Beat: Business

Support for Scottish independence ticks up in latest poll

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USPA News - Support for an independent Scotland has slightly increased over the past few weeks as voters start to make up their minds about whether to support breaking away from the United Kingdom in next month`s historic independence vote, according to a new poll released on Monday. Support for independence has seen up and downs over the past few years, but the latest poll by ICM Research shows an increasing number of voters have made their decision, said Martin Boon of ICM. He said the number of people who are still unsure about which way to vote fell from 21 percent in July to 14 percent this month.

Numbers released by the public opinion researcher shows that support in favor of independence is up by 4 points to 38 percent, while the number of those against independence has ticked up by 2 points to 47 percent. But while the general trend appears to indicate a vote in favor of independence is unlikely, both sides are still short of an outright majority. "The cursory impression would be that `Don`t Know`s` (DKs) are falling to Yes in the ratio of 2:1, but this would be a wholly wrong conclusion," Boon said. "In fact, DKs on this poll have fallen 2:1 in favor of No, a finding that must imply that a swing toward the Yes camp has occurred among people who have changed their mind. Indeed, it further implies that DKs are swinging against the general trend." The latest poll puts the number in favor of independence back to where it was in June, but Boon cautioned that the outcome of referendums with an unprecedented high turnout is difficult to predict. "By definition, pollsters know less about prior non-voters than voters, and if a poll contains many more prior non-voters than usual, then another little layer of uncertainty about the efficacy of a poll has been added," he said. The latest ICM Research poll showed that 71 percent of respondents said they were absolutely certain to vote, while another 14 percent said they were very likely to vote. The referendum is scheduled to take place on September 18 after British Prime Minister David Cameron and Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond signed the historic "Edinburgh Agreement" in October 2012, which granted the Scottish government the special powers necessary for an independence referendum. It followed months of negotiations on the specific details of the agreement. Cameron has vowed to keep the United Kingdom united and the British government has become increasingly vocal in its stance against Scottish independence, with officials warning Scotland that it would not be able to keep the pound as its currency if it breaks away from the union. A newly-independent Scotland would also force its departure from the European Union (EU) until it can negotiate its entry on its own. If Scottish voters choose to break away from the United Kingdom, the proposed date of independence would be March 24, 2016, following the dissolution of the current Scottish Parliament, which is expected to dissolve at 11:59 p.m. the day before. March 24 is also the anniversary of both the Union of the Crowns in 1603 and the signing of the Acts of Union in 1707.

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