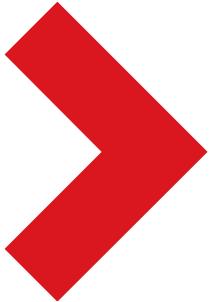




7 in 10 Canadians signal support for new lockdown measures if COVID-19 resurges

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A strong majority of Canadians say they would support, or somewhat support, returning to lockdown in the event of a resurgence of COVID-19 cases. A woman wears a mask as she walks through Toronto's Eaton Centre shopping mall, on March 21, 2020.

CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

A strong majority of Canadians say they would support, or somewhat support, returning to lockdown in the event of a resurgence of COVID-19 cases.

A new poll conducted for The Globe and Mail by Nanos Research found that more than seven in 10 respondents indicated some level of support for closing all but essential businesses and asking exposed Canadians to self-isolate.

“Even with the economic uncertainty, Canadians are quite receptive to a shutdown of the economy again if there was a resurgence,” pollster Nik Nanos said.

“It’s pretty clear that Canadians understand that even though we may be doing okay, this is not over.”

The survey found 50 per cent of respondents said they would support shutting down all but essential businesses, while another 23 per cent said they would somewhat support this. Conversely, one in four Canadians registered some degree of opposition, with 13 per cent opposing it and another 12 per cent somewhat opposing it. Two per cent were unsure.

Many Canadians have been insulated from the full economic effect of the pandemic because of taxpayer-funded support. Millions of Canadians have drawn on the Canada Emergency Response Benefit since April.

“There hasn’t really been a connection between businesses closing and major disruptions to the economy and [Canadians’] day-to-day ability to pay bills because their government has been there to support them through the CERB,” Mr. Nanos said.

“The economic stimulus for Canadian individuals has been generous, so many working-class Canadians haven’t really felt a major economic pinch as a result of the pandemic.”

The federal government has since announced the \$80-billion coronavirus aid will be wound down after September, with recipients shifted to the Employment Insurance program or other support.

Mr. Nanos said he thinks widespread Canadian support for a return to lockdown, if necessary, is also driven by the escalating COVID-19 crisis in the United States, where efforts to contain the virus have failed. U.S. deaths from COVID-19 rose for a fourth week in a row to more than 8,500 people in the seven days ended Aug. 2.

“I think a lot of that has to do with what they’re seeing in the United States and even Australia recently ... a second round of shutdowns.”

The poll surveyed 1,094 Canadians between July 26 and July 30. The margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

In other findings, the poll showed strong support for a return to in-person schooling this fall. Close to eight in 10 Canadians say it’s important, or somewhat important, for provinces to find a way to open schools for in-person schooling this fall.

Forty-five per cent of respondents said it’s important and another 33 per cent said it is somewhat important. Conversely, 8 per cent said it’s not important and another 11 per cent said it was “somewhat not important.” Three per cent of respondents were unsure.

“There are two things at play here: How can parents go back to work if they have to care for their children at home and, second, school openings are among the first steps of normalization” of life for Canadians, Mr. Nanos said.

He said it remains to be seen whether Canadians would back a return to in-person schooling if COVID-19 cases surge.

All Canadian provinces have announced plans for some form of in-person schooling this fall.

The same survey also found a very strong majority – nearly nine in 10 – signalling some measure of support for wearing masks in indoor public spaces. Seventy-two per cent of respondents said they would support this and another 15 per cent said they would somewhat support it. Just 8 per cent opposed the idea and another 4 per cent somewhat opposed it. Two per cent were unsure.

With a report from Reuters

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