

Broadbent poll uncovers public desire to close inequality gap ^[1]

Author: Broadbent, Ed

Source: Toronto Star

Format: Article

Publication Date: 10 Apr 2012

EXCERPTS:

The gap between the rich and the rest of us has reached 1920 levels. Since the 1990s, the top 1 per cent have obtained about a third of all growth in national income while the 99 per cent fight for a shrinking share.

The good news is that, unlike their governments, Canadians, whatever their political stripe, want action. New national public opinion research conducted for the Broadbent Institute by Environics Research and released today makes this clear.

We asked Canadians for their views on whether the growing gap between the rich and everyone else is a problem and the response is conclusive. More than three-quarters consider the growing gap to be a serious problem with long-term negative consequences for our society.

The biggest worry among Canadians is that it will lead to declining living standards, followed by concern about increased crime, and the erosion of public health care and other public services.

The majority of Canadians are also worried that income inequality leads to fewer opportunities for young Canadians to do as well or better than their parents - a trend that should not be ignored, as Canada's percentage of unemployed youth is double the official unemployment rate.

Perhaps most alarming in the long run is that a majority believe that the growing gap can erode the quality of our democracy.

No matter where you live or how much you make, our public opinion research shows that the growing gap is viewed as decidedly un-Canadian. The majority of Canadians (71 per cent) say this trend undermines Canadian values.

The majority also think it is time for government to make reducing income inequality a priority.

Perhaps the most encouraging finding from this poll is the willingness among Canadians to pay higher taxes to protect social programs that they value and help reduce income inequality.

Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) of Canadians are willing to pay slightly higher taxes if that's what it would take to protect our social programs. A majority of Conservative voters (58 per cent) are willing to pay more taxes to protect social programs, while Liberal and NDP voters are even more supportive: 72 per cent of them would pay more.

Interestingly, even high-income earners are as willing as the rest of Canadians to pay slightly more in taxes. It's only our governments that are offside.

An overwhelming majority of Canadians favour increasing income taxes on the wealthiest - those who make \$250,000 to \$500,000 or more. Our research shows most Canadians support the introduction of a new 35 per cent inheritance tax on any estate valued above \$5 million.

And, finally, the majority of Canadians want corporate Canada to play its part too, supporting the idea of returning corporate tax rates to 2008 levels.

The option of raising taxes to protect the social programs we cherish and to address income inequality has been absent from public debate for too long. Our research shows Canadians are prepared to do their part and they expect the wealthy, corporate Canada and their own governments to be a part of the solution, not a part of the problem.

These opinions are widely shared, cutting across traditional ideological barriers. This is a reflection of Canadians' concern that growing income inequality threatens to undo what so many before us struggled to achieve.

The evidence from countries all over the world shows that widening gaps in income threaten all of the things that make for a good community. In contrast, societies with greater income equality are generally less violent, healthier, have higher levels of voting, greater social mobility and more prosperity.

That's the kind of Canada we want. And one that Canadians are willing to pay for. Let's do it.

-reprinted from the Toronto Star

Related link: [Equality project](#) ^[2]

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: public opinion ^[4]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/12/04/broadbent-poll-uncovers-public-desire-close-inequality-gap>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/12/04/broadbent-poll-uncovers-public-desire-close-inequality-gap> ^[2]

<http://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/12/04/equality-project> ^[3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> ^[4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/public-opinion>