

## **ALBERTANS OPPOSE SAME SEX MARRIAGE**

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A Similar Proportion (58%) Would Support Klein's Use of 'Not  
Withstanding Clause' If Federal Law Redefining Marriage is  
Changed***

***Compared to One Year Ago, Albertans Less Likely to Say "We  
Should Be Tolerant of Those With Different Moral Standards"  
(56%, Down 13 points)***



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**Calgary, AB** – As the debate over the recognition of same-sex marriage continues across the country and as the Federal Government seeks an opinion from the Supreme Court over its draft legislation, a new Ipsos-Reid/CFCN/Globe and Mail poll shows that Albertans are generally opposed to same-sex marriage and willing to invoke the "Not Withstanding Clause" should the Federal Government pass legislation that would change the definition of marriage to include same-sex unions. The majority of Albertans (57%) say they oppose "same-sex couples being allowed to marry and register their marriage with the provincial government". Virtually the same proportion (58%) say they support the "use of the Not Withstanding Clause" to exempt Alberta from recognizing same-sex marriages. These findings are set in the context of a large decrease in the percentage of Albertans who say we should be more tolerant. Overall, a majority of Albertans (56%) still agree that "we should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards, even if these are very different from our own" but the proportion who agrees has dropped 13 percentage-points since April 2002.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/CFCN/Globe and Mail poll conducted between June 26th and June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 800 adult Albertans. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.5$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Albertan population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data*

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*were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Alberta population according to the 2001 Census data.*

### ***Nearly 6-in-10 (57%) Albertans Oppose Same Sex Marriage***

In the wake of court rulings in Ontario, BC and Quebec, debate over same-sex marriage has erupted in Alberta. A majority of Albertans (57%) are opposed to same-sex couples being allowed to marry and register their marriage with their provincial government. This opposition is quite intense with 43% who “strongly oppose” and only 14% who “somewhat oppose”. Meanwhile, 41% say they support the recognition of same-sex marriage (20% “strongly support” and 21% “somewhat support”). In the national context, the proportion of Albertans (57%) who oppose same-sex marriage is 13 points higher than the national average (44%).

- Older Albertans (77%) are more likely than middle aged (60%) and younger (41%) Albertans to oppose same-sex marriage.
- Men (63%) are more likely than women (51%) to oppose same-sex marriage.
- Albertans living in rural areas (65%) are more likely than those living in urban areas (45%) to oppose same-sex marriage.

### ***A Majority (58%) Would Support Klein's Use of the 'Not Withstanding Clause' If Federal Law Redefining Marriage is Changed***

The courts have given the Federal Government until July 2004 to include same-sex unions in the definition of marriage. Over the last few weeks, Premier Klein has threatened to use the “Not Withstanding Clause” to exempt Alberta from recognizing same-sex marriages. A majority (58%) of Albertans are onside saying they would support Alberta's use of the “Not Withstanding Clause” in this case. Support is quite strong with 45% who “strongly support” and only 13% who “somewhat support”. In contrast, 40% oppose, (27% “strongly oppose” and 13% “somewhat oppose”), the use of the “Not Withstanding Clause” in this case.

- Older Albertans (75%) are more likely than middle aged (60%) and young adults (44%) to support the use of the “Not Withstanding Clause” in this case.
- Men (64%) are more likely to support the use of the “Not Withstanding Clause” in this case than women (52%).
- Albertans living in rural regions (67%) are more likely than their counterparts living in urban regions (54%) support for the use of the “Not Withstanding Clause” in this case.

More generally, Albertans are divided over whether the morals and beliefs of the Klein Government reflect their own. In all, 44% agree that “in general the morals and values held by the current Government of Alberta are similar to my own” while 37% disagree.

***Compared to One Year Ago, Albertans Less Likely to Say “We Should Be Tolerant of Those With Different Moral Standards” (56%, Down 13 points)***

The debate over same sex marriage occurs at the same time as Albertans’ values seem to be changing. The percentage of Albertans who agree that “we should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards, even if these are very different from our own”, has seen a full 13 percentage-point drop since April 2002, sliding down from 69% to 56%. Meanwhile, almost three-in-ten (27%) Albertans disagree with this statement and 14% are neutral.

- Young adults (73%) are more likely than middle aged (49%) and older Albertans (46%) to agree with the statement.
- Those with Post Secondary education (60%) are more likely to than others (50%) to agree with the statement.
- Albertans living in urban areas (60%) are more likely than those living in rural areas (50%) to agree with this statement.



More specifically, on the issue of homosexuality, half of Albertans (49%) disagree that homosexuality is “morally acceptable”. In fact, the percentage of Albertans who say homosexuality is “morally acceptable” has dropped 5 points (from 45% to 40%) in the last year.

- Women (46%) are more likely to agree with the statement than men (32%).
- University graduates (48%) are more likely to than others (35%) to agree with the statement.
- Young adults (58%) are more likely than middle aged (33%) and older Albertans (25%) to agree with the statement

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