

From 'eh' to 'meh'? Pride and attachment to country in Canada both endure significant declines

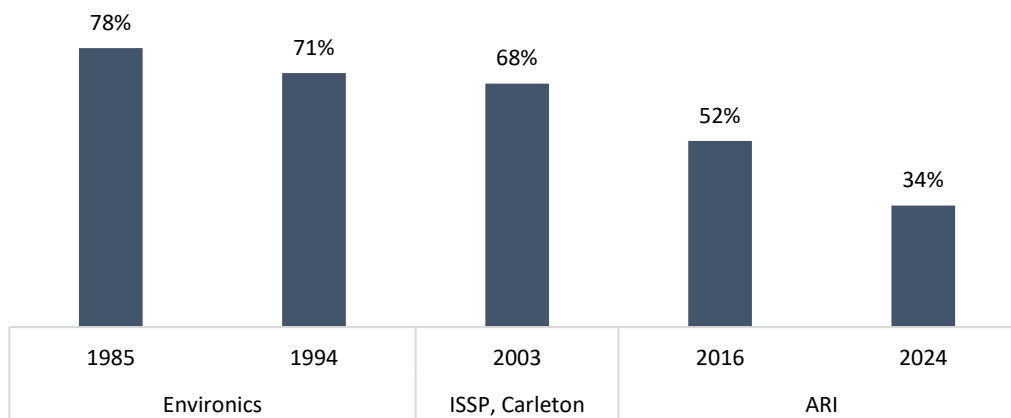
Percentage saying they're 'very proud' to be Canadian has dropped from 78% to 34% since 1985

December 13, 2024 – The years since the onset of COVID-19 have been a well-documented period of division and discord in this country, with Canadians expressing concerns about the [lack of a "middle" option politically](#), an [unwillingness from governments](#) to work together for the people, [weakening compassion and growing space](#) between Canadians.

New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute find two broad trends underscoring these changes and signalling a challenge for national unity. In 2016, 62 per cent of Canadians said they had a deep emotional attachment to Canada. In 1991 that mark was three points higher (65%). Now in 2024 it is 13 points lower at 49 per cent.

Even more dramatic is a drop in a sense of pride among Canadians. In 1985, 78 per cent said they were "very proud" to be Canadian. This dropped to 52 per cent in 2016 and now by another 18 points to 34 per cent. The proportion who say they are either proud or very proud of their nationality has dropped precipitously from 79 per cent to 58 per cent over the past eight years.

Percentage of Canadians "very proud" to be Canadian:



More Key Findings:

- Declines in both "deep attachment" and pride in Canada are consistent across regional lines. Quebec is least likely to have downward movement on attachment (-7) but this is largely due to its starting point, already lowest in the country (37%). The number of Albertans saying they have a deep emotional attachment has dropped 20 points from 67 to 47 per cent since 2016.
- Women and men over the age of 54 are most likely to be proud of their nationality (71% and 68% respectively), while fewer than half of men under 35 (48%) and women of the same age (41%) say this.

CONTACT:

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

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

- Income level correlates with pride. Those least likely to be proud of Canada are those with incomes below \$25,000 (48% proud). Those most likely to be proud have a household income over \$200,000 (65%)
- New Canadians, those living here for less than a decade, profess an attachment to Canada that hinges more on their being provided a good quality of living. Half (51%) say this, compared to 37 per cent among the general population and 33 per cent among immigrants who have living in Canada for more than 20 years.

INDEX:

Part One: Attachment and Pride drop significantly

Part Two: Regional decline

Part Three: Generational trend

Part Four: Data exploration - Income, immigration, and politics

- **Income correlated with pride**
- **Conservatives most likely to want to break the country up or join the U.S.**
- **Newer Canadians show less pride, more transactional relationship with Canada**

Part One: Attachment and pride drop significantly

The 2020s began with a pandemic and the ripple effects of it are still being felt. Two years after the first COVID-19 lockdowns, 82 per cent of Canadians said the pandemic had “pulled people further apart”, while 61 per cent said Canadians’ level of compassion for one another had grown weaker.

Related: [COVID at Two: Vast majorities say the pandemic has pulled Canadians apart, brought out the worst in people](#)

This coincided with a growing regional angst. After years of a sense within their provinces that [they are getting a raw deal from Canada’s confederation](#), the governments in [Alberta](#) and [Saskatchewan](#) have passed “sovereignty” motions in recent years to assert their provincial jurisdiction while stopping what their governments believe is federal government overreach.

Related: [Confederal Fairness: As premiers meet, which provinces say they get more, or less, out of federation?](#)

Meanwhile, the runaway inflation among other economic issues of the post-pandemic era has seen Canadians’ standard of living decline. Per capita GDP has declined since 2019 and the rate of decline is the worst this country has seen [since 1985](#).

Canada’s public health-care system had long been [a source of pride](#) for the country, but has been beset by mounting problems in the post-pandemic era, from staffing shortages, to long wait-times for surgeries, to emergency room closures, to deficit of family doctors.

Related: [After a ‘decade of decline’ in health care, Canadians not convinced that money is enough to solve the crisis](#)

CONTACT:

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

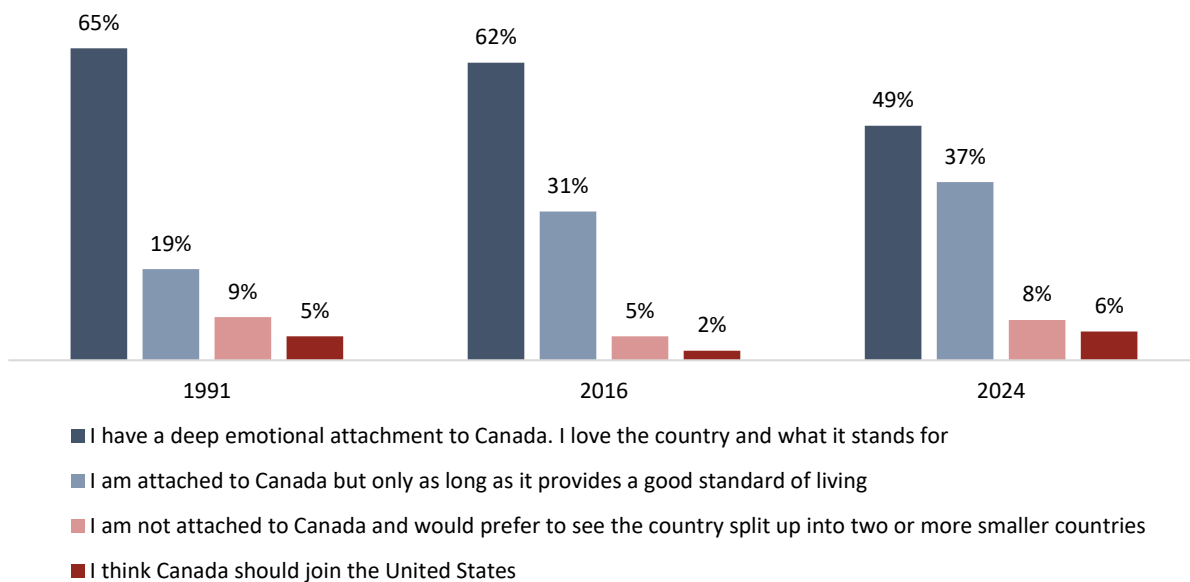
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

As all these factors swirl in the background, Canadians are less attached to their country than they were 30 years ago. In 1991, 65 per cent said they had “a deep emotional attachment” to Canada, while one-in-five (19%) said they were attached to Canada “but only as long as it provides a good standard of living”. The latter figure has nearly doubled, to 37 per cent, while the former has declined by 16 points.

Even as recently as eight years ago, when the Angus Reid Institute released [a wide-ranging study of Canadian values, beliefs and identity](#), three-in-five (62%) Canadians reported “deep” attachment to their country suggesting a good portion of this attachment has eroded in the eight years since that study took place.

Related: [What makes us Canadian? A study of values, beliefs, priorities and identity](#)

Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about Canada?



There has also been a steep decline in overall pride Canadians take in identifying as Canadian. Dating back to 1985, there have been several studies that have asked this question. In 1985, four-in-five (78%) said they were “very proud”. This has more than halved in four decades since, with the steepest decline noted in the previous eight years, from 52 per cent who identified as “very proud” in 2016 to 34 per cent now.

Note that the questions asked in 1985, 1994 and 2003 offered four possible answers – very, somewhat, not very and not all proud – while ARI’s last two studies offered five ([see the questionnaire](#)).

CONTACT:

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

Percentage of Canadians 'very proud' to be Canadian:



Enviro-nics and ISSP data sourced from [ODESI](#)

Part Two: Regional decline

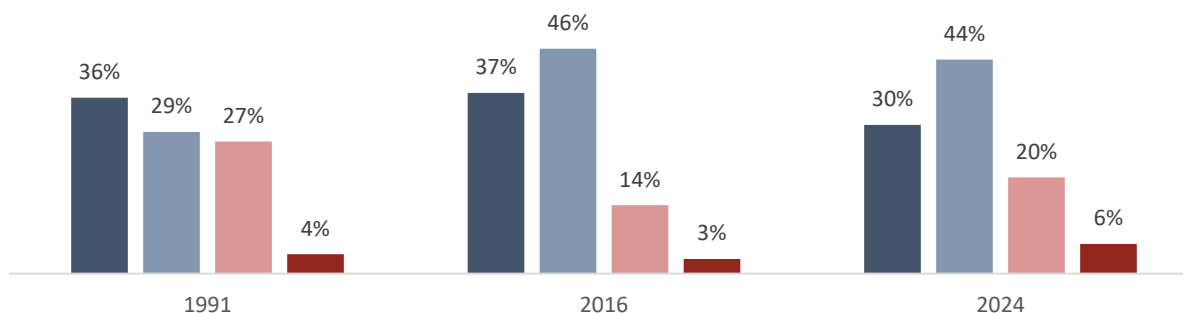
While Alberta and Saskatchewan have been vocal about asserting their provincial sovereignty in recent years, historically the concern over whether Canada can stay together has been balanced on Quebec. There have been two referendums in Quebec as to whether the province should separate – 1980 and 1995 – the latter of which was only narrowly voted down by one percentage point. Despite the narrow defeat 30 years ago, the Quebec sovereignty movement went into a [more or less dormant](#) state since. However, the Parti Québécois, who have not governed since 2014, are experiencing a resurgence in vote intention and are [promising a referendum if elected](#).

Still, Quebecers are less likely to say they have a deep attachment to Canada (30%) than Canadians overall (49%). Instead, 44 per cent say their connection is predicated on the country providing a good standard of living. Notably, the percentage of Quebecers who say they prefer Canada should be split up into smaller countries is lower (20%) than it was in 1991 (27%):

CONTACT:

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

**Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about Canada?
(QC only)**



- I have a deep emotional attachment to Canada. I love the country and what it stands for
- I am attached to Canada but only as long as it provides a good standard of living
- I am not attached to Canada and would prefer to see the country split up into two or more smaller countries
- I think Canada should join the United States

In 2016, at least two-thirds in every province outside of Quebec said they had a “deep” connection to Canada. This sentiment has declined by double digits in all provinces except Quebec, led by 20 percentage point drops in Alberta (67% in 2016 to 47% now):

Percentage saying they have a “deep emotional attachment” to Canada:								
	Total	Region						
		BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	ATL
2016	62%	70%	67%	67%	75%	71%	37%	75%
2024	49%	53%	47%	50%	57%	57%	30%	59%
Change	-13	-17	-20	-17	-18	-14	-7	-16

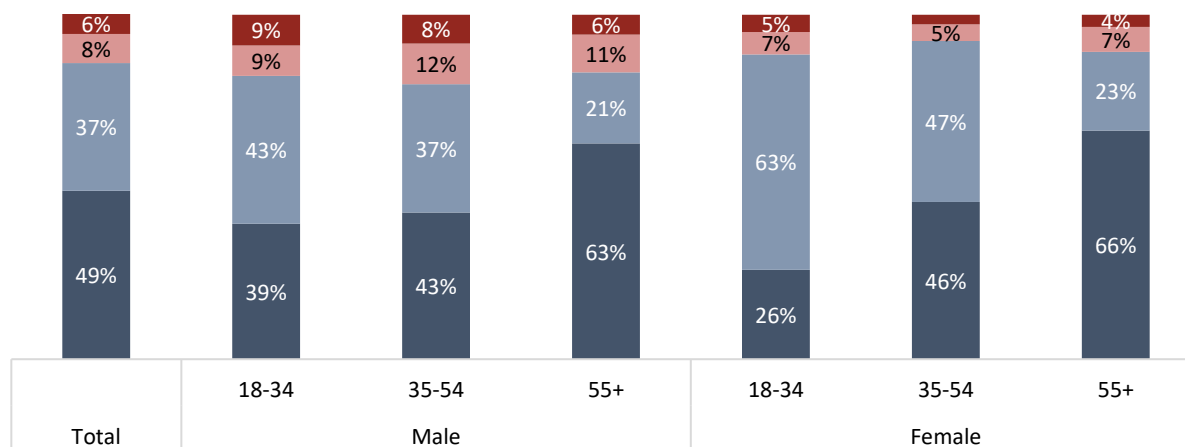
This is paralleled by an even greater drop in every province in the proportion of people who say they are proud to be Canadian. The largest decline in this sentiment is seen in the prairies (Saskatchewan -28 percentage points, Alberta -25 and Manitoba -24). A pride that was expressed by at least four-in-five in every province in 2016 is now reported by at most two-thirds in any part of the country:

Percentage saying they are 'very proud' or 'proud' to be Canadian								
	Total	Region						
		BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	ATL
2016	79%	81%	83%	87%	90%	85%	63%	85%
2024	58%	62%	58%	59%	66%	62%	45%	66%
Change	-21	-19	-25	-28	-24	-23	-18	-19

Part Three: Generational trend

Younger generations evidently have less of an attachment to Canada than their elders. Men over the age of 54 and women of the same group are most likely to say they have a deep attachment to Canada; in each case this number exceeds three-in-five. Among young people, and particularly among young women, the relationship with Canada is far more transactional. Just one-quarter of women 18-to-34-years of age say have a deep attachment, while 63 per cent say they are attached to Canada as long as it provides a good standard of living:

Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about Canada?



- I think Canada should join the United States
- I am not attached to Canada and would prefer to see the country split up into two or more smaller countries
- I am attached to Canada but only as long as it provides a good standard of living
- I have a deep emotional attachment to Canada. I love the country and what it stands for

CONTACT:

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

In all cases the number of Canadians professing deep emotional attachment to Canada is falling. This decline since 2016 is most dramatic among men 35-to-54 (-1) and women younger than 35 (-19).

Percentage of Canadians saying they have a “deep emotional attachment to Canada”							
	Total	Male			Female		
		18-34	35-54	55+	18-34	35-54	55+
2016	62%	50%	61%	69%	47%	63%	78%
2024	49%	39%	43%	63%	26%	46%	66%
Change	-13	-11	-18	-6	-19	-17	-12

The change in the proportion of Canadians now professing that they are not overly proud of being Canadian is staggering. Among those most attached to the country, the 55 plus group, a massive decline is noted here. There has been a consistent decline among men of all ages, while young women are again most likely to have changed their positive views since 2016:

Percentage of Canadians saying they are ‘very proud’ or ‘proud’ to be Canadian							
	Total	Male			Female		
		18-34	35-54	55+	18-34	35-54	55+
2016	79%	72%	77%	83%	70%	79%	88%
2024	58%	48%	53%	68%	41%	56%	71%
Change	-21	-24	-24	-25	-29	-23	-17

Part Four: Data exploration - Income, immigration, and politics

There are a number of other notable demographic data, all of which are viewable in the [detailed tables here](#).

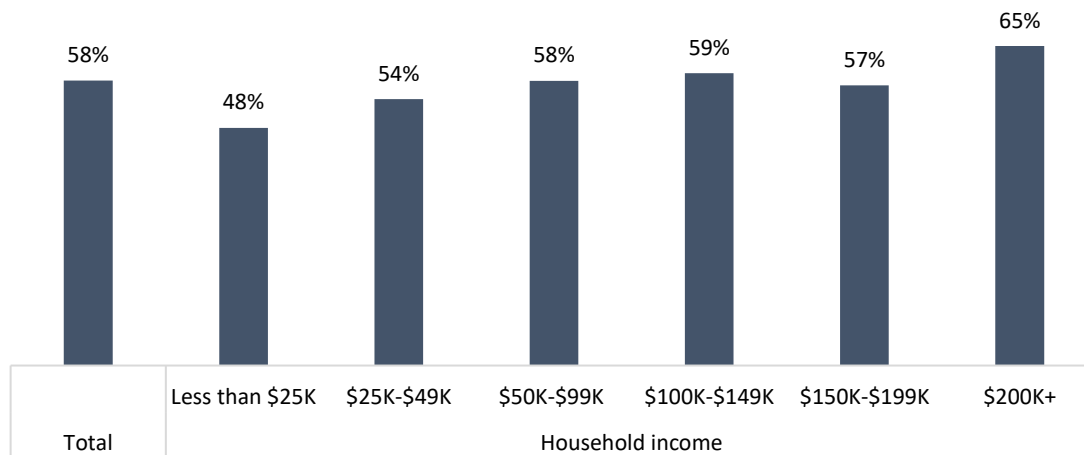
Income correlated with pride

Those least proud of Canada tend to have lower levels of household income, while those with higher incomes are most likely to have pride in their country.

CONTACT:

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

Percentage saying they're proud to be Canadian by income level



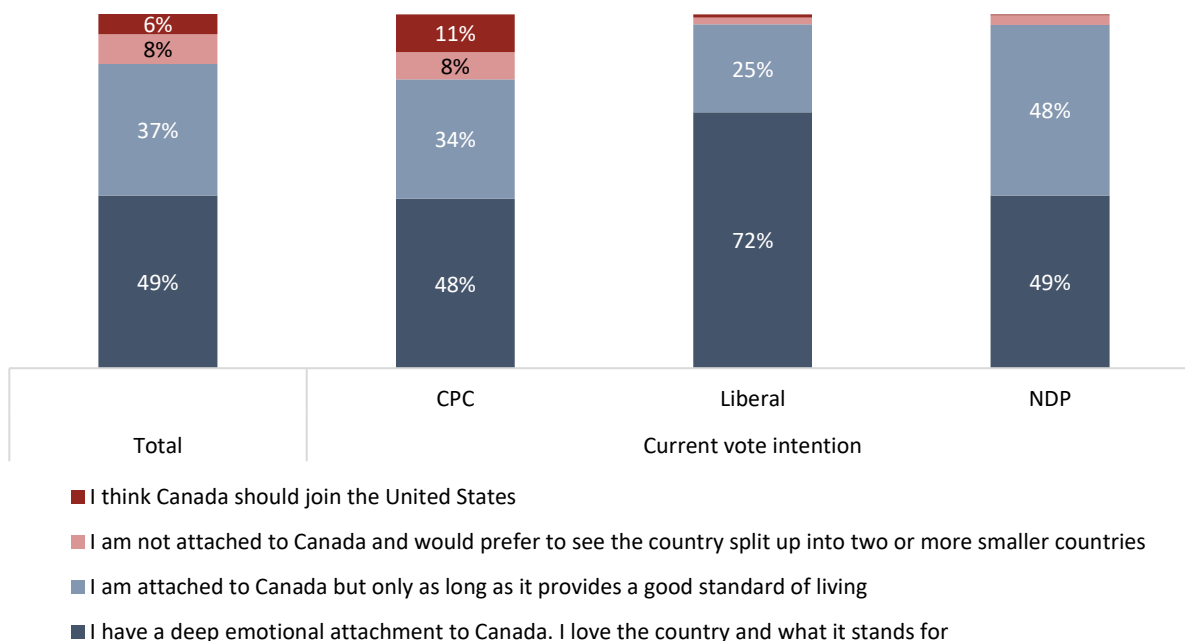
Conservatives most likely to want to break the country up or join the U.S.

Across the vote intention spectrum, those who intend to support the Conservative Party are the most likely to take two more radical positions when it comes to confederation. Eight per cent say they would rather Canada be broken up into multiple smaller countries, while 11 per cent say they would like Canada to take up Donald Trump on his offer to become the 51st American state. For comparison, support for those options among Liberal and NDP voters adds to six percentage points combined:

CONTACT:

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

Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about Canada?



Newer Canadians show less pride, more transactional relationship with Canada

Newer Canadians are not immune to this falling sense of patriotic passion. Compared to 2016, those who have been in the country for less than a decade are far less likely to voice pride in their new country. This number has dropped from 75 to 46 per cent.

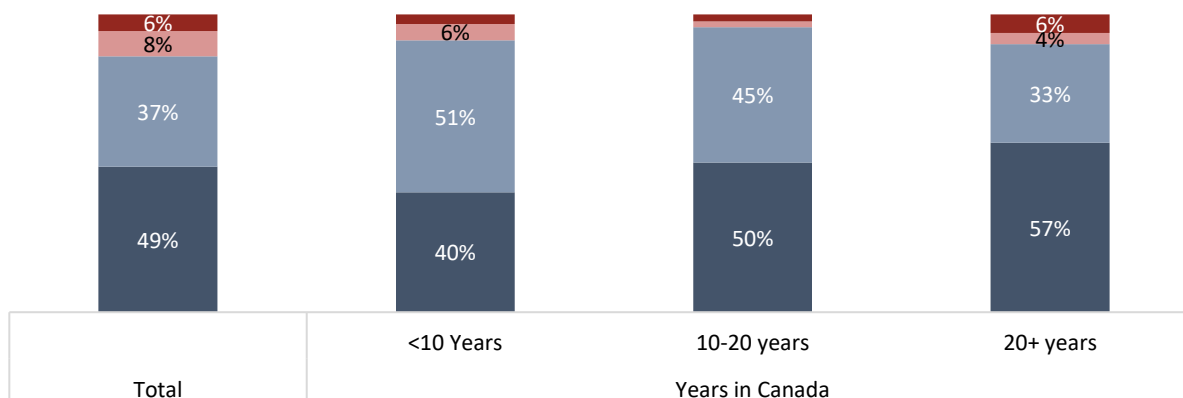
Percentage saying they are proud to be Canadian:				
	Total	Years in Canada		
		<10 Years	10-20 years	20+ years
2016	79%	75%	77%	82%
2024	58%	46%	65%	66%
Change	-21	-29	-12	-16

There is perhaps a growing sense that coming to Canada is still an opportunity, though perhaps not one that will engender deep feelings of love of country. Among those newest arrivals, half say that they have an attachment to Canada that is based on the standard of living it provides. This number is still not as high, however, as it is among young women in the general population (63%), as noted earlier. It is, however, higher than those who immigrated more than 20 years ago (33%):

CONTACT:

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

Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about Canada?



- I think Canada should join the United States
- I am not attached to Canada and would prefer to see the country split up into two or more smaller countries
- I am attached to Canada but only as long as it provides a good standard of living
- I have a deep emotional attachment to Canada. I love the country and what it stands for

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

METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from Nov. 29 to Dec. 5, 2024 among a representative randomized sample of 4,004 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For regional margin of error estimates, see the end of this report. 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.

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.

CONTACT:

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