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While Two Thirds (65%) Believe in Hand Gun and Long gun Registry, just 38% Agree with Automatic 10-year Sentence for those caught with non-registered Handguns

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Toronto, ON – In light of the recent school shootings in Canada over the past two years, the results of a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for CanWest News Service and Global National finds that fully half (50%) of Canadians say that schools in their community have become 'less safe' for the students attending them than they were five years ago. Despite increased news attention paid to violence in schools, nearly one quarter (23%) maintain that the schools in their community have become 'more safe', while a little less (21%) say that they are no more or no less safe than they were five years ago.

And what do Canadians blame as being the primary causes of violence in public schools in Canada? One third (35%) cite absent, lenient or poor parenting, while one quarter (23%) agree that 'lack of morals, conscience and respect' is a primary cause. Equally (23%), television and media violence were offered as primary causes of violence in public schools in Canada.

With the tragic murder of Jordan Manners at C.W. Jefferys school in Toronto last week fresh in the memories of Canadians, nearly half (44%) say that current school board policies in their area that deal with incidents of school violence are 'too lenient'. Just 3% agree that the policies in their area are 'too harsh', while four in ten (42%) believe them to be 'about right'.

The lingering debate about gun control in Canada is once again resurfacing to the forefront of political discourse, but it appears that no resolution is in sight. In the face of scrapping the long-barrelled gun registry being on the agenda of the Conservative government in Ottawa, two thirds (65%) of Canadians believe that Canada should have both a handgun registry and a long-gun registry. Only three in ten (30%) believe that Canada should have a handgun registry, but not require people to register their long-barrelled guns.

Despite calls from many for tougher measures for those who illegally posses handguns, just four in ten (38%) believe that if a person is caught in the possession of a non-registered handgun they should be subjected to an automatic minimum sentence of 10 years, regardless of their age. On the other hand, a strong majority (59%) believe that if a person is caught in the possession of a non-registered handgun there should be no mandatory minimum sentence imposed. Furthermore, these Canadians think that the courts should have the discretion to hand down an appropriate punishment as they see fit.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for CanWest News Service and Global National from May 29 to May 31, 2007. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1004 adults across Canada was interviewed by telephone. 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 population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure that

the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.

Half (50%) Say Schools Less Safe...

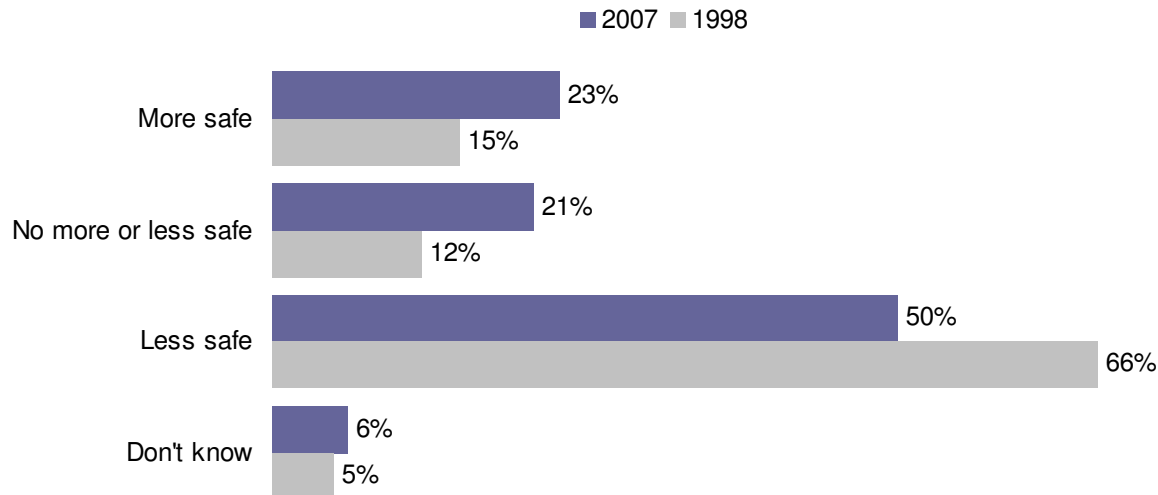
In light of the recent shootings in Toronto and Montreal over the past few years, fully half (50%) of Canadians say that schools in their community have become 'less safe' for the students attending them than they were five years ago. Despite increased news attention paid to violence in schools, nearly one quarter (23%) maintain that the schools in their community have become 'more safe', while a little less (21%) say that they are 'no more or no less safe' than they were five years ago.

- Canadians residing in urban centres are more likely than Canadians in rural areas to say that their schools have become 'less safe', with 52% compared to 41% saying so.
- Possibly as a result of the close proximity to the recent shootings in Toronto, over half (54%) of Canadians living in Ontario are more likely than those living in other regions to say that their schools have become 'less safe'. In comparison, just under half (48%) of Quebecers say the same, while 44% of British Columbians agree that their schools are less safe.

Canadians Think Schools Safer than a Decade Ago...

When compared to data obtained in a similar survey issued in 1998, despite the fact that half (50%) of Canadians currently feel 'less safe', more Canadians feel safer now than they did nine years ago. Nearly one quarter (23%) currently feel 'more safe' than they did five years ago, while only 15% of Canadians in 1998 said that they feel safer than they did five years previous.

Graph 1: School Safety Then and Now



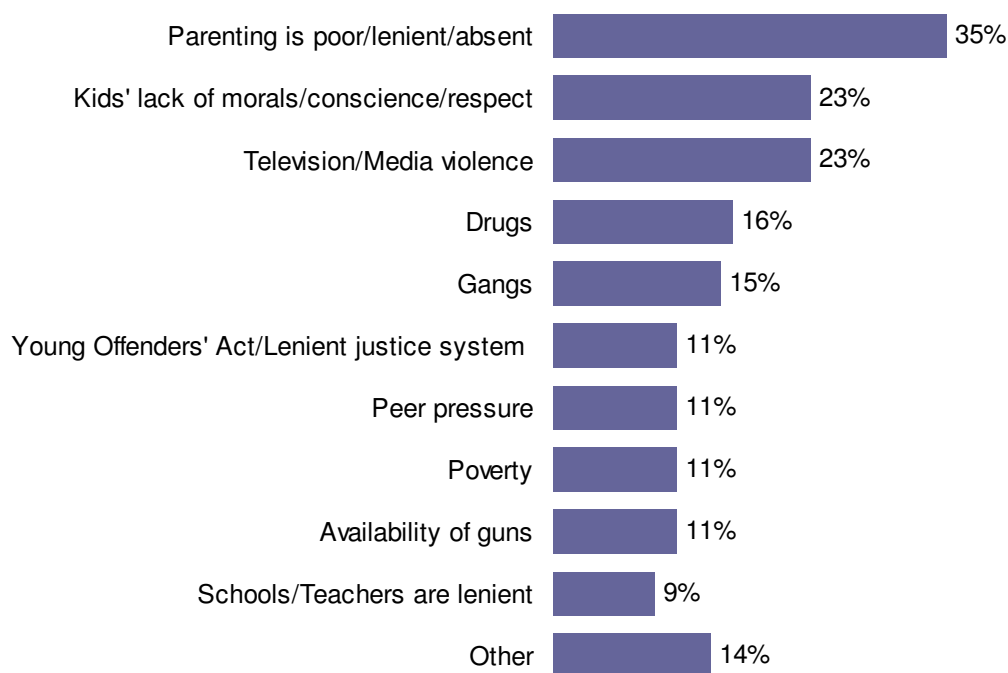
Q: Thinking about schools in your community, would you say that over the last five years they have become more safe or less safe for the students attending them?

While this might seem counter-intuitive in light of the recent shootings in Canada and the U.S., the years leading up to the study conducted in 1998 were particularly bloody in schools in the United States. With almost a dozen school shootings scattered across the States (and a highly publicized one in Scotland) in the two-and-a-half years leading up to the '98 study, it appears that the increased media coverage of these events had an impact on Canadians at that time, despite there being no incidents of this nature in Canada. The next year (1999), the Columbine High School shootings occurred in Littleton, Colorado, resulting in fifteen deaths. However, the recent shootings at Virginia Tech in April of 2007 were the bloodiest school shootings in North American history, leaving 33 dead and another 20 wounded. The fact that current concern appears to be less than it was a decade ago suggests that perhaps Canadians are become used to hearing about events like this occurring.

Canadians Blame 'Poor Parenting', 'Lack of Morals', and 'Television Violence' as Leading Causes of Violence in Public Schools...

When asked about the primary causes of violence in public schools in Canada, one third (35%) of Canadians cite 'absent, lenient or poor parenting', while one quarter (23%) agree that 'lack of morals, conscience and respect' is a primary cause. Equally (23%), television and media violence were offered as the primary causes of violence in public schools in Canada.

Graph 2: Primary Causes of School Violence



Q: What do you think is the primary cause of violence in public schools in Canada?

- Nearly one quarter (23%) of Quebecers cited 'gangs' as a primary cause of violence in public schools. A similar proportion (24%) of Quebecers blame 'drugs'. Quebecers are also more likely than the rest of Canada to cite 'poverty' (15%) as a leading cause.

- Two in ten (18%) Albertans name 'peer pressure' as a primary cause of Violence in schools.

Almost Half (44%) Believe School Board Policies on School Violence 'Too Lenient'...

In regards to school board policies that deal with incidents of school violence in public schools, almost half (44%) of Canadians say that these policies are 'too lenient'. Just 3% agree that the policies in there area are 'too harsh', while four in ten (42%) believe them to be 'about right'.

- Just one third (31%) of British Columbians feel that these policies are 'about right', while half (50%) of Albertans say the same thing.
- While more Canadians on the whole say that their local board policies are 'too lenient' (44%) than say that they are 'about right' (42%), more Albertans (50% to 46%), Quebecers (46% to 40%) and residents of the Prairie Provinces (49% to 45%) say that their local board policies are 'about right' than 'too lenient'.
- Half of British Columbians (49%) say that the policies of the school board in their areas are 'too lenient'.

Two Thirds (65%) Believe Canada Should Have Handgun and Long-Gun Registry...

Flying in the face of the federal government's agenda to scrap the financially controversial long-barrelled gun registry, two thirds (65%) of Canadians say that Canada should have a handgun registry and a long-gun registry. Only three in ten (30%) believe that Canada

should have a handgun registry, but not require people to register their long-barrelled guns at all.

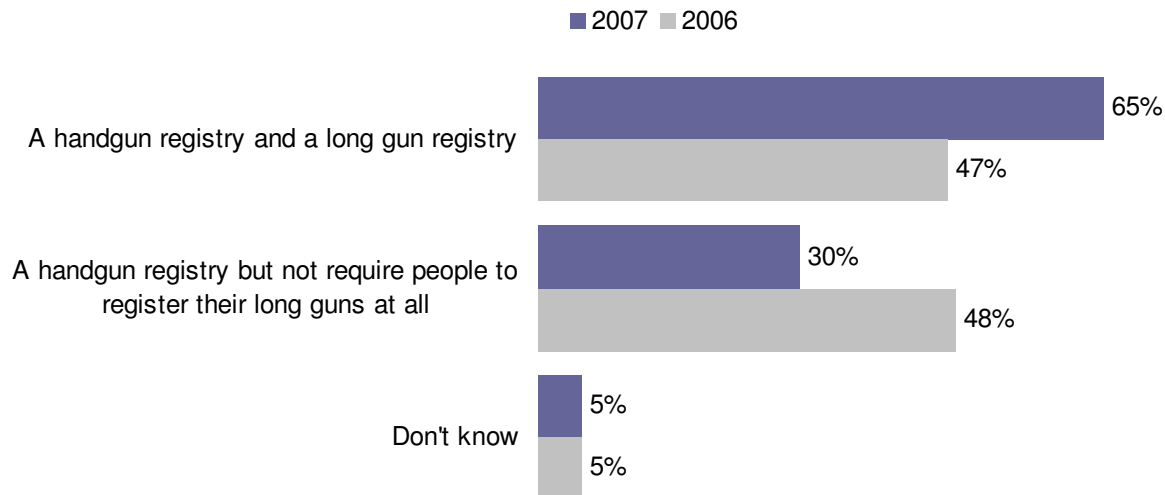
- Maintaining a division along party lines, less than half (48%) of those who, in a concurrent poll gauging federal political party support, intend to vote Conservative support a handgun registry for both short and long-barrelled guns. Comparatively, 69% of those who support the NDP say the same, while 71% those who support the Liberals believe in a registry for both types of guns. Supporters of the Bloc are the most likely to also support a registry for short and long-barrelled guns, with 84% indicating their support.
- Two thirds (67%) of Canadians living in an urban setting support a gun registry for both short and long-barrelled guns, while just over half (54%) of those in rural settings say the same.
- Three quarters (75%) of younger Canadians, aged 18 to 34, support a gun registry for both types of guns, while only 56% of older Canadians, aged 55 and up, support the dual registry.

Support for a Federal Handgun and Long-Barrelled Gun Registry Up Significantly Since Last Year...

Support for a federal handgun and long-barrelled gun registry is up significantly from a similar study conducted by Ipsos Reid in 1998. While, last year, less than half (47%) supported the dual registry, almost two thirds (65%) now indicate their support. Similarly, almost half (48%) of Canadians in 1996 said that Canada should only require owners of handguns to register their side arms. Representing a drop of 18 points, only three in ten

(30%) Canadians currently indicate that only handguns should be registered and not long-barrelled guns.

Graph 3: Support for National Handgun and Long-Barrelled Gun Registry



Q: As you may or may not know, there actually has been a federal handgun registry in Canada since 1934 which requires owners to register their handguns and will continue to exist going forward. In 1995, the former Liberal government began requiring owners of all 'long guns', usually referred to as 'rifles', even the 22 calibre rifles that farmers use to shoot gophers or antique long guns, to register these firearms with a new, central registry. Based on what you have seen, read or heard, should the Canadian government have...

Just 38% Agree with Automatic 10-year Sentence for those caught with non-registered Handguns...

With regards to possession of non-registered handguns, only four in ten (38%) Canadians agree that, if a person is caught in possession of a non-registered handgun, they should be subjected to an automatic minimum sentence of ten years regardless of age. Conversely, a strong majority (59%) believe that if a person is caught in possession of a non-registered handgun there should be no mandatory minimum sentence imposed. Furthermore, these



Canadians think that the courts should have the discretion to hand down an appropriate punishment as they see fit.

- Individuals who have not completed high school are the most likely to support mandatory sentencing of ten years for individuals caught with a non-registered handgun, with a majority (52%) indicating their support. University-degree holders are not as supportive, with only one third (35%) supporting this measure.
- Two thirds (64%) of individuals from Alberta are more inclined to let the courts use their discretion in this matter, while just over half (52%) of Ontarians feel the same way. Ontario, at 45%, is the most likely of all provinces in Canada to support a mandatory minimum sentence for those possessing a non-registered handgun.

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