



NEWS RELEASE

New poll reveals 50% of Canadians 18-24 favour socialism, but few Canadians willing to pay for it

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For immediate release

VANCOUVER—More than 4-in-10 Canadians—and half of younger Canadians aged 18-24—support socialism as their preferred economic system, but an overwhelming majority define socialism as more government spending and programs, and Canadians generally don't want to pay the higher taxes required to finance it, finds a new study by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan, Canadian public policy think-tank, working in conjunction with think tanks in the U.S., Australia and the U.K.

“A whole segment of the population—not just in Canada but across the developed world—self-describes as socialist, but many of them have never lived in a world with genuine socialism nor the misery it imposed,” said Jason Clemens, executive vice president of the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Perspectives on Capitalism and Socialism: Polling Results from Canada, the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom*.

Using new polling data from Leger, commissioned for the Fraser Institute in the fall of 2022, the study finds that 42 per cent of all Canadians support socialism as their preferred economic system. The number rises to 50 per cent among Canadians aged 18-24, and it drops to 38 per cent support among Canadians over 55.

Unlike other similar polls, this recent poll explored how respondents defined socialism. Only 25 per cent of Canadians polled defined socialism in the traditional sense—government owning and controlling businesses and industries. Instead, 65 per cent of Canadians define socialism as government providing more services, and 57 per cent think socialism is government providing a guaranteed minimum income.

The poll found similar results for the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia.

Crucially, when asked how the government should finance the increased government spending on programs and/or providing a guaranteed minimum income, only 31 per cent supported an across-the-board increase in personal income taxes, while just 16 per cent supported raising the GST. Instead, most Canadians preferred a new wealth tax on the top one per cent of income earners (72 per cent), and increasing personal income taxes on the top 10 per cent of income earners (59 per cent) to finance “socialism.”

“These targeted tax hikes will not generate anywhere near enough revenue to pay for the higher levels of spending linked with socialism,” said Steven Globerman, Fraser Institute senior fellow and study co-author.

“If Canadians want a larger government and substantially higher government spending, then all Canadians, and not just top income earners, will have to pay higher taxes to finance it.”

*This study is part of a new multimedia project, **The Realities of Socialism**, by the Fraser Institute, the Institute of Economic Affairs in the UK, the Institute of Public Affairs in Australia and the Fund for American Studies in the U.S.*

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Jason Clemens, Executive Vice President
Fraser Institute

Steven Globerman, Senior Fellow
Fraser Institute

To arrange media interviews or for more information, please contact:
Drue MacPherson, Fraser Institute
(604) 688-0221 Ext. 721
drue.macpherson@fraserinstitute.org

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