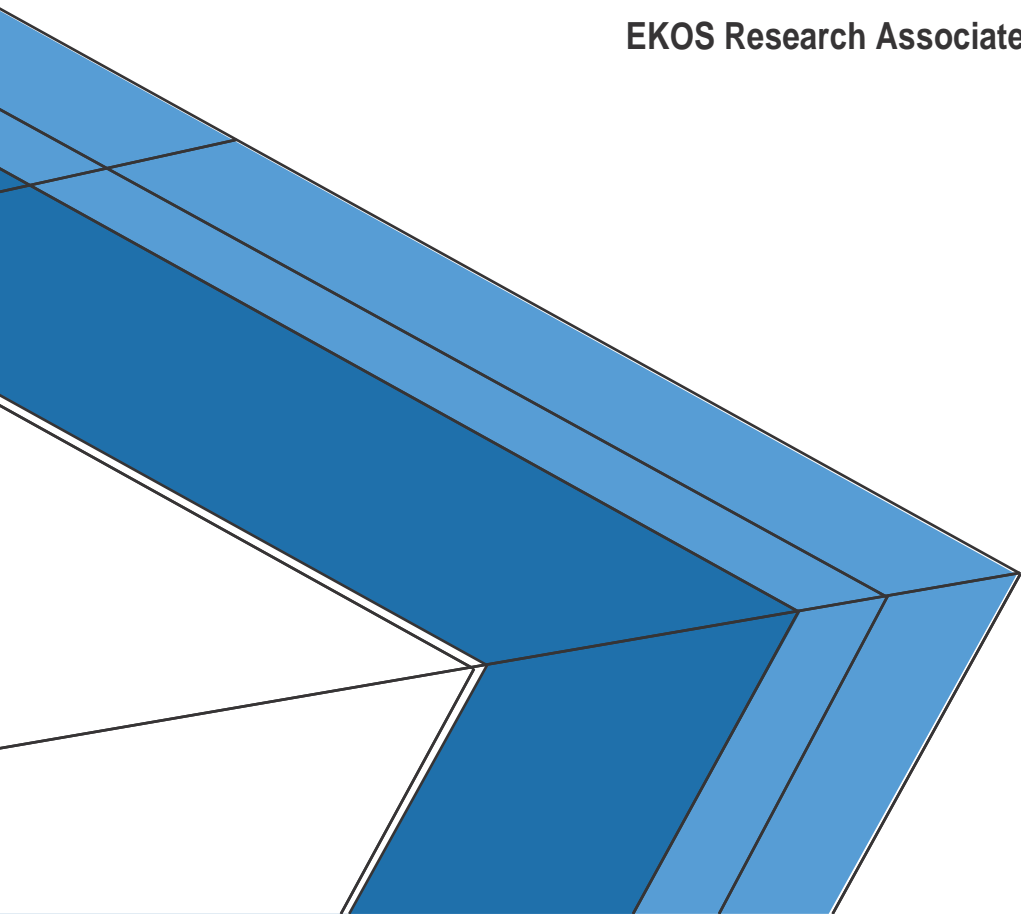




Assessing Public Support for Affordable Housing

*Project Report for the
Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario*

EKOS Research Associates Inc. | Sept 2015



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Introduction

The research consortium led by the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO) contracted EKOS Research Associates (EKOS) to conduct a short survey of national attitudes towards affordable housing as an election issue in the current federal election campaign. This report details the key findings of the survey along with a brief discussion of the survey methodology.

Methodology

The omnibus survey was included as part of EKOS' weekly telephone poll. After sample cleaning - to remove incomplete and other non-usable responses – this survey had a final sample size of 1402 Canadians, aged 18 and older, drawn from across the country. Final results were statistically weighted by gender and age to ensure the sample's composition reflects that of the actual population of the country according to the most recent Census data.

Field dates for the survey were between Sept 9th and Sept 14th 2015. A sample of this size provides a margin of error of +/- 2.26, 19 times out of 20. Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as gender, age, or geographic location).

Survey Results

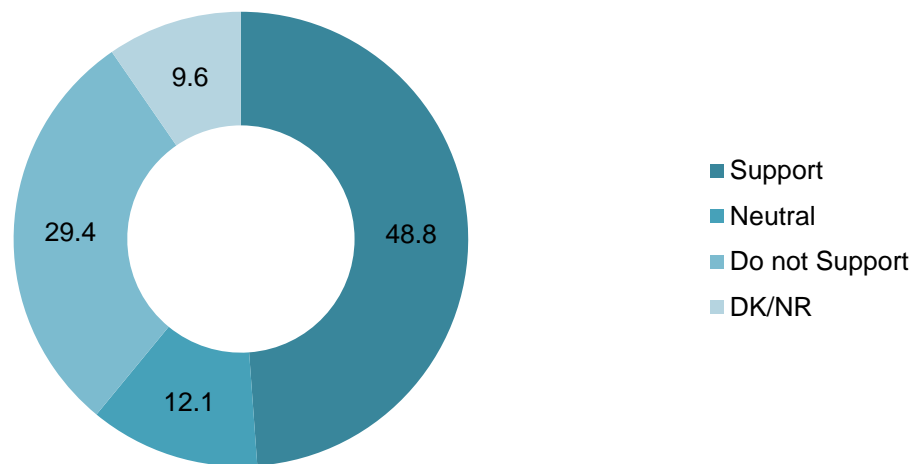
1. Political support for affordable housing

The first question asked respondents to indicate the degree to which they would support a political party that makes affordable housing a priority.

Q1) To what degree would you support a political party that makes affordable housing a priority for all Canadians, including working poor, low income and homeless Canadians? (1-7 scale)

Respondents were most likely to support a party based on its affordable housing stance. And while nearly one in three would not support a party based on their commitment to affordable housing (29.4 per cent) and one in ten were neutral on the question, just shy of half of all respondents indicated they would support a party based on its commitment to affordable housing (Just under one in ten didn't know or did not respond to the question).

Political Support for affordable housing



- Fully one third of all respondents indicate they are strongly supportive
- Women were far more likely than men to indicate party support relative to the question of affordable housing (56 per cent of women versus 46 per cent of men)
- Little difference by age or educational attainment is evident
- There are regional differences with western provinces significantly more likely to indicate their support for a party that makes affordable housing a priority. Residents of British Columbia (55 per cent) and Saskatchewan (64.4) in particular are far more likely to support a party than residents of Quebec (41.6 per cent) and the Atlantic provinces (50.4 per cent)
- The obverse position hold as well; men (by 10 points over women) as well as residents of Quebec are for less likely to support the idea

- Support by vote intention suggest that NDP and Liberal supporters are much more likely to support an affordable housing plan than Conservatives
- In the Quebec sample, Bloc supporters are also much less likely to support a housing plan (but this is a reflection of anti-federalist attitudes more generally than a rejection of support for affordable housing; indeed BQ voters strongly support the allocation of specific dollar amounts to be spent on affordable housing
- Green voters are supportive of the plan in numbers similar to the Conservatives (43.7 per cent of Greens, 43.8 per cent of Conservative voters). Undecided voters are in a similar range of support (45 per cent) - and are more likely to be neutral in terms of support or opposition to housing as a political issue
- Mean score (on a scale of 1 to 7) is 4.55

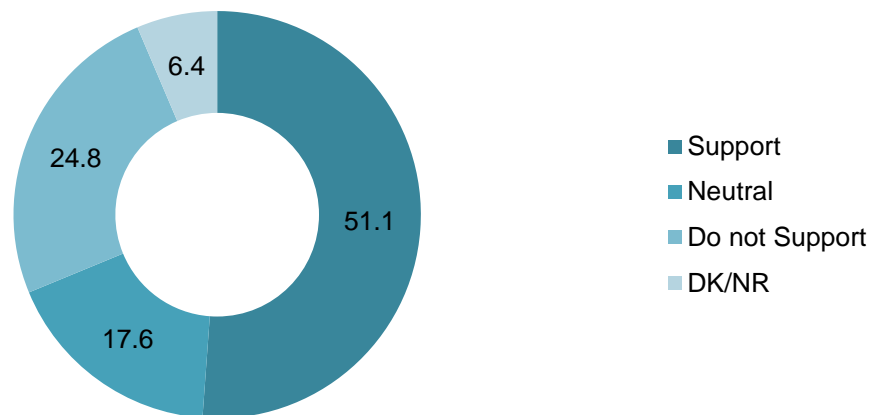
2. Support for spending on affordable housing

Respondents were then asked to rate their likely support for the spending necessary to address upgrades to public housing stock.

Q2) It is estimated that up to two billion dollars a year must be spent to upgrade existing affordable housing projects and build new affordable housing across Canada. To what degree would you support this level of spending? (1-7 scale)

This survey suggests that a (small) majority of Canadians support spending \$2 billion a year to address housing needs (51.1 per cent) while nearly a quarter (24.8 per cent) indicated they would not support this expenditure. Nearly one in five are neutral and a further 6.4 per cent did not know or did not respond to the question

Political Support for Spending on Affordable housing



- Strong supporters outnumber strong opposers by a ratio of three times (10.3 per cent strongly opposed, 29.6 strongly support)
- As above women were more likely than men to indicate support for spending to deal with affordable housing (57 per cent of women versus 50 per cent of men)
- And again support is similar across age and educational attainment although a more pronounced difference emerges between seniors and other age groups (60.2 per cent of seniors support the spending, while only 48.9 per cent of under-35s do). This is significant in that voting rates between these two cohorts are markedly different; seniors continue to vote in the 75-80 per cent range while Canadians under 35 have declined from about two thirds in the early 1990s to less than 40 per cent in the 18-24 year old cohort in the last federal election. Put plainly, spending an identified dollar amount on affordable resonates with a group that votes in large numbers (and typically do so for the right of the political spectrum in Canada.
- The Western provinces (and Atlantic region) were less likely to support the necessary spending (fewer than four in ten respondents in Alberta were supportive, while more than 55 per cent in Ontario are)
- In terms of political affiliation, Liberal (62.1 per cent) and NDP (68.2 per cent) supporters are significantly more likely to support the specific allocation of government spending to affordable housing
- In Quebec, Bloc Quebecois supporters exhibit the highest level of support among all parties for specific expenditures on housing (69.3 per cent)
- Conservative party supporters are significantly less likely to be supportive (only 31.6 per cent) while Green supporters reveal a certain latent fiscal conservatism as well (40.8 per cent)
- Undecided voters are less likely to be supportive or oppose this specific expenditure, and are more likely to prefer to remain neutral on the question
- Mean score (on a scale of 1 to 7) is 4.70