

## Deal or No Deal? Most Canadians support union demands for wage premiums, but more divided over higher pay

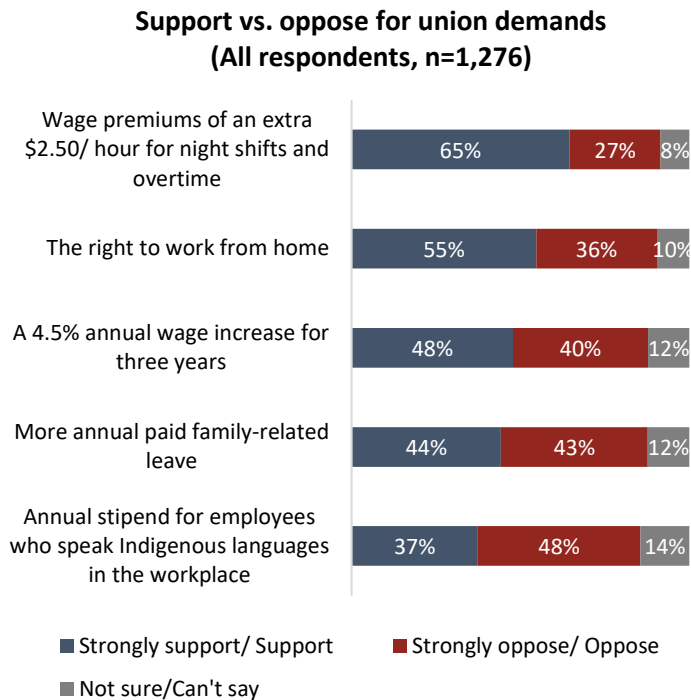
*Past CPC voters oppose most demands, among past Liberal, NDP voters, considerable support*

**April 21, 2023** – As the [largest public service strike in Canadian history](#) enters its first weekend, new data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds a majority of Canadians inclined to back more than 155,000 federal public service workers in their asks for wage premiums and the right to work from home, but circumspect over wage increase demands.

Members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada walked off the job midnight Wednesday seeking a number of wage and benefit enhancements to their contract with the federal government.

Two major demands are supported by a majority of Canadians. Two-thirds say they support wage premiums for night shifts and overtime hours (65%) while one-quarter oppose the government conceding on this (27%). More than half (55%) support the right to work from home for federal employees, while one-in-three (36%) oppose it.

Other proposals receive lower levels of support, including a 4.5% annual wage increase for three years (48% support), more annual paid family leave (44%), and a discussed stipend for employee who speak an Indigenous language (37%).



### **METHODOLOGY:**

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from April 20-21, 2023 among a representative randomized sample of 1,276 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 +/- 3 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.

While many demographic differences drive views on this issue, the most pronounced is political affiliation. Those who supported the Conservative Party in 2021 are overwhelmingly opposed to four of the five demands, though a slim majority (52%) support union calls for wage premiums. Meantime, support from past Liberal and NDP voters is far more evident, with a majority of each supporting all five items.

### **More Key Findings:**

- Overall support for union demands is highest in Quebec and Atlantic Canada, and lowest in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Seven-in-ten (68%) in Quebec support the demand for the right to work from home while close to half as many (36%) in Saskatchewan say the same.

### **CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)  
Jon Roe, Research Associate: 825.437.1147 [jon.roe@angusreid.org](mailto:jon.roe@angusreid.org)

- Men over the age of 55 offer the lowest levels of support for each of the five negotiating issues presented in this survey. Men younger than 35 and women between the ages of 18 and 54 are most supportive.

### **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.*

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### **Bargaining Table: Canadians supportive of some union demands, less sure of others**

The decision to take strike action followed [nearly two years of negotiations](#) between the federal government and the Public Service Alliance of Canada, which represents the bulk of the striking workers.

The striking workers include employees at the Canada Revenue Agency, Veteran Affairs Canada, Service Canada, and the Canada Border Services Agency. The union and the government continue to negotiate, with raises being a major point of dispute.

PSAC has asked for a 4.5 per cent annual salary increase for three years, dating back to the beginning of negotiations in 2021. The [government's most recent offer](#) is a 1.5 per cent increase in 2021, 4.5 per cent in 2022 and three per cent in 2023. The union has also asked for wage premiums for night shifts and overtime, more annual paid leave, an annual stipend for employees who speak Indigenous languages in the workplace and the right to work from home. The final demand likely represents another sticking point, as the government has asked employees to return to the office at least two or three days a week last month, [resulting in demonstrations prior to the recent strike](#).

### **Conservatives push back on demands, majority of Liberal and NDP supporters on board**

Some of the union demands find more support from Canadians than others. Two-thirds (65%) of Canadians support the wage premiums for night shifts and overtime while more than half (55%) support government workers having the right to work from home.

Notably, [half \(51%\) of employed Canadians themselves](#) prefer working from home most of the time.

**Related: [Employee Advantage: With job market remaining tight, many workers continue to resist a return to the office](#)**

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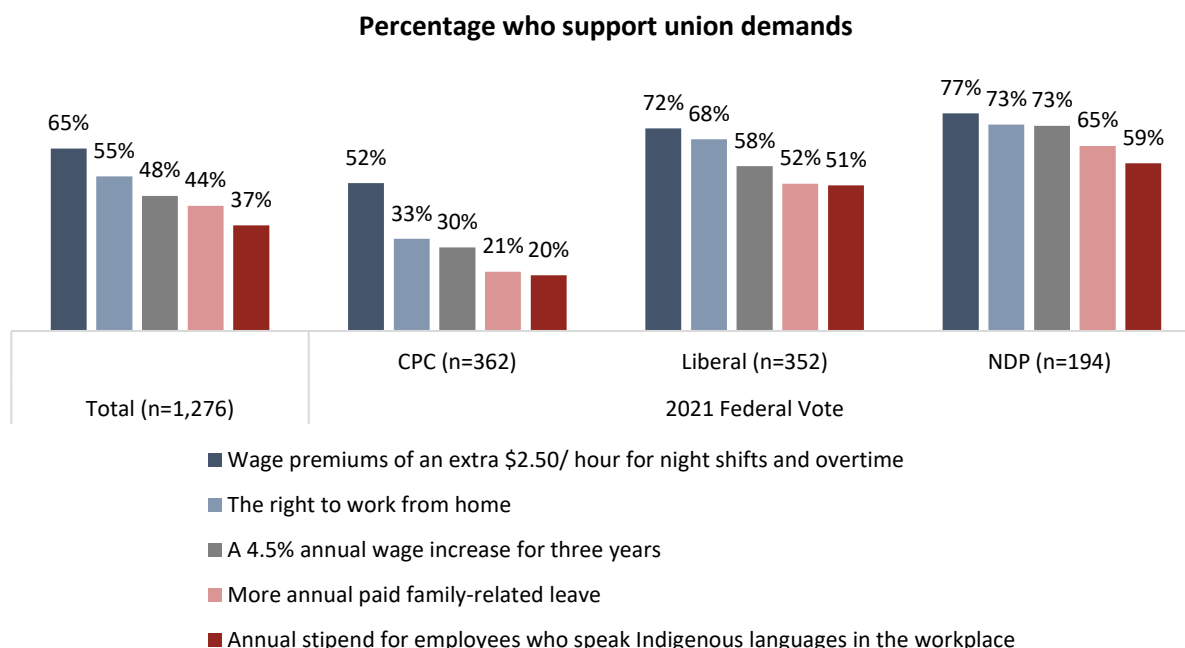
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Less support is evident among Canadians for the annual wage increase demanded by the union, though more say they support (48%) than oppose (40%) it. Canadians are split on whether they are in favour of increasing paid leave for federal government workers (44% support, 43% oppose). And they are more likely to oppose (48%) an annual stipend for employees who speak Indigenous languages in the workplace than support it (37%).

The level of support varies significantly among past voters of the three largest federal political parties, with a clear delineation between those who voted Conservative in 2021 and those who voted Liberal and NDP. For past CPC voters, a majority support the wage premiums for night shifts and overtime, while a majority of at least three-in-five oppose all other demands.

Support for the union's demands is much higher among past NDP and Liberal voters, though New Democrats take this position most strongly:



### Region, age, gender, education

Regional agreement is noted on night shift/overtime wage premiums. At least three-in-five in every region in the country support those top-ups.

There is less agreement on the other demands. Seven-in-ten (68%) in Quebec support PSAC workers demand for the right to work from home while only one-third (36%) in Saskatchewan say the same.

Three-in-five (60%) in Atlantic Canada and more than half (55%) in B.C. are on board with PSAC workers gaining a 4.5 per cent raise. Elsewhere, support for that request does not reach a majority level:

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Percentage who support union demands								
	Total (n=1,276)	Region						
		BC (n=178)	AB (n=137)	SK (n=100)	MB (n=103)	ON (n=366)	QC (n=261)	ATL (n=131)
Wage premiums of an extra \$2.50/ hour for night shifts and overtime	65%	62%	61%	64%	60%	66%	66%	65%
The right to work from home	55%	52%	47%	36%	55%	50%	68%	58%
A 4.5% annual wage increase for three years	48%	55%	43%	42%	40%	44%	49%	60%
More annual paid family-related leave	44%	43%	40%	33%	46%	43%	50%	44%
Annual stipend for employees who speak Indigenous languages in the workplace	37%	33%	31%	23%	39%	40%	41%	37%

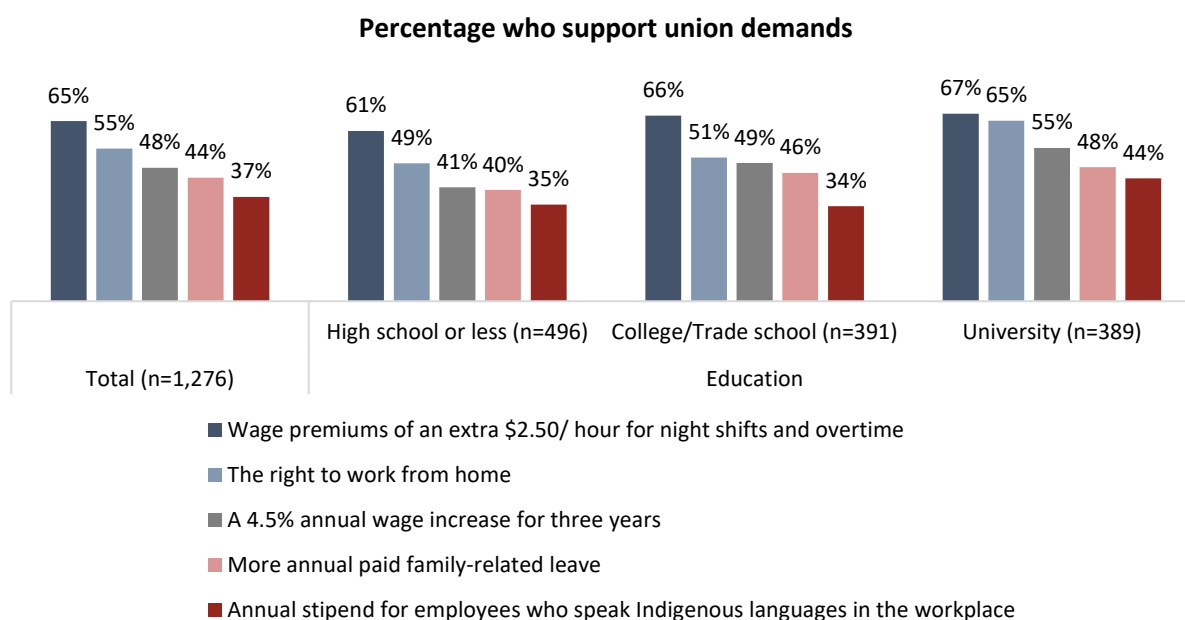
Women are more supportive of the various demands than men, with support from women aged 18- to 34-years-old highest across the board. Men older than 54 are the least supportive of the various requests on the bargaining table:

Percentage who support union demands							
	Total (n=1,276)	Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=172)	35-54 (n=201)	55+ (n=247)	18-34 (n=168)	35-54 (n=209)	55+ (n=277)
Wage premiums of an extra \$2.50/ hour for night shifts and overtime	65%	65%	65%	55%	78%	65%	64%
The right to work from home	55%	60%	48%	41%	73%	60%	54%
A 4.5% annual wage increase for three years	48%	48%	47%	38%	59%	54%	46%
More annual paid family-related leave	44%	54%	48%	27%	62%	48%	37%
Annual stipend for employees who speak Indigenous languages in the workplace	37%	37%	34%	32%	48%	40%	35%

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Canadians with no post-secondary education offer less support for the union's contract demands than Canadians who attended college or university.



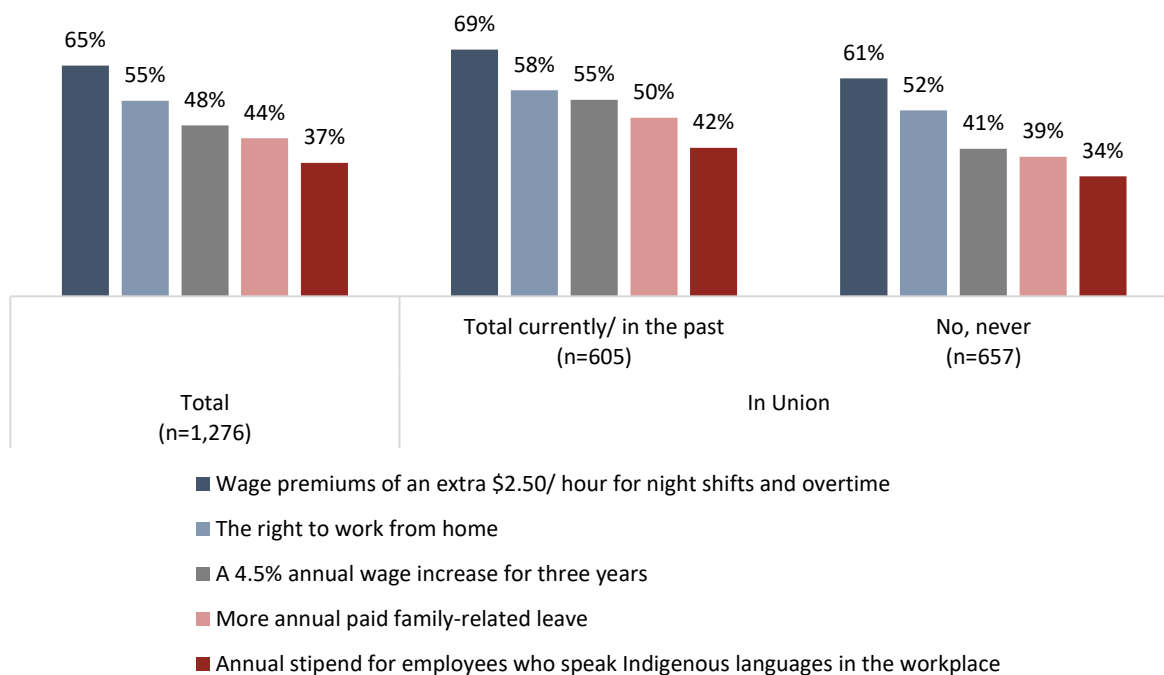
### **Union members more supportive, but divided over some demands**

While Canadians who are currently or were previously a union members offer more support for the union's contract demands than those who have never been in a union, some demands have less support from union members than others. For example, the annual stipend for employees who speak an Indigenous language in the workplace more opposed (45%) than supported (42%) among union members. Otherwise, support among current or former union members varies from seven-in-ten (69%) for wage premiums for night shifts and overtime to half (50%) for more annual paid leave:

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**Support vs. oppose for union demands  
(All respondents, n=1,276)**



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

*For detailed results by union membership, [click here](#).*

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