



EXPLAINING THE RAPID SHIFT IN PUBLIC OPINION FOR LIFTING COVID RESTRICTIONS: SURVEYS REVEALS HOW POSITIVE MESSAGING ABOUT COVID DROVE THE DESIRE FOR LIFTING RESTRICTIONS

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

- As protests continue politicians announced that many of the pandemic driven restrictions will be lifted. Several polling firms (i.e. Angus Reid, Abacus and Leger) observed a shift in Canadian opinion over the last few weeks, with growing support for the lifting of vaccine mandates/restrictions. What underlies this important shift in opinion? Is it the decline in Covid cases and/or the fatigue associated with the restrictions? Have the protests contributed to this shift in public opinion? A deeper dive into the recent data reveals that as politicians and thought leaders increasingly proclaimed that the worst of the crisis was behind us, so too did more Canadians end up supporting the immediate lifting of restrictions. In other words, messaging from policy makers was unable to sustain the level of concern about Covid that has been the basis for public support for mandates. Another important facet of the shift in public opinion is the movement among the double vaccinated (but not boosted) population who are increasingly sympathetic to lifting the restrictions. Crucially, that group has modified a polarized conflict that was previously seen as a pitting the vaccinated and unvaccinated. In other words, an increasing share of persons that are vaccinated supported lifting restrictions. The following study unpacks recent survey data to highlight the trend/direction of public opinion as described above.

The findings arise from two surveys conducted via web panel by Leger in partnership with the Association for Canadian Studies with the first between February 4 and 6, 2022 with 1546 Canadians and the second between January 7-9, 2022 with 1547 Canadians. While no margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample for comparative purposes the national sample of 1547 Canadians would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20

OVER APPROXIMATELY A MONTH THE PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS THAT FELT THE COVID-19 CRISIS WAS BEHIND US ROSE CONSIDERABLY REGARDLESS OF VACCINATION STATUS

What statement best describes your personal opinion of the COVID-19 crisis for Canada? The worst of the crisis is behind us	What is your vaccination status?			Total
	Two doses and a booster shot	Two doses	Not vaccinated	
January 7-9, 2022	18.6%	25.9%	44.3%	24.0%
February 4-6, 2022	43.9%	50.1%	63.2%	46.4%

OVER APPROXIMATELY A MONTH THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT, ESPECIALLY AMONGST THOSE PEOPLE WHO WERE DOUBLE VACCINATED, TO LIFT ALL RESTRICTIONS OF COVID 19

Governments should lift all restrictions related to COVID-19 right now?	What is your vaccination status?			Total
	Two doses and a booster shot	Two doses	Not vaccinated	
Jan 7-9, 2022	9.7%	22.2%	65.6%	20.3%
Feb 4-6, 2022	20.4%	46.7%	82.3%	32.4%

MESSAGING THAT THE WORST OF THE CRISIS IS BEHIND US DRIVES AN INCREASING NUMBER OF CANADIANS TO SUPPORT LIFTING ALL RESTRICTIONS

Do you think governments should lift all restrictions related to COVID-19 right now?	What statement best describes your personal opinion of the COVID-19 crisis for Canada?		
	The worst of the crisis is behind us	We are in the worst period of the crisis now	The worst of the crisis is yet to come
Yes	49.7%	18.9%	12.6%
No	44.1%	71.4%	82.2%
I don't know	6.3%	9.6%	5.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



FULLY VAXXED, DOUBLE VAXXED AND NOT VAXXED: OPINION
FRAGMENTATION EVIDENT ACROSS VACCINE STATUS

THE MAJORITY OF CANADIANS THAT ARE DOUBLE VAXXED BELIEVE THAT GETTING VACCINATED IS A PERSONAL CHOICE AND NOT EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Which of the following comes closer to your view? Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is	What is your vaccination status?			Total
	Two doses and a booster shot	Two doses	Not vaccinated	
Personal Choice	15.9%	55.0%	94.7%	32.9%
Everyone's Responsibility	81.7%	41.9%	5.3%	64.4%
I don't know	2.4%	3.1%		2.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

MOST DOUBLED VAXXED PERSONS FAVOR REOPENING AND LEARNING TO LIVE WITH COVID

Please tell me which of the following best represents how you feel about the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic.	What is your vaccination status?			Total
	Two doses and a booster shot	Two doses	Not vaccinated	
I don't feel comfortable at all with easing safety measures right now. This COVID-19 still is scary for me	15.1%	12.8%	2.1%	13.6%
We should be careful in terms of how quickly we ease safety measures, since we are not out of the woods yet	52.9%	29.5%	15.8%	43.4%
I am adequately vaccinated and with Omicron being less serious, it is about time we reopen and learn to live with this	27.3%	40.5%	5.3%	28.9%
I have been opposed to mandates and government measures for a while and believe governments should cease all public safe	4.8%	17.2%	76.8%	14.1%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

MOST DOUBLE VAXXED PERSONS APPEAR SYMPATHETIC TO THE 'MESSAGE' OF THE CONVOY

Overall, do you support the message the trucker Convoy (also know as Freedom Convoy) protests are conveying of no vaccine mandates and less public health measures, or do you oppose the message?	What is your vaccination status?			Total
	Two doses and a booster shot	Two doses	Not vaccinated	
Strongly support	6.5%	23.4%	80.0%	16.7%
Somewhat support	11.0%	26.0%	7.4%	14.8%
Somewhat oppose	16.2%	16.5%	3.2%	15.1%
Strongly oppose	62.1%	22.4%	1.1%	46.6%
I don't know	4.3%	11.8%	8.4%	6.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

CANADIANS ARE EVENLY DIVIDED ABOUT WHO TO BLAME FOR THE PROTESTS, WHILE THE DOUBLE VAXXED ARE MOST LIKELY TO BLAME POLITICIANS FOR CONDESCENDING ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE OPPONENTS OF VACCINE MANDATES

The Prime Minister and Premiers share the blame for the protest in Ottawa because of their condescending attitude toward Canadians who disagree with vaccine mandates and lockdowns. - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with	What is your vaccination status?			Total
	Two doses and a booster shot	Two doses	Not vaccinated	
Strongly agree	15.0%	28.2%	74.0%	23.3%
Somewhat agree	18.8%	29.7%	11.5%	21.1%
Somewhat disagree	24.0%	13.3%	5.2%	19.6%
Strongly disagree	33.4%	12.1%	3.1%	25.1%
I don't know	8.7%	16.7%	6.3%	10.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

TWO IN THREE DOUBLE VAXXED ARE SYMPATHETIC TO THE CONCERNS VOICED BY THE PROTESTERS

I am vaccinated against COVID-19, but I do sympathize with the concerns and frustrations being voiced by people involved in the trucker protest in Ottawa. - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.	What is your vaccination status?	
	Two doses and a booster shot	Two doses
Strongly agree	15.5%	36.9%
Somewhat agree	19.9%	30.8%
Somewhat disagree	21.4%	11.3%
Strongly disagree	39.5%	13.8%
I don't know	3.7%	7.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

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