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Sent: 14 October 2019 08:26

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Subject: Poll: 70% back repeat Yes/No question for second independence referendum

Don't know if you have seen the attached article in the Scotsman on Saturday 12 October but we may be able to use it around the briefing on the questions

[redacted]

[redacted]

Referendum Question

- *[there has been another poll added since committee appearance]* There have now been 58 polls since June 2016 asking the 2014 Scottish independence referendum question as worded in 2014. The question has been asked almost every month since June 2016. In only 11 of the 41 months since June 2016 has there not been a poll or polls asking the 2014 independence referendum question. *[I should note that this only includes polls from those reputable polling companies featured on the What Scotland Thinks website associated with Sir John Curtice. The true number of times the question has been asked in different types of poll may well be far higher]*

[redacted]

- 77% agreed that 'I would be satisfied if [the 2014 Scottish independence referendum question 'should Scotland become an independent country'] question was used again in another referendum', 9% disagreed and 11% neither agreed nor disagreed (2% didn't know) ([Survation poll](#), Scotland, early October 2019).
- 87% thought the question was clear and easy to understand.
- 81% thought the question was fair.

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- In January 2013 the Electoral Commission published its report on the referendum question proposed by the Scottish Government at the time. The Commission recommended the question be reworded to make it more neutral. This was accepted by Ministers.
- In their 2013 report on the testing of the previous referendum question, the Electoral Commission said that “Participants were clear that the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answers were easy to understand, straightforward and unambiguous.”.
- *[there has been another poll added since committee appearance]* There have now been 58 polls since June 2016 asking the 2014 Scottish independence referendum question as worded in 2014. The question has been asked almost every month since June 2016. In only 11 of the 41 months since June 2016 has there not been a poll or polls asking the 2014 independence referendum question. *[I should note that this only includes polls from those reputable polling companies featured on the What Scotland Thinks website associated with Sir John Curtice. The true number of times the question has been asked in different types of poll may well be far higher]*
- Where questions have previously been put to the public at a referendum, voters will have become familiar with the question and understand which campaign each side is associated with.
- On important issues, subsequent polls and voter engagement may have maintained this association. Any change to the question may therefore risk increased voter confusion, if voters expect to engage with the question in the same way as at a previous poll.
- This is a clear example of a question still familiar to voters which does not need tested again. A change to that question risks voter confusion.

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In a [Survation poll](#) (on behalf of Progress Scotland) of just over 2,000 adults in Scotland undertaken in early October 2019, respondents were asked: In the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, the question on the ballot paper was ‘Should Scotland become an independent country’ with the options of Yes or No. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about that question?

- over three quarters (77%) **agreed that ‘I would be satisfied if that question was used again in another referendum’**, 10% disagreed, 11% neither agreed nor disagreed (2% didn’t know).
- 87% agreed that ‘the question was clear and easy to understand’.
- 81% agreed that ‘the question was fair’.

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