

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Albertans think high-income earners, corporations not paying enough tax: poll**

Results from a public opinion poll commissioned by Parkland Institute show that although a majority of Albertans feel they pay too much in taxes, they support progressive taxation and feel that Alberta's highest-income earners do not pay enough in taxes, and that low-income earners are paying too much. Most Albertans would also be willing to pay slightly more in taxes if it meant protecting or enhancing key public services.

The questions were part of an extensive survey of 1,174 Albertans conducted in January by McAllister Opinion Research. Some of the key findings released today by Parkland Institute include:

- When asked about their own level of taxation, 39% of respondents answered that they are paying a bit more tax than they should and 33% said they were paying much more than they should. One-quarter of Albertans believe they are paying the right amount of tax.
- Albertans across the three major party lines believe that high-income earners and corporations are not paying enough in taxes.
  - 70% of respondents (including 84% of NDP supporters, 66% of PC supporters, and 64% of Wildrose supporters) think the richest fifth of Albertans do not pay enough in taxes.
  - 55% (70% NDP, 50% PC, and 48% Wildrose) also think the second-richest fifth do not pay enough.
  - 61% of respondents (79% NDP, 56% PC, and 48% Wildrose) think major corporations do not pay enough in taxes.
  - 65% said people earning over \$250,000 should pay more taxes, while only 15% said no one should pay higher taxes.
- A majority of Albertans (60%) think it is more important for the government to improve access to public programs and services than it is to avoid a deficit, but there is a difference in opinion on how this should be accomplished: 46% believe access should be improved even if it means running a deficit, while 14% think improved access should be achieved through a tax increase.

- When presented with a list of 15 potential policy outcomes, 81% of respondents identified at least one option for which they would be willing to pay slightly higher taxes, and 58% identified five or more outcomes they would be willing to pay higher taxes for. Specific options selected varied across party lines, but there were some that rated consistently high:
  - 57% of Albertans (73% of NDP, 47% of PC, and 51% of Wildrose) would be willing to pay slightly higher taxes to provide more access to long-term residential care for seniors.
  - 57% (74% NDP, 51% PC, 49% Wildrose) would be willing to pay more to reduce wait times for emergency room services and surgeries.
  - 54% would be willing to pay more to increase income assistance to ensure the poorest Albertans can meet basic food and shelter needs.
  - The same number of respondents (54%) would pay more to make pensions, unemployment insurance, and social assistance stronger so that no Albertan goes without a decent basic income.
  - The options that ranked the lowest (26%) in terms of willingness to pay were a high-speed train between Edmonton and Calgary and full-day kindergarten.

“What the results show us,” says Parkland Institute Director Trevor Harrison, “is that although Albertans will say that their taxes are too high as a matter of course, when you dig a little deeper you find definite support for reforming our tax system to make it more progressive and to ensure public programs and services are protected and even enhanced.”

“Taxes are always a contentious subject,” acknowledges Parkland’s Executive Director Ricardo Acuña. “But Albertans are clearly willing to have that conversation if it is done thoughtfully and with an eye to making the tax system more fair and in support of the public interest.”

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A [backgrounder on the poll results](#) is available for download on the Parkland Institute website.

For more information or to arrange interviews:

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*The poll, an online survey of 1,174 Albertans aged 18 years or older, was conducted from January 13-20, 2017 by McAllister Opinion Research. Respondents were recruited from an MRIA Gold Seal accredited panel designed to replicate a cross-section of the Canadian population. The survey design included an oversample of respondents in Northern Alberta to increase the reliability of inference in areas of low population density.*

*Weighting was applied to the data according to Statistics Canada 2017 projections on region, age, and gender. The margin of error at 95% confidence is 2.88%.*

*The margin of error is provided here as reference only. Online panels are not strictly a probability sample, and therefore a true margin of error cannot be calculated. However, the evidence is that professionally-designed invitation-only online panel samples perform equal to or better than conventional telephone polls when it comes to election outcomes and alignment with known population values. Moreover, a Bayesian approach that accounts non-probability sampling generally produces similar confidence-related ranges when poststratification is taken into account. For further details, please see Andrew Gelman and David Rothschild's work on post-stratification and recent global assessments that suggest that electoral polling continues to be reliable, even in the US, despite media headlines to the contrary.*