

March 2007

# WHAT CAN GOVERNMENTS DO ABOUT CANADA'S GROWING GAP?

## Canadian Attitudes Toward Income Inequality

How close am I to being poor?  
What will happen to the country if the gap keeps growing?  
How big is the gap between  
the rich and the rest of us?  
How close am I to being poor? How close am I to being poor? How close am I to being poor?

**Growing Gap** .ca

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES

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**Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives**

2 Carlton Street, Suite 1001

Toronto, Ontario

(416) 263-9896

[www.GrowingGap.ca](http://www.GrowingGap.ca)

# Introduction

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**IN NOVEMBER 2006** the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released results from a nationwide poll conducted by Environics Research on behalf of the CCPA.

November's poll findings told a story of worry:

- The vast majority of Canadians told Environics they believe the gap between the rich and poor is growing;
- They said economic growth was benefiting the rich but not the rest of us;
- They talked about personal financial worry: 49% said they are always just one or two missed paycheques away from being poor;
- And they pointed to broader social concerns: Three-quarters of Canadians were concerned a growing gap would lead to more crime. They also felt that, if left unchecked, a greater gap between rich and poor will make Canada more like the U.S.

This report focuses on what Canadians believe our governments can do to reduce the nation's growing gap. As a counterpoint to November's story of worry, these poll results tell the story of resolve:

- **Reduce the gap** Almost nine in 10 Canadians (86%) feel that government should take action on the income gap between rich and poor;
- **Reduce poverty** More than eight in 10 (85%) say if government took concrete action, poverty in Canada could be drastically reduced;
- **Affordable tuition** Nine in 10 Canadians (90%) say that making it more affordable for Canadians to go to college or university by reducing tuition and giving more grants to those in need is an effective way to reduce the gap;
- **Increase minimum wage** A similar number (88%) say that increasing the minimum wage to a level that will raise workers in full-time minimum wage jobs out of poverty is an effective way to reduce the gap;
- **Affordable housing** More than eight in 10 (85%) say that creating more subsidized affordable housing for low-income Canadians is an effective way to reduce the gap;
- **Affordable child care** A similar number (80%) think creating more affordable child care spaces for working Canadians is an effective way to reduce the gap;

- **Closing tax loopholes** Eight in 10 (82%) say closing tax loopholes so that wealthy Canadians and corporations pay more tax is an effective way to reduce the gap;
- **Increase taxes on wealthy** Seven in 10 (70%) say increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians to pay for programs that benefit the rest of the population is an effective way to reduce the gap.

These poll findings reveal that governments who take swift and concrete action to address the nation's growing gap will enjoy the support of the majority of Canadians.

The following poll results break down the level of Canadian support for government action to reduce the gap. We break it down by province, by demographics, and even by political party preference.

While there are small variations in opinion, the overriding conclusion is that Canadians everywhere believe in the power of their governments to combat key problems arising from growing income inequality.

# Support for Government Action on the Growing Gap

*Almost nine in 10 Canadians feel that government should take action on the income gap between rich and poor.*

**ENVIRONICS RESEARCH HAS ASKED** Canadians on three separate occasions — 1990, 1999, and 2006 — whether they think their government should reduce the gap between rich and poor.

In both 1990 and 1999, 82% of Canadians agreed government should reduce the gap between the rich and poor.

Today, a large majority of Canadians — 86% — agree that government should reduce the gap between the rich and poor. Support for government action is up four points from 1999. Of that 86% support, a majority of 61% strongly agree government should reduce the gap — up 5% since 1999. Twenty-five per cent of Canadians somewhat agree.

Only a small minority of Canadians (12%) fail to see a role for government in reducing the gap: 6% somewhat disagree and 6% strongly disagree. These numbers are down from both 1999 and 1990.

As in 1999, large majorities in all regional and demographic groups agree that the government should take action to reduce the gap between the rich and poor.

Strong agreement is higher in Quebec and Atlantic Canada; it is lower in Saskatchewan and Alberta, although government action still has strong majority support in those provinces. Strong agreement has increased in Saskatchewan and Alberta since 1999.

**Atlantic Canada** In Atlantic Canada, 91% agree government should reduce the gap between rich and poor (68% strongly agree, 23% somewhat agree). Only 4% somewhat disagree, 3% strongly disagree.

TABLE 1 **Governments Should Reduce the Gap Between Rich and Poor**

Year	Canadians' support
1990	<b>82%</b>
1999	<b>82%</b>
2006	<b>86%</b>

TABLE 2 **Support by Province for Government Action to Reduce the Gap**

	Total support	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Atlantic Canada	<b>91%</b>	68%	23%	4%	3%
Quebec	<b>90%</b>	64%	26%	6%	3%
Ontario	<b>87%</b>	61%	26%	5%	6%
Prairies	<b>80%</b>	55%	25%	9%	8%
B.C.	<b>83%</b>	59%	24%	5%	8%

**Quebec** In Quebec, 90% agree government should reduce the gap (64% strongly agree, 26% somewhat agree). Only 6% somewhat disagree, 3% strongly disagree.

**Ontario** In Ontario, 87% agree government should reduce the gap (61% strongly agree, 26% somewhat agree). Only 5% somewhat disagree, 6% strongly disagree.

**Prairies** In the Prairies, 80% agree government should reduce the gap (55% strongly agree, 25% somewhat agree). Only 9% somewhat disagree, 8% strongly disagree.

- In Manitoba, government action receives 89% support (58% strongly agree, 31% somewhat agree); 4% somewhat disagree, 6% strongly disagree.
- In Saskatchewan, government action receives 81% support (55% strongly agree, 26% somewhat agree); 11% somewhat disagree, 7% strongly disagree.
- In Alberta, government action receives 77% support (54% strongly agree, 23% somewhat agree); 11% somewhat disagree, 9% strongly disagree.

**B.C.** In B.C. 83% agree government should reduce the gap (59% strongly agree, 24% somewhat agree); 5% somewhat disagree, 8% strongly disagree.

Women are more likely to support government action, but differences aren't great: 89% of women say the government should reduce the gap while 83% of men agree.

Support for government action wanes as household incomes rise: 91% of households earning less than \$30,000 support government action; 88% of households earning \$30,000–\$60,000 support government action; 87% of households earning \$60,000–\$80,000 support government action; but support drops slightly among households earning \$80,000 or more — 81% agree government should reduce the gap.

NDP and Bloc Quebecois supporters are notably more likely than others to support government action to reduce the income gap — particularly in comparison to Conservative supporters. That said, it should be pointed out that there is still a very significant 77% of Conservative supporters who agree that government should take action (47% strongly agree, 30% somewhat agree). Among NDP supporters, 97% agree government should reduce the gap (74% strongly agree, 23% somewhat agree). Similarly, 97% of Bloc Quebecois supporters agree government should reduce the gap (76% strongly agree, 21% somewhat agree). 89% of Liberal supporters agree government should reduce the gap (64% strongly agree, 25% somewhat agree).

# Ways That Government Could Reduce the Gap Between the Rich and Poor

*Reducing college/university tuition; increasing the minimum wage; and closing tax loopholes to wealthy Canadians/corporations top the list.*

**CANADIANS FIND A NUMBER** of different approaches to narrowing the income gap to be effective. Making affordable post-secondary education more accessible and increasing the minimum wage above the poverty level lead the list of effective ways in which Canadians say their governments could reduce the income gap. These are followed by closing tax loopholes for wealthy individuals and corporations, creating more subsidized and low-income housing, creating more affordable child care spaces, and increasing taxes for wealthy Canadians.

TABLE 3 **What Can Governments Do About Canada's Growing Gap?**

	Total support
Reduce the gap	86%
Reduce poverty	85%
Affordable tuition	90%
Increase minimum wage	88%
Affordable housing	85%
Affordable child care	80%
Close tax loopholes	82%
Increase taxes on wealthy	70%

## AFFORDABLE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TUITION

*“I am going to read you a list of things that governments could do to reduce the gap between rich and poor in Canada. Would each of the following be a very, somewhat, not very or not at all effective way to reduce the gap? Making it more affordable for Canadians to go to college or university by reducing tuition and giving more grants to those in need...”*

Nine in 10 Canadians (90%) agree that making it more affordable for Canadians to go to college or university by reducing tuition and giving more grants to those in need is an effective way to reduce the gap (65% agree it is very effective 25% say it is a somewhat effective way to reduce the gap). Only 7% of Canadians say it is not a very effective way to reduce the gap and an even smaller 2% say it is not at all effective.

Support for affordable college and university tuition is highest in Atlantic Canada. It holds strong in all other provinces except Quebec, where support drops to 82% — perhaps because Quebec already has lower tuition than other provinces. Tuition for universities in Quebec is less than half those in the rest of the country and college tuition is free in Quebec. The provincial results are:

**Atlantic Canada** In Atlantic Canada, 95% agree making it more affordable for Canadians to go to college or university would be an effective way to reduce the gap (77% say very effective, 18% say somewhat effective).

**Ontario** In Ontario, 92% agree making it more affordable for Canadians to go to college or university would be an effective way to reduce the gap (71% say very effective, 21% say somewhat effective).

**B.C.** Similarly in B.C., 92% agree making it more affordable for Canadians to go to college or university would be an effective way to reduce the gap (63% say very effective, 29% say somewhat effective).

**Prairies** In the Prairies, 91% agree making it more affordable for Canadians to go to college or university would be an effective way to reduce the gap (68% say very effective, 23% say somewhat effective).

- Manitoba holds 89% support (64% very effective, 25% somewhat effective).

TABLE 4 Reduce the Gap with more Affordable Tuition

	Total support	Very effective	Somewhat effective
<b>Canada</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>25%</b>
Atlantic Canada	95%	77%	18%
Ontario	92%	71%	21%
B.C.	92%	63%	29%
Prairies	91%	68%	23%
Quebec	82%	49%	33%



- Support is slightly higher in Saskatchewan, where 90% say it would be effective (70% very effective, 20% somewhat effective).
- Support for affordable post-secondary education is highest in Alberta, where 92% agree (69% very effective, 23% somewhat effective).

**Quebec** In Quebec, 82% agree making it more affordable for Canadians to go to college or university would be an effective way to reduce the gap (49% say very effective, 33% say somewhat effective).

Support for affordable college and university tuition is higher among women (93%) than among men (86%) though both support in considerable majorities.

Interestingly, support for this measure holds steady at 91% for Canadians at all education levels except for those with university degrees; support drops slightly to 87% for those Canadians who have a university degree.

Support for this measure decreases with age: 93% of those aged 18–29 think affordable tuition would be effective; 92% of those aged 30–44 agree; 87% of those aged 45–59 agree; 85% of those 60+ agree.

New Democrats and Liberals hold the highest level of support for affordable tuition: 94% of NDP supporters agree, 93% of Liberal supporters agree, 87% of Conservative supporters agree, and 84% of Bloc Quebecois supporters agree.

#### INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE

*“I am going to read you a list of things that governments could do to reduce the gap between rich and poor in Canada. Would each of the following be a very, somewhat, not very or not at all effective way to reduce the gap? Increasing the minimum wage to a level that will raise workers in full-time minimum wage jobs out of poverty...”*

Eighty-eight per cent say that increasing the minimum wage to a level that will raise workers in full-time minimum wage jobs out of poverty is a very (57%) or somewhat (31%) effective way to reduce the gap.

TABLE 5 Reduce the Gap by Increasing the Minimum Wage

	Total support	Very effective	Somewhat effective
<b>Canada</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>31%</b>
Atlantic Canada	91%	70%	21%
Ontario	89%	58%	31%
Prairies	86%	52%	34%
Quebec	85%	57%	28%
B.C.	86%	50%	36%

Support for this initiative is widespread throughout Canada. Atlantic Canadians are slightly more likely to support a higher minimum wage but the difference between regions is not great — it ranges from 91% support in the Atlantic provinces to 85% support in Quebec. The provincial results are:

**Atlantic provinces** 91% think raising the minimum wage would be effective (70% very effective, 21% somewhat effective)

**Ontario** 89% think raising the minimum wage would be effective (58% very effective, 31% somewhat effective)

**Prairies** 86% think raising the minimum wage would be effective (52% very effective, 34% somewhat effective).

- For Manitoba, the support breaks down to 87% (54% very effective, 33% somewhat effective).
- For Saskatchewan, the support breaks down to 84% (48% very effective, 36% somewhat effective).
- For Alberta support breaks down to 86% (52% very effective, 34% somewhat effective)

**Quebec** 85% think raising the minimum wage would be effective (57% very effective, 28% somewhat effective)

**B.C.** 86% of those in B.C. agree raising the minimum wage would be effective (50% say very effective, 36% say somewhat effective)

Support for raising the minimum wage cuts fairly evenly across income categories. That is, no matter what Canadian household income, there is strong support for increasing the minimum wage.

Support for raising the minimum wage also cuts across all age groups. It's slightly higher (89%) among those aged 18–29 and slightly lower (86%) among those aged 60+.

Women are considerably more supportive of raising the minimum wage than men are, though male support is strong: 93% of women see increasing the minimum wage as effective, 81% of men agree.

Non-European immigrants are more supportive of a higher minimum wage: 91% of non-European immigrants support raising the minimum wage, 81% of European immigrants agree.

The issue of raising minimum wage is popular among NDP supporters (94%), Liberal supporters (90%). Raising minimum wage is a little less popular — though still receiving strong support — among Bloc Quebecois supporters (87%) and Conservative supporters (83%).

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

*“I am going to read you a list of things that governments could do to reduce the gap between rich and poor in Canada. Would each of the following be a very, somewhat, not very or not at all effective way to reduce the gap? Creating more subsidized affordable housing for low-income Canadians...”*

More than eight in 10 (85%) say that creating more subsidized affordable housing for low-income Canadians is a very (47%) or somewhat (38%) effective way to reduce the gap.

Support for affordable housing holds steady in most provinces:

**Atlantic Canada** 87% of Atlantic Canadians say creating more subsidized affordable housing for low-income Canadians is an effective way to reduce the gap (54% say very effective, 33% say somewhat effective).

**B.C.** 88% of B.C. residents support affordable housing (51% say very effective, 37% say somewhat effective).

**Prairies** Support is strong in the Prairies at 85% (43% say very effective, 42% say somewhat effective).

- Support is highest in Manitoba at 89% (40% say very effective, 49% say somewhat effective).
- 85% of Albertans support affordable housing (47% say very effective, 38% say somewhat effective).
- 82% of those in Saskatchewan agree with this initiative (35% say very effective, 47% say somewhat effective).

**Ontario** 83% of Ontarians say creating more subsidized affordable housing for low-income Canadians is an effective way to reduce the gap (44% say very effective, 39% say somewhat effective).

**Quebec** 84% of Quebecers say creating more subsidized affordable housing for low-income Canadians is an effective way to reduce the gap (50% say very effective, 34% say somewhat effective).

TABLE 6 Reduce the Gap with more Affordable Housing

	Total support	Very effective	Somewhat effective
<b>Canada</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>38%</b>
Atlantic Canada	87%	54%	33%
B.C.	88%	51%	37%
Prairies	85%	43%	42%
Ontario	83%	44%	39%
Quebec	84%	50%	34%

The lower the household income, the greater the support for affordable housing: 91% of households earning less than \$30,000 say creating more subsidized affordable housing for low-income Canadians is an effective way to reduce the gap. 87% of households earning \$30,000–\$60,000 agree. But support drops to 81% for those earning \$60,000–\$80,000 and 82% for those earning \$80,000 or more. Still a large majority of support, however.

Like most measures, more women (89%) support affordable housing than men (79%).

NDP supporters (91%) and Liberal supporters (90%) are most likely to agree with affordable housing, followed by 87% of Bloc supporters, dropping to 77% for Conservative supporters.

### AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

*“I am going to read you a list of things that governments could do to reduce the gap between rich and poor in Canada. Would each of the following be a very, somewhat, not very or not at all effective way to reduce the gap? Creating more affordable child care spaces for working Canadians...”*

Eight in 10 (80%) think creating more affordable child care spaces for working Canadians is a very (46%) or somewhat (34%) effective way to reduce the gap.

With the exception of Quebec, which is the only province that offers \$7 a day child care to all parents, support for this initiative is pretty widespread throughout Canada. Quebec doesn’t just have better child care programs. It is the only province with a comprehensive universal child care program. Atlantic Canadians are far more likely to support affordable child care (at 87% support). The provincial results are:

**Atlantic provinces** 87% think creating more affordable child care spaces for working Canadians would be effective (54% very effective, 33% somewhat effective)

**Ontario** 82% think creating more affordable child care spaces for working Canadians would be effective (50% very effective, 32% somewhat effective)

TABLE 7 Reduce the Gap with more Affordable Child Care

	Total support	Very effective	Somewhat effective
<b>Canada</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>34%</b>
Atlantic Canada	87%	54%	33%
Ontario	82%	50%	32%
Prairies	80%	46%	34%
Quebec	74%	38%	36%
B.C.	81%	45%	36%

**Prairies** 80% think creating more affordable child care spaces for working Canadians would be effective (46% very effective, 34% somewhat effective).

- For Manitoba, the support breaks down to 82% (56% very effective, 26% somewhat effective).
- For Saskatchewan, the support breaks down to 77% (45% very effective, 32% somewhat effective).
- For Alberta support breaks down to 81% (43% very effective, 38% somewhat effective)

**Quebec** 74% think creating more affordable child care spaces for working Canadians would be effective (38% very effective, 36% somewhat effective). This lower number likely reflects the fact that Quebec's child care costs are already the lowest in the country.

**B.C.** 81% think creating more affordable child care spaces for working Canadians would be effective (45% say very effective, 36% say somewhat effective).

Support for creating affordable child care cuts fairly evenly across income categories. That is, no matter what Canadian household income, there is strong support for affordable child care.

Support for affordable child care is stronger for Canadians aged 44 and under and drops off slightly as Canadians age: 85% of those aged 18–29 support affordable child care; 84% for those aged 30–44; 77% for those aged 45–59; and 73% for those 60+.

Women are considerably more supportive of creating affordable child care than men are, though male support is strong: 83% of women see creating more affordable child care as effective, 77% of men agree.

Affordable child care receives greater support from full-time (84%) and part-time (83%) workers than among homemakers (73%) and the unemployed (74%).

The issue of creating more affordable child care is popular among NDP supporters (89%), Liberal supporters (85%), Bloc Quebecois supporters (84%) and less popular among Conservative supporters (72%), though still receiving majority support.

## **CLOSING TAX LOOPHOLES**

*“I am going to read you a list of things that governments could do to reduce the gap between rich and poor in Canada. Would each of the following be a very, somewhat, not very or not at all effective way to reduce the gap? Closing tax loopholes so that wealthy Canadians and corporations pay more tax...”*

A strong majority — eight in 10 Canadians (82%) — say closing tax loopholes so that wealthy Canadians and corporations pay more tax is a very (54%) or somewhat (28%) effective way to reduce the gap.

Support for this measure is highest in Atlantic Canada, lowest in Alberta.

**Atlantic Canada** 89% of Atlantic Canadians agree closing tax loopholes so that wealthy Canadians and corporations pay more tax would be an effective way to reduce the gap (59% say very effective, 30% say somewhat effective).

**Prairies** Support for this measure in the Prairies sits at 81% but it varies wildly from province to province.

- It is highest in Saskatchewan at 89% (59% say very effective, 30% say somewhat effective).
- Support in Manitoba sits at 81% (53% say very effective, 28% say somewhat effective).
- It is lowest in Alberta at 79% (53% say very effective, 26% say somewhat effective).

**Ontario** 82% of Ontarians agree closing tax loopholes would be an effective way to reduce the gap (55% say very effective, 27% say somewhat effective).

**Quebec** In Quebec, 80% see closing tax loopholes as effective (53% say very effective, 27% say somewhat effective).

**B.C.** 81% of those in B.C. agree closing tax loopholes would be an effective way to reduce the gap (52% say very effective, 29% say somewhat effective).

Support is similar across all levels of household income (ranging from 83–85%) but drops off slightly to 79% for households earning more than \$80,000.

Support for closing tax loopholes increases with age: 81% of those aged 18–29 support it, 80% of those aged 30–44 support it, 84% of those aged 45–59 support it, and similarly, 83% of those aged 60+ support it.

Women are far more supportive of this measure: 85% of women support closing tax loopholes while 78% of men support it.

NDP supporters are most inclined to support closing tax loopholes (88% support it), followed by 86% of Bloc Quebecois supporters, 84% of Liberal supporters and 77% of Conservative supporters.

**TABLE 8 Reduce the Gap by Closing Tax Loopholes**

	Total support	Very effective	Somewhat effective
<b>Canada</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>28%</b>
Atlantic Canada	89%	59%	30%
Prairies	81%	54%	27%
Ontario	82%	55%	27%
Quebec	80%	53%	27%
B.C.	81%	52%	29%

## INCREASING TAXES ON WEALTHIER CANADIANS

*“I am going to read you a list of things that governments could do to reduce the gap between rich and poor in Canada. Would each of the following be a very, somewhat, not very or not at all effective way to reduce the gap? Increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians to pay for programs that benefit the rest of the population...”*

Seven in 10 (70%) say increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians to pay for programs that benefit the rest of the population is very (32%) or somewhat (38%) effective.

Support for increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians to pay for programs that benefit the rest of the population is higher in the Atlantic provinces, B.C., and Saskatchewan — though it also receives majority support in all the other provinces.

**Atlantic Canada** 76% of Atlantic Canadians agree that increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians to pay for programs that benefit the rest of the population would be an effective way to reduce the gap (34% say very effective, 42% say somewhat effective).

**B.C.** 74% of B.C. residents agree that increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians to pay for programs that benefit the rest of the population would be an effective way to reduce the gap (32% say very effective, 42% say somewhat effective).

**Ontario** 70% of Ontarians agree that increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians to pay for programs that benefit the rest of the population would be an effective way to reduce the gap (33% say very effective, 37% say somewhat effective).

**Prairies** Similarly, 70% of those on the Prairies agree that increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians to pay for programs that benefit the rest of the population would be an effective way to reduce the gap (28% say very effective, 42% say somewhat effective).

- Support for increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians is highest in Saskatchewan at 73% (27% say very effective, 46% say somewhat effective)
- There is 70% support in Alberta (26% say very effective, 44% say somewhat effective).

TABLE 9 Increasing Taxes on Wealthier Canadians

	Total support	Very effective	Somewhat effective
<b>Canada</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>38%</b>
Atlantic Canada	76%	34%	42%
B.C.	74%	32%	42%
Ontario	70%	33%	37%
Prairies	70%	28%	42%
Quebec	69%	34%	35%

- 66% of Manitobans support the idea (34% say very effective, 32% say somewhat effective).

**Quebec** 69% of support increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians (34% say very effective, 35% say somewhat effective).

Support declines as household incomes rise: 77% of households earning less than \$30,000 support the idea, 74% of those earning \$30,000–\$60,000 support it, 73% of those earning \$60,000–\$80,000 support it, but support drops to 63% for those households earning more than \$80,000.

At 74%, women are more supportive than men (68%) are of increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians to pay for programs that benefit the rest of the population.

84% of NDP supporters back this measure, followed by 79% of Bloc supporters, 74% of Liberal supporters, and 58% of Conservative supporters.

### **SUMMARY OF REGIONAL DIFFERENCE IN OPINION**

Atlantic Canadians are significantly more likely than others to think almost all of these methods would be very effective. Quebecers are significantly less likely to think that reducing tuition or creating more affordable child care spaces are very effective ways to reduce the income gap — and this may be because they already have more access to affordable higher education and child care than do Canadians in other provinces.

Lower-income Canadians are more likely to think that all of these methods are very effective, with the exception of creating more affordable child care spaces. While the trends with respect to education status are less pronounced, those with higher levels of education are less likely to see many of these approaches as very effective. Non-European immigrants are more likely to see most of these approaches as very effective, with the exception of closing tax loopholes and raising taxes.

Women and younger Canadians are more likely to support increasing access to post-secondary education, increasing the minimum wage and creating more affordable child care spaces. Women are also more inclined to think creating more affordable housing is very effective. Older Canadians are more likely to support closing tax loopholes.

NDP supporters are more likely to see all of these approaches as very effective. Liberal supporters are more inclined to see access to post-secondary education, low-income housing and affordable child care spaces as very effective. Bloc Quebecois supporters are more inclined to think closing tax loopholes is very effective in reducing the income gap. Conservative supporters are less inclined to think that any of these approaches would be very effective, though there is majority support for all measures.



# Summary of province by province support for each measure

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## ATLANTIC CANADA

**Government should reduce the gap** 91% agree government should reduce the gap between rich and poor (68% strongly agree, 23% somewhat agree). Only 4% somewhat disagree, 3% strongly disagree.

**Affordable college and university tuition** 95% agree making it more affordable for Canadians to go to college or university would be an effective way to reduce the gap (77% say very effective, 18% say somewhat effective).

**Raising the minimum wage** 91% think raising the minimum wage would be effective (70% very effective, 21% somewhat effective)

**Creating affordable housing** 87% of Atlantic Canadians say creating more subsidized affordable housing for low-income Canadians is an effective way to reduce the gap (54% say very effective, 33% say somewhat effective).

**Affordable child care** 87% think creating more affordable child care spaces for working Canadians would be effective (54% very effective, 33% somewhat effective)

**Closing tax loopholes** 89% of Atlantic Canadians agree closing tax loopholes so that wealthy Canadians and corporations pay more tax would be an effective way to reduce the gap (59% say very effective, 30% say somewhat effective).

**Increase taxes on wealthier Canadians** 76% of Atlantic Canadians agree that increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians to pay for programs that benefit the rest of the population would be an effective way to reduce the gap (34% say very effective, 42% say somewhat effective).

## QUEBEC

**Government should reduce the gap** 90% agree government should reduce the gap (64% strongly agree, 26% somewhat agree). Only 6% somewhat disagree, 3% strongly disagree.

**Affordable college and university tuition** 82% agree making it more affordable for Canadians to go to college or university would be an effective way to reduce the gap (49% say very effective, 33% say somewhat effective).

**Raising the minimum wage** 85% think raising the minimum wage would be effective (57% very effective, 28% somewhat effective)

**Creating affordable housing** 84% of Quebeckers say creating more subsidized affordable housing for low-income Canadians is an effective way to reduce the gap (50% say very effective, 34% say somewhat effective).

**Affordable child care** 74% think creating more affordable child care spaces for working Canadians would be effective (38% very effective, 36% somewhat effective). This lower number likely reflects the fact that Quebec's child care costs are already the lowest in the country.

**Closing tax loopholes** In Quebec, 80% see closing tax loopholes as effective (53% say very effective, 27% say somewhat effective).

**Increase taxes on wealthier Canadians** 69% of support increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians (34% say very effective, 35% say somewhat effective).

## **ONTARIO**

**Government should reduce the gap** 87% agree government should reduce the gap (61% strongly agree, 26% somewhat agree). Only 5% somewhat disagree, 6% strongly disagree.

**Affordable college and university tuition** 92% agree making it more affordable for Canadians to go to college or university would be an effective way to reduce the gap (71% say very effective, 21% say somewhat effective).

**Raising the minimum wage** 89% think raising the minimum wage would be effective (58% very effective, 31% somewhat effective)

**Creating affordable housing** 83% of Ontarians say creating more subsidized affordable housing for low-income Canadians is an effective way to reduce the gap (44% say very effective, 39% say somewhat effective).

**Affordable child care** 82% think creating more affordable child care spaces for working Canadians would be effective (50% very effective, 32% somewhat effective)

**Closing tax loopholes** 82% of Ontarians agree closing tax loopholes would be an effective way to reduce the gap (55% say very effective, 27% say somewhat effective).

**Increase taxes on wealthier Canadians** 70% of Ontarians agree that increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians to pay for programs that benefit the rest of the population would be an effective way to reduce the gap (33% say very effective, 37% say somewhat effective).

## PRAIRIES

**Government should reduce the gap** 80% agree government should reduce the gap (55% strongly agree, 25% somewhat agree). Only 9% somewhat disagree, 8% strongly disagree.

**Affordable college and university tuition** 91% agree making it more affordable for Canadians to go to college or university would be an effective way to reduce the gap (68% say very effective, 23% say somewhat effective).

**Raising the minimum wage** 86% think raising the minimum wage would be effective (52% very effective, 34% somewhat effective).

**Creating affordable housing** Support is strong in the Prairies at 85% (43% say very effective, 42% say somewhat effective).

**Affordable child care** 80% think creating more affordable child care spaces for working Canadians would be effective (46% very effective, 34% somewhat effective).

**Closing tax loopholes** Support for this measure in the Prairies sits at 81% but it varies wildly from province to province.

**Increase taxes on wealthier Canadians** 70% of those on the Prairies agree that increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians to pay for programs that benefit the rest of the population would be an effective way to reduce the gap (28% say very effective, 42% say somewhat effective).

## MANITOBA

**Government should reduce the gap** Government action receives 89% support (58% strongly agree, 31% somewhat agree); 4% somewhat disagree, 6% strongly disagree.

**Affordable college and university tuition** Manitoba holds 89% support (64% very effective, 25% somewhat effective).

**Raising the minimum wage** For Manitoba, the support breaks down to 87% (54% very effective, 33% somewhat effective).

**Creating affordable housing** Support is highest in Manitoba at 89% (40% say very effective, 49% say somewhat effective).

**Affordable child care** For Manitoba, the support breaks down to 82% (56% very effective, 26% somewhat effective).

**Closing tax loopholes** Support in Manitoba sits at 81% (53% say very effective, 28% say somewhat effective).

**Increase taxes on wealthier Canadians** 66% of Manitobans support the idea (34% say very effective, 32% say somewhat effective).

## SASKATCHEWAN

**Government should reduce the gap** Government action receives 81% support (55% strongly agree, 26% somewhat agree); 11% somewhat disagree, 7% strongly disagree.

**Affordable college and university tuition** 90% say it would be effective (70% very effective, 20% somewhat effective).

**Raising the minimum wage** For Saskatchewan, the support breaks down to 84% (48% very effective, 36% somewhat effective).

**Creating affordable housing** 82% of those in Saskatchewan agree with this initiative (35% say very effective, 47% say somewhat effective).

**Affordable child care** For Saskatchewan, the support breaks down to 77% (45% very effective, 32% somewhat effective).

**Closing tax loopholes** It is highest in Saskatchewan at 89% (59% say very effective, 30% say somewhat effective).

**Increase taxes on wealthier Canadians** Support for increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians is highest in Saskatchewan at 73% (27% say very effective, 46% say somewhat effective)

## ALBERTA

**Government should reduce the gap** Government action receives 77% support (54% strongly agree, 23% somewhat agree); 11% somewhat disagree, 9% strongly disagree.

**Affordable college and university tuition** Support for affordable post-secondary education is highest in Alberta, where 92% agree (69% very effective, 23% somewhat effective).

**Raising the minimum wage** For Alberta support breaks down to 86% (52% very effective, 34% somewhat effective)

**Creating affordable housing** 85% of Albertans support affordable housing (47% say very effective, 38% say somewhat effective).

**Affordable child care** For Alberta support breaks down to 81% (43% very effective, 38% somewhat effective)

**Closing tax loopholes** It is lowest in Alberta at 79% (53% say very effective, 26% say somewhat effective).

**Increase taxes on wealthier Canadians** 70% support in Alberta (26% say very effective, 44% say somewhat effective).

## **B.C.**

**Government should reduce the gap** 83% agree government should reduce the gap (59% strongly agree, 24% somewhat agree); 5% somewhat disagree, 8% strongly disagree.

**Affordable college and university tuition** 92% agree making it more affordable for Canadians to go to college or university would be an effective way to reduce the gap (63% say very effective, 29% say somewhat effective).

**Raising the minimum wage** 86% of those in B.C. agree raising the minimum wage would be effective (50% say very effective, 36% say somewhat effective)

**Creating affordable housing** 88% of B.C. residents support affordable housing (51% say very effective, 37% say somewhat effective).

**Affordable child care** 81% think creating more affordable child care spaces for working Canadians would be effective (45% say very effective, 36% say somewhat effective).

**Closing tax loopholes** 81% of those in B.C. agree closing tax loopholes would be an effective way to reduce the gap (52% say very effective, 29% say somewhat effective).

**Increase taxes on wealthier Canadians** 74% of B.C. residents agree that increasing taxes on wealthier Canadians to pay for programs that benefit the rest of the population would be an effective way to reduce the gap (32% say very effective, 42% say somewhat effective).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The poll results are based on omnibus questions placed on Environics' FOCUS CANADA survey, conducted with a representative sample of adult Canadians between September 18 and October 12, 2006.

The questions were designed by Environics senior researchers in conjunction with representatives from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA). The questions were pre-tested as part of the overall survey, prior to being finalized.

The sampling method was designed to complete approximately 2,020 interviews within households randomly selected across Canada. The sample is drawn in such a way that it represents the Canadian population with the exception of those Canadians living in the Yukon, Northwest Territories or Nunavut, or in institutions (armed forces barracks, hospitals, prisons).

The sampling model relies on the stratification of the population by 10 regions (Atlantic Canada, Metropolitan Montreal, the rest of Quebec, the Greater Toronto Area, the rest of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, the Greater Vancouver Regional District and the rest of British Columbia) and by four community sizes (1,000,000 inhabitants or more, 100,000 to 1,000,000 inhabitants, 5,000 to 100,000 inhabitants, and under 5,000 inhabitants).

A total of 2,021 interviews were completed between September 18 and October 12, 2006. A sample of this size will produce a sampling error of plus or minus 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error is greater for results per-

taining to regional or socio-demographic subgroups of the total sample. The margin of error for Manitoba and Saskatchewan is higher (plus or minus 8.8 percentage points) due to smaller sample size.



**> ABOUT THE CENTRE**

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives is an independent, non-profit research institute funded primarily through organizational and individual membership. It was founded in 1980 to promote research on economic and social issues from a progressive point of view. The Centre produces reports, books and other publications, including a monthly magazine. It also sponsors lectures and conferences.

**> AU SUJET DU CENTRE**

Le Centre canadien de politiques alternatives est un institut de recherche indépendant et sans but lucratif, financé en majeure partie par ses membres individuels et institutionnels. Fondé en 1980, son objectif est de promouvoir les recherches progressistes dans le domaine de la politique économique et sociale. Le Centre publie des rapports et des livres, ainsi qu'une revue mensuelle. Il organise aussi des conférences et des colloques.



**CCPA**

CANADIAN CENTRE  
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES  
CENTRE CANADIEN  
de POLITIQUES ALTERNATIVES

[www.policyalternatives.ca](http://www.policyalternatives.ca)

**> NATIONAL OFFICE**

410-75 Albert Street, Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7  
TEL 613-563-1341 FAX 613-233-1458  
ccpa@policyalternatives.ca

**BC OFFICE**

1400-207 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1H7  
TEL 604-801-5121 FAX 604-801-5122  
ccpabc@policyalternatives.ca

**MANITOBA OFFICE**

309-323 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2C1  
TEL 204-927-3200 FAX 204-927-3201  
ccpamb@policyalternatives.ca

**NOVA SCOTIA OFFICE**

P.O. Box 8355, Halifax, NS B3K 5M1  
TEL 902-477-1252 FAX 902-484-63441  
ccpans@policyalternatives.ca

**SASKATCHEWAN OFFICE**

105-2505 11th Avenue, Regina, SK S4P 0K6  
TEL 306-924-3372 FAX 306-586-5177  
ccpasask@sasktel.net

**> BUREAU NATIONAL**

410-75 rue Albert, Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7  
TÉLÉPHONE 613-563-1341 TÉLÉCOPIER 613-233-1458  
ccpa@policyalternatives.ca

**BUREAU DE LA C.-B.**

1400-207 rue West Hastings, Vancouver, C.-B. V6B 1H7  
TÉLÉPHONE 604-801-5121 TÉLÉCOPIER 604-801-5122  
ccpabc@policyalternatives.ca

**BUREAU DE MANITOBA**

309-323 avenue Portage, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2C1  
TÉLÉPHONE 204-927-3200 TÉLÉCOPIER 204-927-3201  
ccpamb@policyalternatives.ca

**BUREAU DE NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE**

P.O. Box 8355, Halifax, NS B3K 5M1  
TÉLÉPHONE 902-477-1252 TÉLÉCOPIER 902-484-63441  
ccpans@policyalternatives.ca

**BUREAU DE SASKATCHEWAN**

105-2505 11e avenue, Regina, SK S4P 0K6  
TÉLÉPHONE 306-924-3372 TÉLÉCOPIER 306-586-5177  
ccpasask@sasktel.net