

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE: THE DEBATE ENJOINED

Majority (59%) of Canadians Oppose Church Directives to Politicians on Public Policy Issues

Majority (54%) Say Politicians Should Vote According to Wishes of Constituents, Not Own Conscience (39%) or Church Leaders (6%)

Canadians Split on Application of Word "Marriage" As Support for Concept of Same-Sex Marriage Slips from 54% to 49%



Public Release Date: Friday, August 8th, 2003 - 11:00 p.m. (EDT)

Ipsos-Reid is Canada's leading marketing research and public affairs company, both in size and reputation. It operates in seven cities and employs more than 300 researchers and support staff in Canada. Ipsos-Reid has the biggest network of telephone call centres, as well as the largest prerecruited household and online panels in Canada. Its Canadian marketing research and public affairs practices are staffed with seasoned research consultants with extensive industry-specific backgrounds offering the premier suite of research vehicles in Canada, including the Ipsos Trend Report, the leading source of public opinion in the country. Ipsos-Reid is a member of the Ipsos Group, the second largest survey-based marketing research company in the world.

Visit www.ipsos-reid.com

For copies of other news releases, please visit

http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/PRE_REL.cfm

© Ipsos-Reid

***Washington | New York | Minneapolis | San Francisco
Vancouver | Edmonton | Calgary | Winnipeg | Toronto | Ottawa | Montreal***



SAME-SEX MARRIAGE: THE DEBATE ENJOINED

Majority (59%) of Canadians Oppose Church Directives to Politicians on Public Policy Issues

Majority (54%) Say Politicians Should Vote According to Wishes of Constituents, Not Own Conscience (39%) or Church Leaders (6%)

Canadians Split on Application of Word “Marriage” As Support for Concept of Same-Sex Marriage Slips from 54% to 49%

Toronto, ONTARIO – As the issue of same-sex marriage and gay rights heats up around the world, the Pope and the Catholic Church waded into the debate in an official document, that called on all Catholic legislators around the world to vote against any legislation that would recognize ‘gay marriage’. However, according to the latest Ipsos-Reid/CTV/Globe and Mail poll released today, six in ten (59%) Canadians oppose the Catholic Church and other religious groups issuing directives to politicians on how they should vote on public policy issues. In fact, a plurality (44%) of Canadians strongly opposes such directives.

Asked specifically on what basis politicians should decide their vote on same-sex marriage, a majority (54%) feel that votes should be cast according the wishes of a politician’s constituents. This compares to 39% who feel that a vote on this issue should be based on a politician’s own conscience. In further evidence of a backlash against the Church, just one in twenty (6%) feel that on the same-sex marriage issue, a politician should vote according to how his/her’s religious leaders say they should.

However, while Canadians may express a definite opinion on the role of the Church in such policy discussions, they are split on the actual concept and issues concerning ‘gay marriage’.



Canadians split evenly between supporting (49%) and opposing (49%) the concept of allowing same-sex couples to marry and register their marriage with their provincial government. This represents a slip from the 54% support recorded in early June.

One of the key arguments in the discussion over same-sex marriage is the actual use of the term 'marriage'. Canadians are just as split on this issue as on the general concept. Just as many Canadians say that 'the word marriage should apply to any two people, regardless of sexual orientation, who choose to make a life commitment to each other' (38%) as say that 'the word marriage should apply exclusively to the union of a man and a women' (37%). One in four (24%) opt for a compromise by saying that 'the word marriage should apply exclusively to the union of a man and a women and that there should be some other legal term for the formal union of same-sex couples.'

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/CTV/Globe and Mail poll conducted between August 5th and August 7th, 2003. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,057 adult Canadians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2001 Census data.

Six in ten (59%) Canadians oppose the Catholic Church and other religious groups issuing directives to politicians on how they should vote on public policy issues. In fact, a plurality (44%) of Canadians strongly opposes such directives. In total, four in ten (38%) say they support the Catholic Church and other religious leaders in issuing directives to politicians on public policy issues, with one in five (22%) who strongly support such actions.

- Regionally, the strongest opposition is recorded among residents of Quebec (62%), Ontario (62%), Atlantic Canada (59%) and British Columbia (59%). This compares to just 40% opposition among the residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba. In fact, this region is the only one where a majority (59%) of residents supports such actions.
- A majority of both women (63%) and men (55%) express opposition, however, women are significantly more likely to do so, while men (42%) are significantly more likely to support such actions than are women (35%).
- Canadians in upper (64%) and middle (59%) income households are significantly more likely to express opposition than are their counterparts in lower income households (50%).
- Half of Roman Catholic Canadians (52%) express opposition to such directives.

Asked specifically on what basis politicians should decide their vote on same-sex marriage, a majority (54%) feel that votes should be cast according the wishes of a politician's constituents. This compares to 39% who feel that a vote on this issue should be based on a politician's own conscience. In further evidence of a backlash against the Church, just one in twenty (6%) feel that on the same-sex marriage issue, a politician should vote according to how his/her's religious leaders say they should.

- Regionally, residents of Alberta (66%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (59%) lead as to voting according to constituents wishes, followed by those in British Columbia (54%), Ontario (53%) and Atlantic Canada (53%). Quebec (48%) is the only part of the country where a majority does not feel this way. In fact, almost as many (45%) in Quebec hold the view that a politician should vote according to their conscience on this issue. There is no



regional difference in the proportion that feels a politician should follow the directive of his or her 's religious leaders.

- Interestingly, young adults (58%) and middle-aged (57%) Canadians are significantly more likely to hold the position that on the issue of same-sex marriage, that politicians should vote according to the wishes of his or her's constituents, than are their older counterparts (44%). In comparison, older (49%) Canadians are significantly more likely than either their young adult (35%) or middle-aged (34%) counterparts to hold the view that politicians should vote according to their conscience on this issue.
- Canadians with post-secondary education/some university (58%) or a university degree (58%) are more likely to hold the view that a politician should vote according to their constituent's wishes than are those with a high school diploma (47%) or less education (37%).
- Canadians in upper income households (62%) are significantly more likely than are those in middle (54%) or lower (42%) income households to hold the view that a vote on this issue should be based on constituents issues, where as those in lower income households (44%) are significantly more likely than their upper household income (34%) counterparts to hold the view that a vote on this issue should be based on a politicians on conscience on the issue.
- One in ten (9%) Canadians who oppose same-sex marriage say that politicians should vote according to how his or her 's religious leaders say they should. In comparison, 48% of this group believe a vote should be based on the wishes of constituents and 40% believe it should be based on the personal conscience of the politician. Of those who support same-sex marriage, six in ten (60%) opt for the view of the wishes of constituents, with

37% saying that it should be up to the conscience of the politician, and just 2% believe that a politician should vote based on the views of his/her 's religious leaders.

- Catholics are slightly less likely than the national average (48% versus 54%) to say that a politician's vote on this issue should be based on the wishes of their constituents, and are as likely (42% versus 39%) to hold the view that it should be based on the personal conscience of the politician. Catholics are equally likely as the national average (7% versus 6%) to hold a politician should vote on this issue according to how his or her 's religious leaders say they should.

However, while Canadians may express a definite opinion on the role of the Church in such policy discussions, they are split on the actual issue of same-sex marriage. In fact, Canadians split evenly between those who support (49%) and those who oppose (49%) allowing same-sex couples to marry and register their marriage with their provincial government. This represents a slip from the 54% support recorded in early June. However, while overall support is split, the intensity is stronger on the opposition side, with close to four in ten (37%) who strongly oppose same-sex marriage, compared to just 26% who strongly support to policy.

- Support is strongest in Quebec (60%), British Columbia (53%) and Atlantic Canada (51%), followed by Ontario (46%), Alberta (41%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (37%). In fact, three of the regions have a at least half who express support (Quebec 60%; British Columbia 53%; Atlantic Canada 51%), while the other three regions have at least half who are opposed (Saskatchewan/Manitoba 61%; Alberta 58%; and Ontario 52%).
- Women (55% versus 44% of men) are significantly more likely to support same-sex marriage, while men (54% versus 44% of women) are significantly more likely to oppose some-sex marriage.

- Young adults (63%) are significantly more likely to support same-sex marriage than are their middle aged (50%) or older (35%) counterparts, while there is almost exact reverse image on the opposition side. Older (63%) Canadians are significantly more likely than are their middle aged (49%) or young adult (34%) counterparts.
- Canadians without a high school diploma (66%) or with just a high school diploma (58%) are significantly more likely to oppose the policy than are university graduates (36%).
- Those in the highest income households (56%) are significantly more likely than their counterparts in middle (48%) or lower (44%) income households to express support for same-sex marriage.
- Roman Catholic Canadians are evenly split on the issue with 50% who support the policy and 48% who oppose it.

One of the key arguments in the discussion over same-sex marriage is the actual use of the term ‘marriage’. Canadians are just as split on this issue as on the general concept. Just as many Canadians say that ‘the word marriage should apply to any two people, regardless of sexual orientation, who choose to make a life commitment to each other’ (38%) as say that ‘the word marriage should apply exclusively to the union of a man and a women’ (37%). One in four (24%) opt for a middle ground compromise by saying that ‘the word marriage should apply exclusively to the union of a man and a women an that there should be some other legal term for the formal union of same-sex couples.’

- The view that marriage should refer to any two people, regardless of sexual orientation is strongest among residents of British Columbia (45%), Quebec (43%), Atlantic Canada (38%) and Ontario (37%), followed by Saskatchewan/Manitoba (29%) and Alberta (24%). Meanwhile, residents of Alberta (49%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (49%) are more likely

than are those in Atlantic Canada (40%), Ontario (37%), British Columbia (33%) and Quebec (32%) to say that marriage should apply exclusively to the union of a man and a woman. There are no significant regional differences in the proportion that opt for the compromise position.

- Women (43% versus 32% of men) are significantly more likely to believe that the word marriage should apply to any two people who choose to make a life commitment, regardless of their sexual orientation. In comparison, men (43% versus 32% of women) are significantly more likely to hold the view that the word marriage should apply exclusively to the union of a man and a woman.
- Young adult (52%) Canadians are significantly more likely to believe marriage should be between any two individuals regardless of sexual orientation, than are their middle aged (37%) or older (24%) counterparts. In comparison, the view that marriage should only be used to signify the union of a man and a woman, is significantly stronger among older (45%) and middle-aged (39%) Canadians than among young adult (28%) Canadians. Older (30%) Canadians are significantly more likely to opt for the compromise on finding another term for same-sex unions than are their middle-age (24%) and young adult (18%) counterparts.
- Canadians from upper income households (47%) are significantly more likely than are their counterparts in middle (35%) or lower (31%) income households to hold the position that marriage should refer to any two people who make a life commitment, regardless of their sexual orientation, while Canadians from lower (46%) and middle (39%) income households are significantly more likely than Canadians in upper income households (27%) to hold the position that the word marriage should refer exclusively to the union of a heterosexual couple.



- Canadians without a high school diploma (55%) and those with just a high school diploma (48%) are significantly more likely than are university graduates (25%) to believe that marriage should exclusively refer to the union of a man and a woman.
- Not surprising, Canadians who support same-sex marriage (73%) are overwhelmingly more likely than those who oppose (3%) to say the word marriage should apply to any two people who choose to make a life commitment to each other. In comparison, two-thirds (68%) of Canadian who oppose same-sex marriage (versus 7% of those who support) say that the term marriage should apply exclusively to heterosexual couples. This group is also significantly more likely than those who support same-sex marriage (28% versus 19%) to believe that marriage should refer exclusively to heterosexual couples, but that another legal term should be found for the union of same-sex couples.
- The views of Roman Catholics on this topic are almost identical to the national average.

-30-

For more information on this news release, please contact:

***John Wright
Senior Vice-President
Ipsos-Reid Public Affairs
(416) 324-2900***

For full tabular results, please visit our website at www.ipsos-reid.com. News Releases are available at http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/PRE_REL.cfm