



# POLICY *Brief*



## **The Apex of Alienation: What Longitudinal Data Reveal About Alberta and Saskatchewan Separatism**

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## Policy Brief: Context

- Debate over national unity is dominating the public agenda
- It is primarily driven by two conflicting factors
  - The economic threats posed by the U.S. Trump administration
  - Potential for independence referendums in Alberta and Quebec
- Canadian nationalism strong in face of Trump threats, yet:
  - Separatist sentiment in Alberta expressed in referendum initiative
  - Saskatchewan separatists also organizing
  - Quebec faces separatist referendum if PQ government elected
- Members of Trump administration supportive of Alberta separation
- Separatists in Alberta appear well-organized
- Alberta Premier's position ambiguous: "sovereign Alberta in united Canada"

## Policy Brief: Considerations

- Longitudinal polling data shows western discontent peaked in 2019
- It came following the re-election of the Trudeau government
- Rise of “Wexit” (western separation) sentiment rose
- Asked respondents in 2019 if they agreed with the statement they were “less committed” to Canada than before:
  - 42 per cent in Saskatchewan agreed
  - 38 per cent of Albertans agreed
- Today when asked the same question the results are:
  - 38 per cent in Saskatchewan agree
  - 32 per cent of Albertans agree
- Caution that only 100 surveyed in Sask., so large margin for error

## Policy Brief: Questions

- In general terms, what can be inferred from these results?
- Why do you think there's been a slight decline in alienation?
- What are the reasons for the continuing discontent?
- Are western grievances legitimate?
- If so, what are they?
- What policy measures would address the sentiment?