

## **Focus Canada – Fall 2020**

### **COVID-19, public policy and government decision-making**

### **FINAL REPORT**

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*As part of its Focus Canada public opinion research program (launched in 1976), the Environics Institute explored opinions on public priorities and on the ways in which governments make decisions. This survey was conducted in partnership with the Faculty of Social Sciences' IMPACT Project at the University of Ottawa and Century Initiative. This survey is based on telephone interviews conducted (via land line and cellphones) with 2,000 Canadians between September 8 and 23, 2020. A sample of this size drawn from the population produces results accurate to within plus or minus 2.2 percentage points in 19 out of 20 samples.*

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#### **Executive summary**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profoundly disruptive effect on the lives of Canadians, but the public's general reaction to the situation remains more positive than negative. During the time in which COVID-19 emerged as the most important problem facing the country, satisfaction with the way things are going in Canada increased. Most Canadians are confident in the ability of their governments to follow expert and scientific advice when making difficult policy decisions, and most look to government to provide quality programs and services in areas such as child care and care for the elderly to all who need them. At the same time, support for the concept of a basic income is growing. The public remains more divided, however, on the question of whether their governments are adept at thinking ahead and planning for the challenges that the country might face over the longer term.

#### ***General context – issues of public concern***

Not surprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as the most important issue facing the country, while many also remain preoccupied with the economy and unemployment. Yet, despite these concerns, satisfaction among Canadians with the general direction of the country is now higher than it was a year ago. About three in five now say they're satisfied with the way things are going in the country today, compared to one in three who express dissatisfaction – the lowest level since this question was added to the Focus Canada survey in 2017. Satisfaction continues to be higher than average in Quebec, and much lower than average in Alberta.

Those who mention COVID-19 as the most important problem facing Canadians today are much more likely than average to say that they're satisfied with the way things are going in our country today, likely an indication of support for the way in which the country has so far responded to the crisis.

#### ***Government programs and services***

There is almost unanimous support in Canada for government intervention to ensure quality programs and services for the elderly, for people with disabilities, for parents with young children, and for lower-

and middle-income families in search of affordable housing. Younger Canadians are more strongly in favour of government action to expand both daycare and affordable housing, compared to older generations; as are women compared to men.

The survey also found that almost two-thirds of Canadians support a guaranteed annual income policy, in place of current economic assistance programs. This is significantly higher than the proportion that was in favour in an earlier survey conducted in 2013. While lower income Canadians remain more supportive than those with higher incomes, majorities of those in all income groups now favour the idea.

### ***Government planning and decision-making***

Canadians are somewhat divided on the question of whether their governments are capable of long-term planning. A small majority have confidence in the ability governments in Canada to plan ahead and prepare for the challenges that we will face in the future, but a sizeable minority does not.

Canadians are more likely to have confidence that both the federal government and their provincial government follow the best advice of scientists and other experts when making difficult policy decisions – about two in three feel this way. The level of confidence in the ability of governments to follow expert advice is higher than average among those who say that COVID-19 is the most important problem facing Canadians today. This suggests that, to date, the response to the pandemic in Canada has reinforced rather than undermined the public's confidence in the ability of their governments to follow expert advice. The level of confidence also varies according to partisanship, with those supporting the Liberal Party and the NDP being more likely to express a lot or some confidence, compared to those supporting the Conservative Party or the Green Party. Conservative Party supporters are much less likely to express confidence when thinking about the federal government – where the Conservative Party forms the official opposition – than when they are thinking about their provincial government (which, in most provinces, are controlled by parties on the right).

## **General context – issues of public concern**

*Two in five Canadians now say that COVID-19 is the most important problem facing Canadians today, far more than any other issue. At the same time, Canadians' overall satisfaction with the direction of their country has risen steadily over the past 18 months, and fewer Canadians are dissatisfied today than at any point in the last three years – despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.*

**Most important issue facing Canada today.** For a decade following the financial crisis of 2008, the economy remained the issue most often cited by Canadians as the most important one facing the country. More recently, the environment and climate change emerged as the top concern for a growing proportion of the public: between October 2018 and October 2019, the proportion mentioning this as the top issue more than doubled. By October 2019, the environment and climate change had eclipsed both the economy and poor government leadership as the top issue, shaping the outcome of the federal election held that month.

Not surprisingly, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic completely upset these trends. The latest survey repeated the question, asking Canadians to identify the single most important issue facing the country today (asked unprompted, with only one response accepted). Two in five (39%) mention COVID-19. This is the highest figure recorded for any issue other than the economy or health care since this question was first asked in the Focus Canada survey program in 1983.

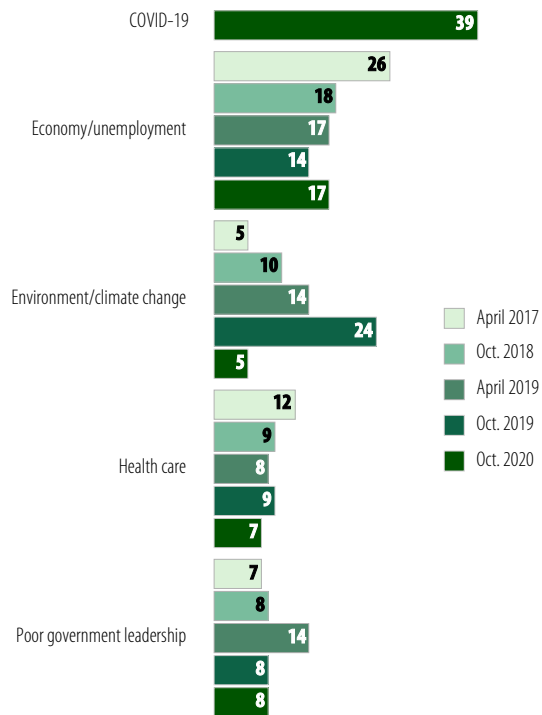
The next most likely issue mentioned in the current survey is the economy and unemployment (17%), followed by poor government leadership (8%) and health care (7%).<sup>1</sup> The environment/climate change is now mentioned by five percent, down from 24 percent a year ago.

In the context of hundreds of millions of dollars of additional government borrowing to finance spending to deal with the COVID-19 emergency, it is noteworthy that only four percent of Canadians mention the government deficit or debt as the most important problem facing Canada today (unchanged from a year ago).

COVID-19 is mentioned as the most important problem by Canadians in all regions and from all backgrounds, including roughly equal proportions of men (38%) and women (41%), and Canadians who are racialized (37%) and who are white (40%). However, it is much more likely to be mentioned by supporters of the federal Liberal Party (52%) than those who back the Conservatives (27%). Conservative supporters are more likely to mention the economy (21%, compared to 9% for Liberal supporters), poor government leadership (18%, compared to 2%), or the deficit or debt (8%, compared to 2%).

### Most important problem facing Canada today

2017 – 2020 Top mentions, unprompted



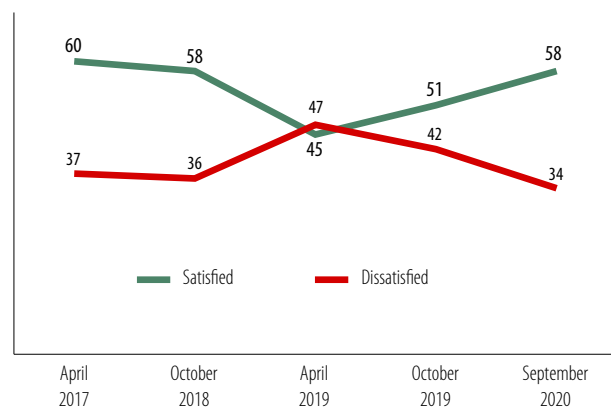
### Satisfaction with the direction of the country.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the lives of Canadians, resulting in illness and bereavement for thousands, the loss of employment and income for millions, and restrictions for everyone on the ability to engage in day-to-day activities once taken for granted. Despite this, satisfaction among Canadians regarding the general direction of the country is now higher than it was a year ago.

About three in five (58%) now say they're satisfied with the way things are going in the country today, up seven percentage points since last October, reaching the level recorded in 2018. One in three (34%) express dissatisfaction (down 8 points), the lowest level since this question was added to the Focus Canada survey in 2017. Another nine percent of Canadians do not provide an opinion either way.

### Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in our country today?

2017 – 2020



<sup>1</sup> The category of the economy includes mentions of interest rates and a recession; in this report, this category is also combined with mentions of jobs or unemployment.

It is notable that those who mention COVID-19 as the most important problem facing Canadians today are also much more likely than average to say that they're satisfied with the way things are going (see Table 1). It's likely that these Canadians are expressing satisfaction, not so much with the current state of affairs during a pandemic, but with the way in which the country has so far responded to the crisis.

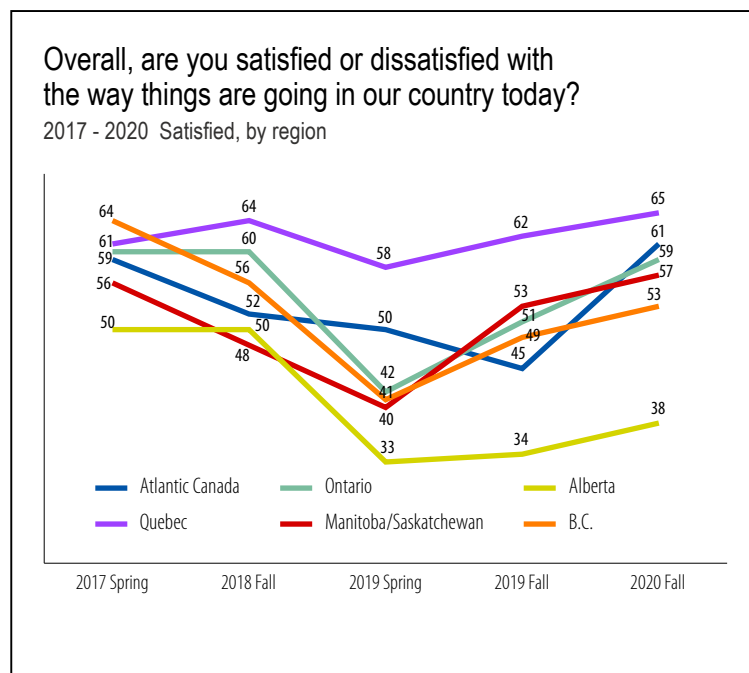
**Table 1: Satisfaction with the country's direction, by choice of most important problem**

Most important problem	Mentioned by	Proportion who are:	
		Satisfied with way things are going (%)	Dissatisfied with way things are going (%)
COVID-19	39%	70	22
Health care	7%	70	23
Economy/unemployment	17%	49	46
Poor government leadership	8%	23	70

Satisfaction also continues to be higher than average in Quebec (65%), and much lower than average in Alberta (38%) – the continuation of a pattern that has held for the last 18 months. Satisfaction is also somewhat higher among younger Canadians, those with a university education, immigrants and racialized Canadians.

Not surprisingly, opinions remain sharply polarized along the partisan divide, with supporters of the federal Liberal Party (77%) being more than twice as likely to be satisfied with the way things are going in the country than their Conservative counterparts (33%). Levels of satisfaction for supporters of the Bloc Québécois (70%), the NDP (66%) and the Green Party (59%) fall in between.

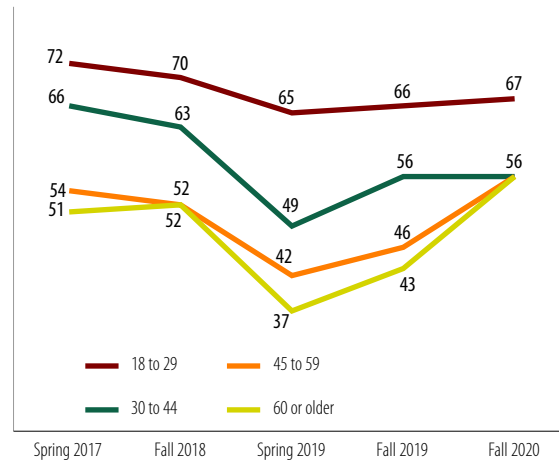
Looking at changes since last fall, the biggest jump in satisfaction across Canada's regions comes in Atlantic Canada (up 16 points). Among age groups, levels of satisfaction are stable among those under the age of 45, but are up 10 points among those age 45 to 59, and up 13 points among those age 60 and over. Finally, satisfaction is up only slightly among Liberal (+3), Conservative (+2) and Green (+3) party supporters, but have risen significantly among supporters of the NDP (+12) and the Bloc Québécois (+15).



Finally, while levels of satisfaction in Canada have consistently been higher than those in the United States, since the Spring of 2019, the gap between the two countries has widened considerably. In the Spring of 2019, Canadians were 18-percentage points more likely than Americans to say they are satisfied with the way things are going in their country. Since then, satisfaction has increased north of the border and declined to the south. The result is that, currently, Canadians are 46 points more likely to say they are satisfied with the way things are going in their country than are Americans.<sup>2</sup>

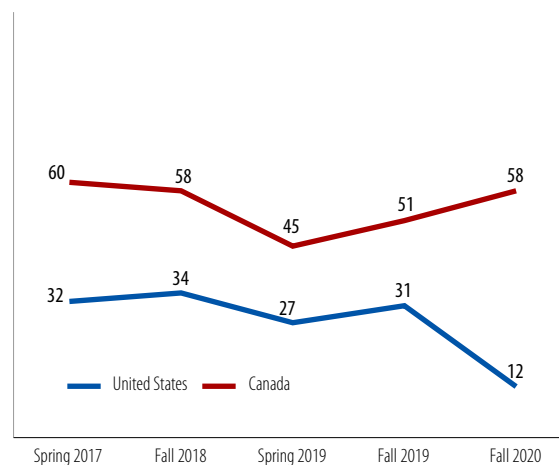
Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in our country today?

2017 – 2020 Satisfied, by age



Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in our country today?

2017 - 2020 Satisfied, Canada and the United States



<sup>2</sup> U.S. data from the Pew Research Centre (<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/06/30/publics-mood-turns-grim-trump-trails-biden-on-most-personal-traits-major-issues/>).

## Government programs and services

*There is almost unanimous support in Canada for government intervention to ensure quality programs and services for the elderly, for people with disabilities, for parents with young children, and for lower- and middle-income families in search of affordable housing. And almost two in three Canadians now support a guaranteed annual income policy, up from fewer than one in two in 2013.*

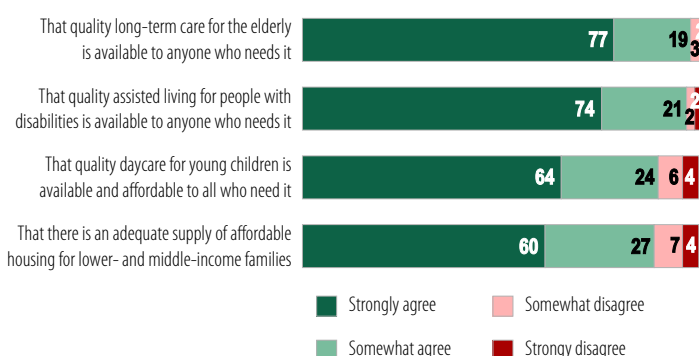
**Areas of government responsibility.** The COVID-19 pandemic has shone light on some of Canada's greatest strengths – including its public health care system – but it has also exposed some critical weaknesses. Many groups in society, including seniors living in long-term care, Canadians living in poverty, those living with disabilities, working parents, Indigenous communities, recent immigrants and racialized Canadians have been disproportionately affected either by the virus or by the restrictions imposed to control it.

Against this background, the Focus Canada survey finds that there is almost unanimous support in Canada for government intervention to ensure quality programs and services for the elderly, for people with disabilities, for parents with young children, and for lower- and middle-income families in search of affordable housing. Specifically, the survey finds that:

- 96 percent agree that it is the government's responsibility to ensure that quality long-term care for **the elderly** is available to everyone who needs it (this includes 77% who strongly agree).
- 95 percent agree that it is the government's responsibility to ensure that quality assisted living for **people with disabilities** is available to everyone who needs it (this includes 74% who strongly agree).
- 88 percent agree that it is the government's responsibility to ensure that quality **daycare** for young children is available and affordable to all parents who need it (this includes 64% who strongly agree).
- 87 percent agree that it is the government's responsibility to ensure that there is an adequate supply of **affordable housing** for lower- and middle-income families (this includes 60% who strongly agree).

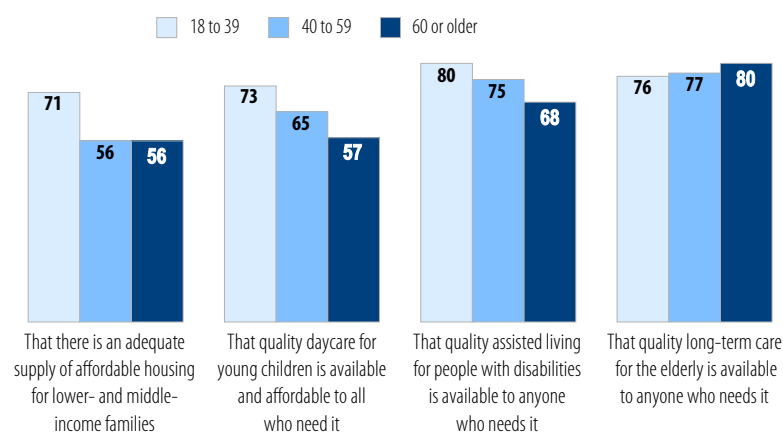
### Government responsibility for social programs and services

Is it the government's responsibility to ensure the following?



### Government responsibility for social programs and services

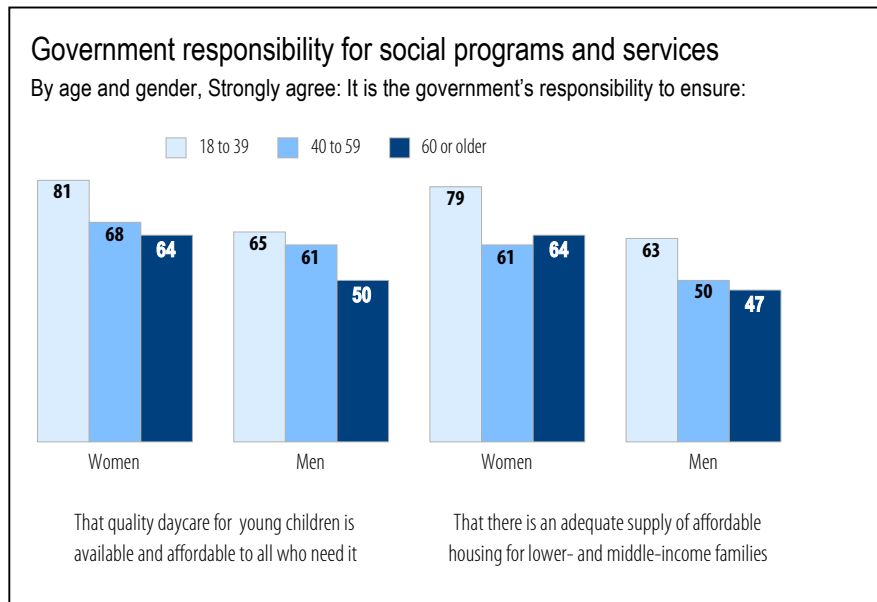
By age, Strongly agree: It is the government's responsibility to ensure:



While overall support for each of these measures is widespread across the population as a whole, there are some revealing differences in the strength of support among different demographic groups.<sup>3</sup>

Age is an important factor, particularly in the case of both daycare and affordable housing, with younger Canadians being more strongly in agreement compared to older generations. It is notable, however, that while younger Canadians are much more supportive than their older counterparts of government action to provide daycare programs for families with young children, the reverse is not true in the case of care for the elderly: strong agreement that the government should make quality long-term care for the elderly available to all those who need it does not drop off significantly among younger age groups.

In the case of both daycare and affordable housing, there are also significant differences in the level of strong agreement by gender, with women being more strongly in favour of government action than men. Combining age and gender, younger women are the most strongly in favour of government action in each case, and older men are the least so. For example, 81 percent of women between the ages of 18 and 39 *strongly* agree that it's the government's responsibility to ensure that quality daycare for young children is available and affordable to all parents who need it, compared to 50 percent of men age 60 and older.



Generally speaking, government involvement in the areas mentioned in the survey is an alternative to delivering services through the private sector to those who can afford them. However, in three out of the four items covered in the survey, there is no significant difference in support for government action by household income. Higher- and lower-income Canadians are equally likely to say that it's the government's responsibility to ensure that quality and affordable daycare, quality assisted living for people with disabilities, and quality long-term care for the elderly are all available to everyone who needs them.

The exception is affordable housing. While a majority of those earning \$100,000 or more per year still strongly agree that it's the government's responsibility to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing for lower- and middle-income families, their level of strong agreement (54%) is lower than that for those with household incomes below that amount (65%). (Note that, of the four items covered in this section of the survey, affordable housing is the only one that mentions targeting government action to those with lower incomes.)

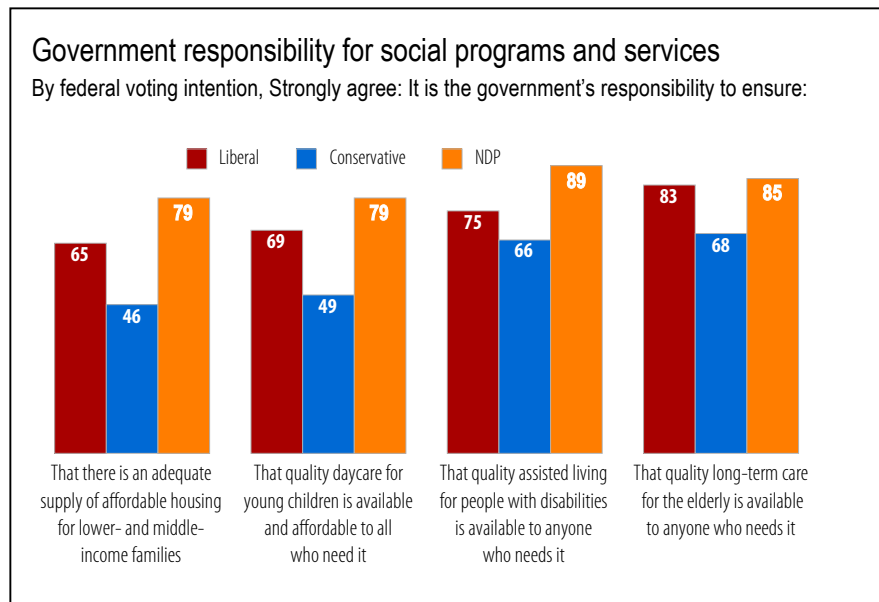
In addition, there are significant differences in views on this question by political partisanship. As expected, supporters of the NDP are consistently more likely to strongly agree that the government has a responsibility to act in each of the four areas, supporters of the Conservative Party are consistently the

<sup>3</sup> The items related to people with disabilities and the elderly were each asked to half of the survey sample (selected randomly). For this reason, the analysis of differences among different groups within the population is more constrained than is the case with the other two items.



least likely to strongly agree, and supporters of the Liberal Party are generally in the middle. Beyond this general pattern, it is interesting to note the following:

- The gaps between Conservative supporters and others are greater in the cases of daycare and affordable housing than in the cases of care for the elderly and those who are disabled.



- In the cases of care for the elderly and those who are disabled, while Conservative supporters are somewhat less likely than other partisans to *strongly agree* that there is a government responsibility, very few *disagree* (only 5% of Conservative supporters disagree – whether somewhat or strongly – in each case). In the cases of daycare and affordable housing, however, a more notable minority of Conservative supporters disagree: 19 percent in the case of daycare (compared to 6% of Liberal and 3% of NDP supporters who disagree), and 22 percent in the case of affordable housing (compared to 7% of Liberal supporters and 5% of those who back the NDP).
- In the cases of daycare and affordable housing, there are also differences in the strength of opinion among Conservative supporters by gender. Women who back the Conservatives are 12 percentage points more likely than their male counterparts to *strongly agree* that it is the government's responsibility to ensure that quality daycare for young children is available and affordable (56% vs. 44%); 23 percent of Conservative men *disagree*, compared to 13 percent of Conservative women. In the case of affordable housing, the gender gap among Conservative supporters is even larger (16 points), with 55 percent of Conservative women and 39 percent of Conservative men *strongly agreeing*, and 26 percent of Conservative men and 15 percent of Conservative women *disagreeing*.

Taken together, these findings suggest the following: while, overall, majorities of supporters of all the main federal parties agree that the government has a responsibility to act in each case, the extent of the consensus across the political spectrum is somewhat weaker in the case of daycare and affordable housing, suggesting that these issues are more likely to be the focus of political debate. At the same time, there is also a greater variation of opinion *within* the Conservative Party on these two issues, with about one in five Conservative supporters *disagreeing*, and a wider gap in views between Conservative men and women. This suggests that a politicization of these issues also brings with it some risk of internal division among supporters of the official opposition.

**A guaranteed annual income.** The steps taken by governments in Canada to provide income support to Canadians who lost employment as a result of the measures taken to contain the spread of COVID-19 once again drew attention to the notion of a guaranteed annual income. The purpose of a guaranteed annual income, or a basic income, is twofold: to provide greater security to economically vulnerable citizens by guaranteeing that their incomes will not fall below a minimum threshold; and to simplify the administration of existing benefit programs, each of which has its own rules governing eligibility, by replacing them with a single program based on streamlined criteria.

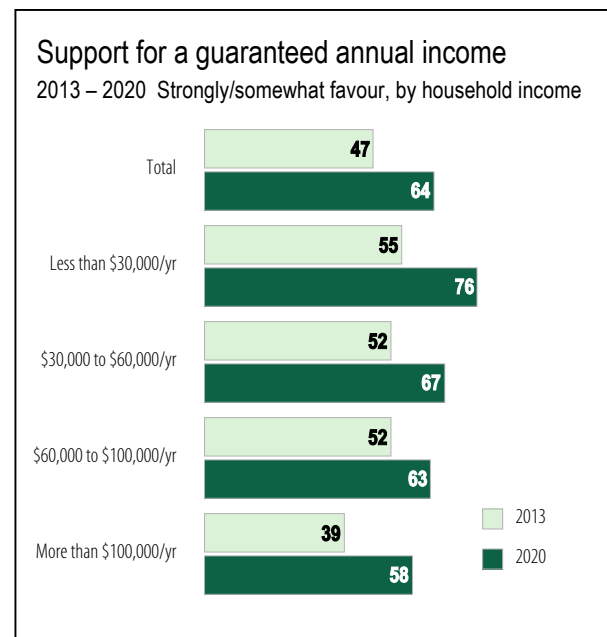


The survey finds that a majority of Canadians (64%) support a guaranteed annual income policy, to replace the current economic assistance programs, while 29 percent are opposed and eight percent cannot say. Those who are supportive are equally split between those who are strongly (33%) and somewhat (31%) in support. The policy was described in the survey as one that would provide a specific amount of money from the government each year to every Canadian whose income is below a minimum threshold, replacing existing programs like welfare and unemployment insurance, so as to ensure everyone has enough money to pay for basic necessities.<sup>4</sup>

The results show that Canadians have become significantly more supportive of the concept of a guaranteed annual income since a similar question was asked in 2013.<sup>5</sup> At that time, in a survey conducted by the Environics Institute for the Trudeau Foundation, 47 percent supported the policy and 42 percent were opposed. Support for the policy has increased among all income groups. While lower income Canadians remain more supportive than those with higher incomes, majorities of those in all income groups now favour the idea.

Support for a guaranteed annual income policy is now supported by majorities across all age groups (with younger Canadians being slightly more supportive), and by a majority of men (60%) and well as women (67%). It is also supported by majorities across all regions, although support is slightly higher than average in Atlantic Canada (70%) and slightly lower than average in the Prairies (60%). One in three (34%) of those in the Prairies oppose the idea, including one in four (25%) who strongly oppose it.

Finally, support varies significantly among supporters of the different federal political parties, with those backing the NDP (84%), the Greens (76%) and the Liberals (74%) being much more supportive than those backing the Conservatives (43%). One in two Conservative supporters (50%) oppose the idea of a guaranteed annual income, including almost one in three (31%) who oppose it strongly, compared to 11 percent strongly opposed among supporters of the Green Party, seven percent of Liberal supporters, and six percent of those who support the NDP.



<sup>4</sup> The full question wording is as follows: *Some people believe the best way to help economically disadvantaged people is to provide them with something called a “guaranteed annual income” or a “basic income.” This would provide a specific amount of money from the government each year to every Canadian whose income is below a minimum threshold. Such a program would replace existing programs like welfare and unemployment insurance, and is intended to ensure everyone has enough money to pay for basic necessities. Would you favour or oppose a guaranteed annual income policy for Canadians, to replace the current economic assistance programs?*

<sup>5</sup> In 2013, the question was phrased as follows: *Some people believe the best way to help economically disadvantaged people is to provide them with something called a “guaranteed annual income.” This would involve every Canadian receiving a specific amount of money from the government each year, which would then be “clawed back” with every dollar of income people earn. Such a program is intended to ensure everyone has enough money for the basic necessities, and would replace other forms of economic assistance, like welfare and unemployment insurance. Would you favour or oppose a guaranteed annual income policy for Canadians, to replace the current economic assistance programs?*

## Government planning and decision-making

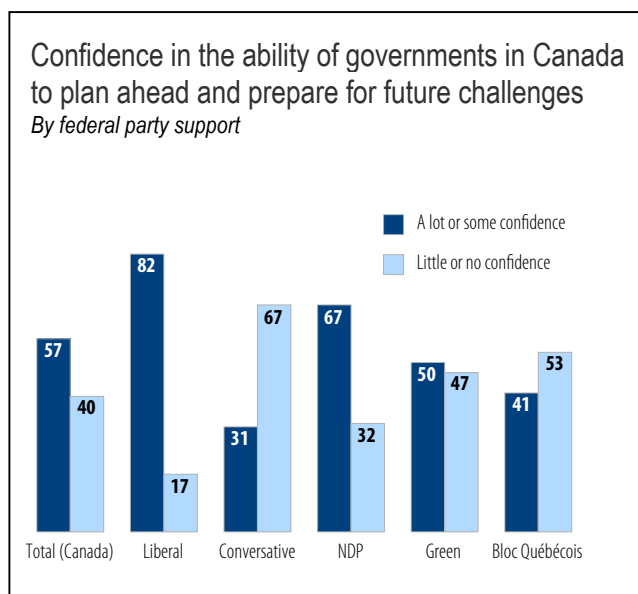
*Canadians are somewhat divided on the question of whether their governments are capable of long-term planning, with opinions on this question strongly linked to general attitudes about government itself. But most Canadians have confidence that both the federal government and their provincial government follow the best advice of scientists and other experts when making difficult policy decisions.*

**Planning for the future.** The time horizon for forward planning in contemporary democratic politics is notoriously short. Governments are said to be interested only in policies that will have a visible impact prior to the next election. Policies whose benefits will only become apparent over the long term hold less appeal, especially if they entail costs in the short term. Climate change is one challenge that has exposed the limits of such short-term planning. The COVID-19 pandemic also found many governments to be unprepared, despite the fact that scientists had warned that the eventual eruption of a global pandemic of one type or another was a virtual certainty.

The survey finds that Canadians are somewhat divided on the question of whether their governments are capable of long-term planning. A small majority (57%) have a lot (14%) or some confidence (43%) in the ability governments in Canada to plan ahead and prepare for the challenges that we will face in the future (say, 20 years from now). But a sizeable minority (40%) have little (24%) or no confidence at all (16%) in their government's ability to do this.

Confidence in the ability of governments to plan ahead does not vary significantly by either age or gender, or among Canadians with different levels of education or income – in each case, a small majority has a lot or some confidence in the ability of governments in Canada to plan ahead. However, opinions on this question are closely tied to views about government itself.

In this first instance, there is a considerable difference in opinion among supporters of the different federal political parties. About four in five (82%) of those who support the Liberal Party have a lot or some confidence the ability of governments to plan ahead, as do two in three (67%) of those who back the NDP. Confidence is lower among supporters of the Green Party (50%), the Bloc Québécois (41%) and, especially, the Conservative Party (31%). Two-thirds of Conservative Party supporters (67%) have little or no confidence in the ability of governments in Canada to plan for the long term.



In light of these results, it's tempting to conclude that opinions on this question simply reflect the extent to which one supports the current Liberal government in Ottawa: those who support the current party in office also believe that the leaders of that party are capable of long-term thinking. But it may not be that simple. The low degree of confidence in governments' ability to plan among Conservative supporters may reflect their views on what government in general is or is not good at doing, rather than just the current office-holders, particularly as the question referred to all governments in Canada, not only the federal government. The difference in views of NDP and Green Party supporters – both of

whom are in opposition in the federal Parliament – are also telling in this regard. Both of these parties are generally thought of as being to the left of the political spectrum; and both seek a more, rather than a less, activist approach to government. But the lower level of confidence in governments' ability to prepare for the future expressed by Green Party supporters may reflect their greater degree of concern about climate change.

Beyond the connection to partisanship, the extent of confidence in governments' ability to prepare for the future is also strongly linked to current levels of satisfaction in the direction of the country. Those who are satisfied with the way things are going in the country are more than twice as likely as those who are dissatisfied to have a lot or some confidence in the ability of governments to plan for the future (the figures are 71% and 33%, respectively); they are five times more likely to have a lot of confidence (20% vs. 5%). Two in three (65%) of those who are dissatisfied have little or no confidence in governments' ability to engage in long-term planning, including 36 percent who have no confidence at all. This stark contrast in views again suggests that answers to this question are driven not so much by a specific assessment of governments' long-term planning abilities as distinct from other functions that governments perform, but rather by general feelings about the overall performance of the country's political system.

Finally, it's worth noting that those who identify COVID-19 as the most important problem facing Canadians today are more, and not less, likely than average to have a lot or some confidence in the ability of governments in Canada to plan ahead and prepare for future challenges (the figures are 67% for those who see this as the most important problem, compared to the average of 57%). In part, this could be because, as noted, those who see COVID-19 as the most important problem are also more likely to be satisfied with the direction of the country and to support the Liberal Party, which are both also associated with greater confidence in the ability of governments to plan ahead. But it is notable nonetheless that the salience of the pandemic as an issue does not seem to be a factor that is currently undermining the confidence that Canadians have in the long-term planning abilities of their governments.

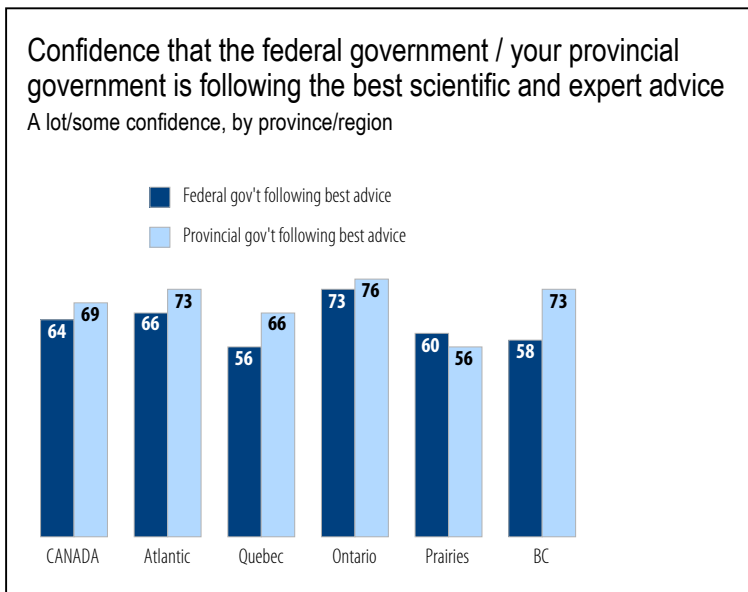
**Following expert advice.** During the pandemic, governments in Canada and around the world have relied on the advice of public health, medical and other scientific experts to help them identify the best steps to take in order to contain the spread of COVID-19. The emphasis on the alignment of government policy with the best available expert advice adds legitimacy to potentially unpopular decisions, such as those relating to the closure of schools and businesses. Conversely, governments that are found to have ignored scientific advice are open to the charge of mishandling the crisis.

Thinking generally, and not just about the current pandemic, most Canadians are confident that both the federal government and their provincial government follow the best advice of scientists and other experts when making difficult policy decisions. In the case of the federal government, 64 percent say they have a lot (23%) or some (41%) confidence that they follow scientific and expert advice, while 34 percent say they have little (22%) or no confidence at all (12%). The level of confidence in provincial governments is slightly higher, with 69 percent who say they have a lot (25%) or some (44%) confidence, compared to 27 percent who say they have little (17%) or no confidence at all (10%).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Half of survey participants, chosen at random, were asked about the federal government, and the other half were asked about their provincial government.

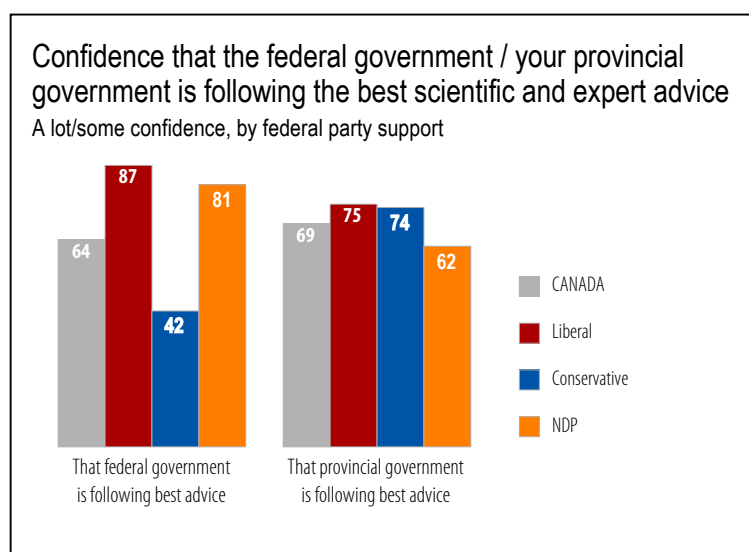
Canadians are more likely to express confidence that their provincial government is following expert and scientific advice, compared to the federal government, in most regions in the country, and in especially in Quebec (where 66% have a lot or some confidence that their provincial government does this, compared to 56% in the case of the federal government) and British Columbia (where the corresponding figures are 73% and 58%, respectively). The one exception to this pattern is the Prairies (Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta), where people have slightly more confidence that the federal (60%) government follows expert advice, compared to their provincial government (56%).



Setting aside the distinctions between views on federal and provincial government, confidence in governments' ability to follow expert advice is somewhat higher in Ontario and somewhat lower in the Prairies and Quebec. In fact, Ontarians are twice as likely to have *a lot* of confidence (32%) as are Albertans (15%).<sup>7</sup>

The level of confidence does not vary significantly among other demographic groups within the population, with the exception that it is somewhat higher among immigrants (with 73% having a lot or some confidence) compared to those born in Canada to Canadian-born parents (65%).

Not surprisingly, however, confidence is higher among those who are satisfied with the way things are going in the country today (77%), compared to those who are dissatisfied (51%). More notably, the level of confidence is also higher than average among those who say that COVID-19 is the most important problem facing Canadians today (73% of those who take this view have a lot or some confidence that their governments follow the best advice of scientists and other experts when making difficult policy decisions). This suggests that, to date, the response to the pandemic in Canada has reinforced rather than undermined the public's confidence in the ability of their governments to follow expert advice.



The level of confidence also varies according to partisanship, with those supporting the Liberal Party (80%) and the NDP (71%) being more likely to express a lot or some confidence than those supporting

<sup>7</sup> Unless specified otherwise, these figures and those that follow combine responses for both versions of the question (one referring to the federal government, and the other to the provincial government), which were each asked to separate groups of survey participants.

the Conservative Party (58%) or the Green Party (59%). Attitudes among Conservative Party supporters, however, vary significantly depending on whether they are thinking about the federal government – where the Conservative Party forms the opposition – or their provincial government (which, in most provinces, are controlled by parties on the right). Only 42 percent of Conservative supporters have a lot or some confidence in the ability of the federal government to follow the best advice of scientists and other experts when making difficult policy decisions, compared to 74 percent who feel this way about their provincial government. Conservative supporters are far less likely than Liberal supporters to express *a lot* of confidence in the federal government’s ability to follow expert advice (9% vs. 41%), but are just about as likely to say the same of their provincial government (27% vs. 30%).

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**The Environics Institute for Survey Research** was established in 2006 as an independent non-profit organization to promote relevant and original public opinion and social research on important issues of public policy and social change. It is through such research that organizations and individuals can better understand Canada today, how it has been changing, and where it may be heading. [www.EnvironicsInstitute.org](http://www.EnvironicsInstitute.org).

**The IMPACT Project in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa**, Canada’s largest bilingual university, is a knowledge mobilization infrastructure dedicated to promoting a new model of policy development, cultivating knowledge among Canadians, and contributing to the expertise of governments and community members across the country and onto the global stage. <https://sciencessociales.uottawa.ca/recherche/impact>

**Century Initiative** is a national, non-partisan charity with a mission to enhance Canada’s long-term prosperity, resiliency and global influence by responsibly growing the population of Canada to 100 million by 2100. Century Initiative delivers its mission by leading, enabling and partnering on initiatives that support long-term thinking and planning in immigration, urban development, employment and entrepreneurship, early childhood supports, and education. The Century Initiative is concerned about our future and believes a bigger, bolder Canada benefits us all. [www.centuryinitiative.ca](http://www.centuryinitiative.ca)

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