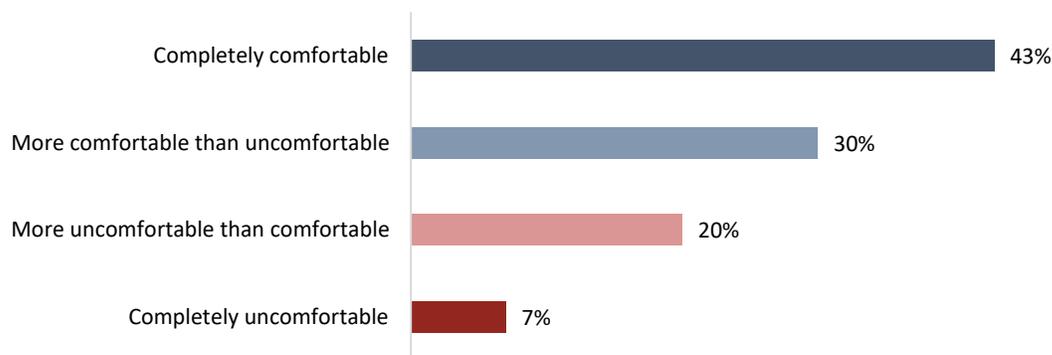
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

NDP. The Liberals passed [a confidence motion](#) earlier this year with the NDP's support after the two parties negotiated an extension of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.

Whether or not an election is called Elections Canada has apparently been [preparing](#) plans for socially distanced polling places and a potential two-day voting weekend – just in case.

This will likely come as comforting to many Canadians, as just two-in-five (43%) say they are completely comfortable voting in person for an election this fall:

**Suppose some political event triggers a federal election this fall. Given COVID-19, how comfortable would you be going to a polling place to cast your ballot as you normally would?
(All respondents, n=5,005)**

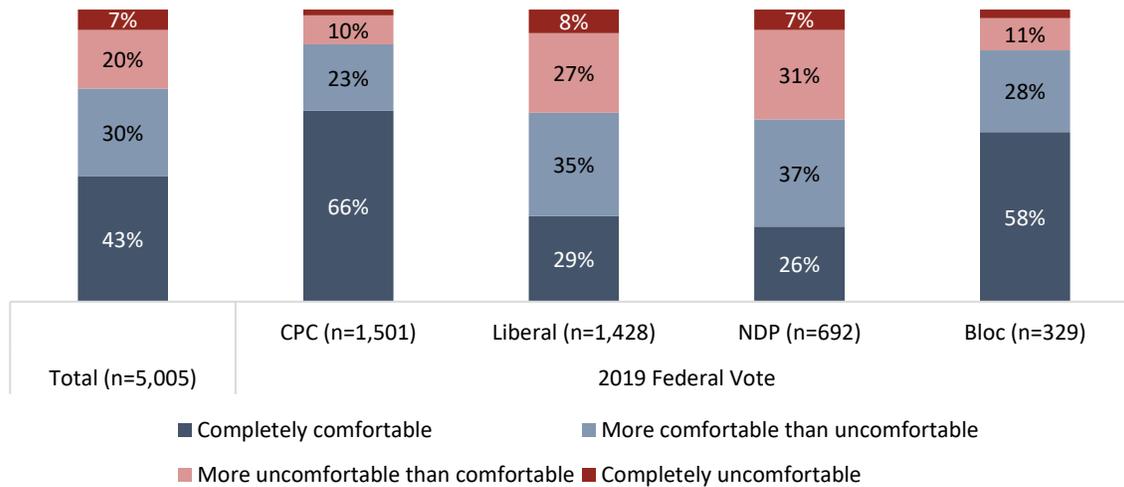


Expanded voting would likely assuage some concerns for those who are uncomfortable about voting in person during the pandemic. Others have suggested that increased [mail-in voting](#) could play a role as well. Those who supported the Conservative Party in last October's federal election are much more likely to be comfortable voting this fall under the current conditions, followed by past Bloc voters in Quebec:

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Suppose some political event triggers a federal election this fall. Given COVID-19, how comfortable would you be going to a polling place to cast your ballot as you normally would?



There are also notable age and gender gaps in sentiment surrounding this issue. Men are far more likely than women to be “completely comfortable” voting in person in a hypothetical election. This holds across each age category:

Suppose some political event triggers a federal election this fall. Given COVID-19, how comfortable would you be going to a polling place to cast your ballot as you normally would?							
	Total (n=5,005)	Age and Gender					
		Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=663)	35-54 (n=826)	55+ (n=893)	18-34 (n=736)	35-54 (n=899)	55+ (n=967)
Completely comfortable	43%	44%	56%	55%	28%	37%	37%
More comfortable than uncomfortable	30%	34%	23%	29%	32%	30%	35%
More uncomfortable than comfortable	20%	17%	16%	14%	30%	23%	20%
Completely uncomfortable	7%	6%	5%	2%	10%	10%	8%

Regionally, Canada’s most populous province is also among the most uncomfortable with the idea of voting in person. In Ontario, just 38 per cent of residents are completely comfortable, while three-in-ten are more uncomfortable than comfortable. Ontario is second only to B.C. where one-in-three are hesitant:

Suppose some political event triggers a federal election this fall. Given COVID-19, how comfortable would you be going to a polling place to cast your ballot as you normally would?

	Total (n=5,005)	Region						
		BC (n=628)	AB (n=599)	SK (n=500)	MB (n=485)	ON (n=1,026)	QC (n=868)	ATL (n=899)
Completely comfortable	43%	35%	55%	51%	39%	38%	51%	38%
More comfortable than uncomfortable	30%	32%	25%	26%	33%	32%	28%	35%
More uncomfortable than comfortable	20%	25%	16%	18%	21%	22%	16%	20%
Completely uncomfortable	7%	8%	5%	5%	7%	8%	6%	6%

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

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org