

# Canadians have no interest in joining unions: Poll

BY STEFANIA MORETTI, QMI AGENCY

FIRST POSTED: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 05, 2011 12:00 AM EDT

---

The vast majority of non-unionized Canadians have no interest in joining a union, according to a new poll released Monday.

The Canadian LabourWatch Association, which describes itself as a not-for-profit, pro-employee choice advocacy group, commissioned Nanos Research to survey working Canadians on their impressions of unions and found just under a third belong to an employee union. For most, membership came when they took the job.

Nearly eight in 10 who did not hold a union job would not want to be unionized if given the choice, Nanos said. Nearly 84% agreed with having a secret ballot vote when forming a union is on the table.

Roughly three-quarters agreed with the right of workers to cross picket lines.

The majority of workers were also opposed to the idea of union dues paying for things such as partisan politics (59.8%), including attack ads (73.3%) and non-work advocacy groups (70%).

A whopping 83% of Canadians agreed with mandatory public financial disclosure for both public and private sector unions on a regular basis.

John Mortimer, president of LabourWatch, said Canada is the only country where someone's job is at risk if they don't finance a union's political agenda. That's because union dues in Canada are a condition of employment.

"You must pay union dues to get your job and keep you job even if the union uses them not for collective bargaining but for politics," he said. "In every other country, from Sweden to Russia, Italy to England, Australia to the U.S., that's no longer allowed. Money in politics in the rest of the world is voluntary money, not compelled money.

"The Canadian public is not entitled to know at law what is going on with union financial," he said, adding 75% of the public sector is unionized and tax dollars fund the union dues.

On the flip side, a clear majority of respondents said unions have a positive impact on job security. More than half of unionized workers said their dues are well spent and one-in-two still believe unions remain relevant.

Nanos randomly surveyed 1,001 employed Canadians between July 20 and July 25, 2011, by telephone for the results of this survey. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.1%, 19 times out of 20.

Stefania.Moretti@canoe.ca