



THE DOMINION
INSTITUTE



Americans Feel More Empowered by their Political System than Do Canadians

Toronto – November 16, 2005 – According to a new Dominion Institute survey conducted by Innovative Research Group when asked, three-quarters (73%) of Americans agree that “if there was a political issue I really cared about, I think I could make a difference by participating in the political process.” This compares to just 58% of Canadians who concur with this position. The decline in political participation in both Canada and the United States has been a major concern for a number of years. Theories for this decline include the view that citizens do not feel like they have a voice in the decision process, that their participation would not make a difference. One-in-three (36%) Canadians and just one-quarter (22%) of Americans disagree that they would not make a difference. Looking at the intensity of feelings, a plurality of Americans (38%) strongly agree, compared to just one-in-five (21%) Canadians.

In Canada, the most optimistic residents are found in Manitoba/Saskatchewan (69%), while the least optimistic are those in Quebec (51%). In the United States, residents of the West (76%) and the South (74%) are more likely than those in the Northeast (66%) to agree with the view that they could make a difference by participating in the political process.

The feeling of political empowerment in the United States appears to increase with educational achievement. That is, Americans who feel the most empowered are those with at least some college education (77%) or with post-graduate education (77%), compared to Americans with a high school (or less) education (63%).

About This Survey

Innovative Research Group, Inc. (www.innovativeresearch.ca), a Toronto-based research firm, was commissioned to survey 1,016 randomly selected Canadians. The survey was conducted between Thursday, October 20th and Tuesday, October 25th, 2005 and has a margin of error of $\pm 3.1\%$, 19 times out of 20. Innovative was also commissioned to survey 1,000 randomly selected Americans. The survey was conducted between Friday October 21st and Sunday, October 23rd and has a margin of error of $\pm 3.1\%$, 19 times out of 20.

The Dominion Institute (www.dominion.ca) was established in 1997 by a group of young professional concerned about the erosion of a common memory in Canada. In the space of eight short years, the Institute has had a far-reaching impact on Canadians’ knowledge and perceptions of their history and shared citizenship, through groundbreaking public opinion research, high-profile Internet, education and television programming, book publications, and meaningful curriculum reform. The Institute is a non-partisan organization and a federally registered charity (#873968176 RR0001).

The Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute (www.cdfai.org) is a charitable, independent, non-partisan, research institute with an emphasis on Canadian Foreign Policy; Defence Policy; and National Security. We provide Canadians with factual and comprehensive policy analysis to promote their understanding of Canada's foreign policy and the state of our military preparedness and national security by developing and sponsoring authoritative research and education programs.

Attribution

In the first instance of mentioning the poll results the survey should be identified as a "Dominion Institute / CDFAI survey conducted by Innovative Research Group".

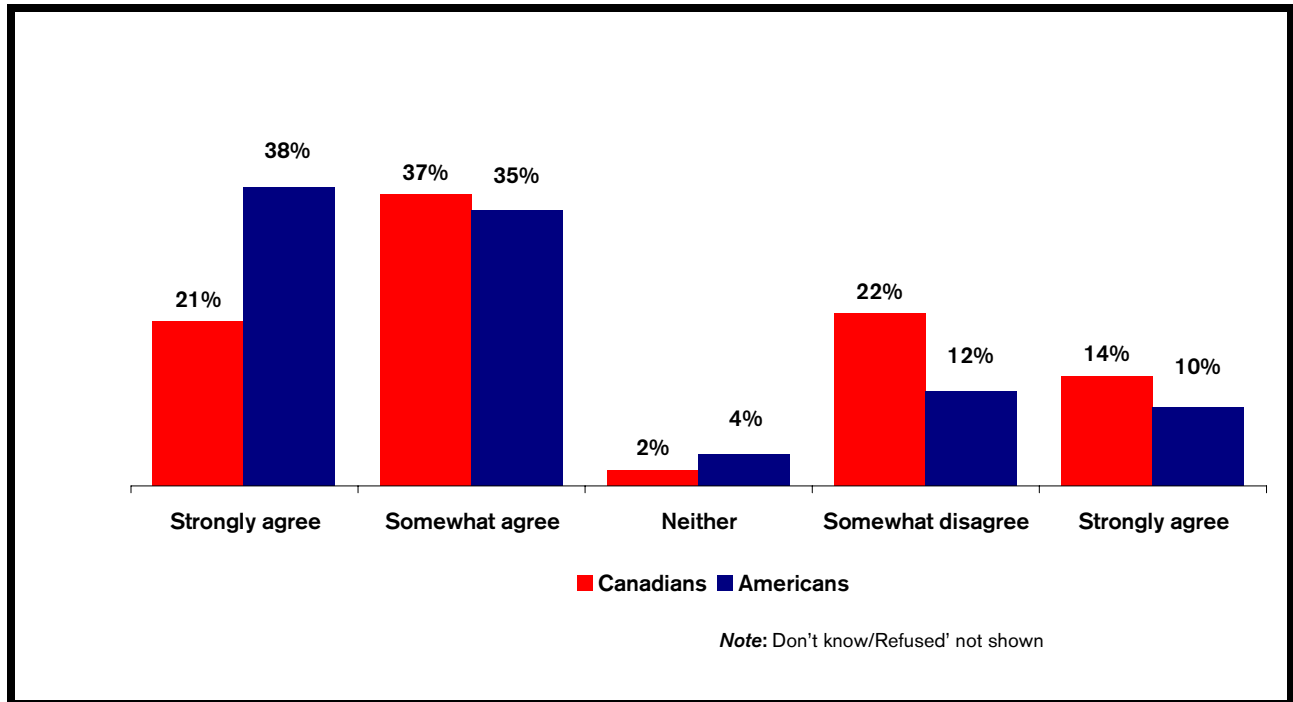
All subsequent mentions can use the convention "Dominion Institute / CDFAI poll conducted by Innovative".

Spokespersons

David Bercuson
CDFAI, Vice Chair
DBercuson@cdfai.org
Cell: 403-969-3632

Greg Lyle
Innovative Research Group Inc.
glyle@innovativeresearch.ca
Office Direct 416-642-6429

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: If there was a political issue I really cared about, I think I could make a difference by participating in the political process



FULL QUESTION TEXT

[ASK IN US AND CANADA]

9. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: If there was a political issue I really cared about, I think I could make a difference by participating in the political process

Strongly agree		1
Somewhat agree	2	
Neither agree nor disagree	3 [VOLUNTEERED]	
Somewhat disagree	4	
Strongly disagree	5	
Don't know	8 [VOLUNTEERED]	
Refused	9 [VOLUNTEERED]	