



On the 10th anniversary of Nunavut, a Survey Gauges Southern Canadians' Views on the North For the First Time

Majority believe that Canadian politicians should focus more attention on the North and less on the USA

Toronto, April 1st, 2009 – For the first time in Canada, a survey conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship and the Dominion Institute measures Southern Canadians' views on the North. The survey found that three quarters (74%) of Canadians agree (24% strongly/50% somewhat) that 'Canadian politicians should focus more attention on Canada's North and less on our Southern neighbour, the USA.'

The survey was released to mark the upcoming LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture to be given by Siila Watt-Cloutier, Nobel Prize nominee and former President and International Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council on May 29 in Iqaluit, Nunavut. This marks the first time that one of Canada's most important national lectures will be held in the Northern regions of Canada. The Lecture, chaired by John Ralston Saul, is co-organized by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship and the Dominion Institute.

"Now, like at no time in history, all eyes are turned to the North," said Siila Watt-Cloutier, who will be delivering the upcoming LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture. "Canadians have a unique opportunity to better understand the layers of issues that Canadians are facing in the four Inuit regions of the country: Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region."

On the issue of Arctic sovereignty, the survey found that nine in ten (88%) Canadians agree (36% strongly/52% somewhat) that the 'most important guarantee of sovereignty in the Arctic is the presence of people living there' compared to 54% who agree (15% strongly/38% somewhat) that it is the presence of military forces.

The survey also found that a majority (59%) of Canadians realize that Canada is the only one of the eight circumpolar countries that does not have a university in the Arctic. In this regard, three quarters of Canadians 'agree' (26% strongly/48% somewhat) that Canada should have one located somewhere in the territories.

"The peoples of the North have been working towards the creation of a university in the Arctic for many years. The time has now come to move ahead with this demand," said John Ralston Saul, Chair of the LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture and Co-Chair of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship. "This survey shows that Canadians support the desire of Northerners to have their own university."

The poll also looked at the impact of climate change in the North. Eight in ten Canadians (77%) agree (25% strongly/52% somewhat) that 'climate change will soon destroy the life and habitat of Canada's North.' Nine in ten Canadians (88%) agree (43% strongly/45% somewhat) that 'we should look to the Arctic as an early warning signal for the effects of climate change in Canada.' Furthermore, 84% agree (36% strongly/48% somewhat) that 'Canada has an even greater responsibility to tackle climate change because so much of our landmass is in the Arctic.'

"For the first time, we now have a survey that actually gauges the views of Canadians on the North and Northern issues. This is a region of the country that matters intensely to Canadians. The North should be at the heart of our national conversation on our most pressing issues, such as climate change and arctic sovereignty," said Marc Chalifoux, Executive Director of the Dominion Institute.

The survey also found that while only one in ten Canadians (13%) has personally visited one of Canada's territories in the North, this ran from highs of 28% in British Columbia and 20% in Alberta to lows of 11% in Ontario and 5% in Quebec.

For detailed survey results, visit: <http://dominion.ca/polling.htm>.

To learn more about the *LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture*, visit: <http://www.icc-icc.ca/en/symposium/>

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For more information:

Naoko Kumagai
Communications Manager – The Institute for Canadian Citizenship
416.593.6998 ext: 225
nkumagai@icc-icc.ca

Marc Chalifoux
Executive Director – The Dominion Institute
416.602.9721 (cell)
marc@dominion.ca