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- 64% SUPPORT DEATH PENALTY FOR SERIAL KILLERS --**
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Public Release Date: Embargoed until Friday, November 19 at 9:00pm (EDT)

This National Angus Reid Group/Globe and Mail/CTV poll is based on a national telephone survey conducted between November 4th and November 14th, 1999 among a representative cross-section of 1,500 Canadian adults. These data are statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, age and sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to 1996 Census data.

With a national sample of 1,500, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results are within ± 2.5 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

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Today it was revealed that 1994 convicted killer Karla Homolka has withdrawn her bid to seek temporary passes from Joliette prison. Homolka was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment for the deaths of two Ontario teenagers. The notorious case, involving her husband Paul Bernardo who was imprisoned indefinitely for his primary role in the killings, is also back in the headlines. On the same day that Ms. Homolka withdrew her bid, documents became available that highlighted Paul Bernardo's appeal for a new trial claiming the judge made errors in law and pointing the finger at his ex-wife for having played a primary role in the killings.

An Angus Reid / Globe and Mail / CTV poll released tonight indicates that a full majority (75%) of Canadians believe that "since Ms. Homolka committed such a terrible crime, she should be locked up until the day of her parole and have no access to any privileges". Further, 65% of Canadians support the death penalty for serial killers and those who murder police officers or prison guards. The death penalty has been hotly debated from time to time over the last two decades since its abolition by Parliament in 1975.

These are the highlights gleaned from a national Angus Reid Group/Globe and Mail/CTV telephone survey of 1,500 Canadian adults. Interviews were conducted between November 4th and November 14th, 1999. A sample size of 1,500 is said to have a corresponding margin of error of ± 2.5 percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty.

Homolka Should be Locked Up with No Access to any Privileges

A full majority of Canadians (75%) believe that “since Ms. Homolka committed such a terrible crime, she should be locked up until the day of her parole and have no access to any privileges”. Nearly one quarter (23%) agreed that “Ms. Homolka is going to be paroled in the future, it is important to start doing things now to help her rejoin society – this would include giving her privileges that are provided for other prisoners like access to day passes and educational opportunities”.

Women (81%), over 55 year olds (80%) and respondents who do not have a university education (79%) are the most likely to say she should not be granted any privileges.

Regionally, Québécois (30%) are the most likely to suggest that Homolka should be allowed the same privileges as other prisoners in order to help her to rejoin society compared to Alberta (27%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (25%), British Columbia (24%), Ontario (18%) and the Atlantic (16%).

Serial Killers Should Receive the Death Penalty

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Canadians believe “we should have the death penalty in Canada for serial killers and those who murder police officers or prison guards”. The intensity of agreement is strong as most (44%) “strongly agree” and the other approximately 20% “somewhat agree” with capital punishment in these types of cases. Those who disagree with the death penalty (36%) for such crimes are more likely to “strongly disagree” (24%) than “somewhat disagree” (approximately 12%).

Consistent with the sentiment regarding Homolka’s treatment, the university educated (45%) and young Canadians (56%) are least likely to suggest that the death penalty be allowed in Canada. Men (70%), on the other hand, are more likely than women (58%) to support the death penalty despite the fact that they were more lenient than women regarding Homolka’s rehabilitation.

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