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Government and Regulatory Affairs

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**Who's your Senator? Not Spezza,
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"Senate Reform Edition"

Canadians don't know what they are missing. The Senators are in town but no one is watching. The Senators are making decisions that will affect more than standings, trades or your Saturday night. Important construction industry decisions are being decided that affect all Canadians who go to work. What can we do?

A popular public opinion polling company released a bundle of information recently. **Angus Reid Strategies** has proclaimed "Canadians yearn for Senate Reform : majority support concept of elected Senators".

This may be an overly dramatic attempt to "frame" the issue but nonetheless the information is useful for the Building Trades. As a national association we have people based across every province and territory. The Senate, in its current format is primarily a regional representative body.

The structure, functioning and constitutional role of the Senate is beyond the scope of Lets Talk Politics.

However, in the spirit of promoting democracy and reform to political institutions for the benefit of all Canadians, a discussion on Senate reform would be valuable.

Angus Reid tells us that 77% of Canadians want a referendum on the future of the Senate. More importantly however, the survey tells us that 61% of Canadians polled would vote to allow Canadians to elect their Senate representation. Currently, the Senate is appointed at the discretion of the Prime Minister as vacancies arise.

Although as uncomfortable change may be for traditional institutions like the Senate or Parliament, Canadians should be interested in how they are represented beyond their MP.

The Building Trades needs a position on Senate reform. When this debate arises in Ottawa and in coffee shops across the nation we need to be ready.

In the coming months we will provide you with updates on policy and viewpoints from within the debate.

At the 2008 Legislative Conference we will be exploring the issue further and setting direction for the future for our organization.

If Canadians want to move this issue forward we need to be ready. For more information on the Angus Reid Strategies survey call us.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS AND LOWLIGHTS :

- 77% of those surveyed want to hold a referendum on the future of the Senate
- 61% (of those surveyed) would vote to allow Canadians to directly elect their Senators
- 36% would vote to abolish the Senate
- 5% think that the current guidelines that call for appointed Senators are "ok"

