

# ALBERTANS CONTINUE TO OPPOSE SAME SEX MARRIAGE

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Federal Legislation Redefining Marriage to Include Same-Sex  
Couples*

*Despite Two Years of Debate, Albertans' Underlying Values on  
the Issue Remain Unchanged*



Ipsos Reid

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## ALBERTANS CONTINUE TO OPPOSE SAME SEX MARRIAGE

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### *Despite Two Years of Debate, Albertans' Underlying Values on the Issue Remain Unchanged*

**Calgary, AB** – With same-sex marriage now established in law, a new Ipsos Reid poll shows that a majority (56%) of Albertans disapprove of the federal Civil Marriage Act (Bill C-38) that redefines marriage to include same-sex couples, and forces all levels of government to recognize same-sex marriages. And, despite vigorous public debate, court rulings, and now federal legislation, Albertan's core attitudes remain in opposition to same-sex marriage.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between July 18th and July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2005. 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 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.*

## ***A Majority of Albertans (56%) Disapprove of Bill C-38 – The Federal Legislation Redefining Marriage to Include Same-Sex Couples***

Near the end of a contentious spring session in the House of Commons, the governing Liberals – with the support of the Bloc Quebecois and the NDP, successfully passed Bill C-38 – the Civil Marriage Act. The bill has since passed the senate and been given royal assent. While votes for the bill were largely split along party lines, it did cause at least one cabinet minister (Joe Comuzzi – Minister Responsible for Northern Ontario) to leave the Liberal party. A majority of Albertans are against this piece of legislation. Overall, 56% of those surveyed say they disapprove of Bill C-38. This disapproval is quite intense, with almost half (46%) of Albertans saying they “strongly disapprove” and 10% saying they “somewhat disapprove”. Approval of the legislation sits at 42% but intensity of opinion is much lower with 22% who “strongly approve” and 19% who “somewhat approve” of the legislation.

- Women (48%) are more likely to approve of the Civil Marriage Act than men (35%).
- Approval of the legislation declines with age from 55% among 18-34 year olds to 39% among 35-54 year olds and 29% among those aged 55+.
- Residents of Calgary (44%) and Edmonton (46%) are more likely than Albertans living in the rest of the province (34%) to approve of the legislation.

## ***Despite Two Years of Debate, Albertans’ Underlying Values on the Issue Remain Unchanged***

The last two years have been characterized by intense debate over same-sex issues and yet, Ipsos Reid’s tracking on support for same-sex marriage generally, tolerance towards those with different lifestyles, and acceptance of homosexuality and have remained essentially unchanged since 2003.

- A majority of Albertans (55% today vs. 57% in July 2003) are still opposed to the general idea of “same-sex couples being allowed to marry and register their

marriage with their provincial government”. This includes 42% who “strongly oppose” and 13% who “somewhat oppose” same sex marriage. Meanwhile, 42% currently support same-sex marriage (23% “strongly support” and 19% “somewhat support”) compared with 41% in 2003. Calgary (47%) and Edmonton (46%) are more likely than the rest of the province (34%) to support same sex marriage.

- Six-in-ten (58%) Albertans agree (rate 5, 6 or 7 out of 7) while 27% disagree (rate 1, 2 or 3 out of 7) 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”. In 2003, 56% agreed with this statement while 27% disagreed. Calgary (45%) and Edmonton (45%) are more likely than the rest of the province (31%) to say we should be more tolerant.
- But, this tolerant attitude does not necessarily extend to homosexuality. Significantly fewer respondents (41%) agree (rate 5, 6 or 7) that “homosexuality is morally acceptable” while half of Albertans (49%) disagree (rate 1, 2 or 3). Both are unchanged since 2003). Calgary (36%) is more likely than Edmonton (28%) and the rest of Alberta (24%) to say homosexuality is morally acceptable.

On all three measures, women and younger Albertans tend to be more supportive of same-sex marriage, more tolerant of those with different lifestyles and more likely to say homosexuality is morally acceptable.

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*For more information on this news release, please contact:*

*Peter Weylie  
Vice-President  
Public Affairs Alberta  
Ipsos Reid  
(403) 390-7052*

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