

**Only 34% of Canadians Want Abortion Debate Reopened,
46% say 'Leave Things as they Are',
17% Don't Care One Way or the Other**

Canadians More Likely to Support a Party that 'Wants to Leave Things as they Are' (50%), While One in Three (34%) Would be More Likely to Support a Party that 'Wants a New Abortion Law'

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Toronto, ON - In the lead up to the G-8 and G-20 summits to be held in Muskoka and Toronto, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's maternal-health plan for under-privileged countries and his refusal to include access and funding of abortions in the plan has once again raised the issue of abortion in Canada. By passing a unanimous motion calling on the Prime Minister to end its ambiguity on the subject, the members of the National Assembly of Quebec have brought attention to the fact that since 1988 Canada has been without a law that regulates abortion.

A new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Canwest News Service and Global Television has revealed that only one in three (34%) Canadians believe that the federal government should 'reopen the issue of abortion'. In fact, nearly one half (46%) think that the federal government should just 'leave things as they are', and two in ten (17%) 'don't care one way or the other', while 3% don't know.

If abortion were to become a major issue in the next federal election, fully one half (50%) of Canadians would be more likely to support a party that 'wants to leave things as they are', while one in three (34%) would be more likely to support a party that 'wants a new abortion law'. One in ten (11%) offered that abortion wouldn't have an impact on their vote even if it



were a major issue in the next election campaign, while 5% don't know how the issue would impact their vote.

In the context of the fact that abortion in Canada is not limited by law since the Supreme Court decided on a case in 1988, just four in ten (36%) Canadians believe that not having a law governing abortion is 'unacceptable', which likely explains why there is not a great deal of appetite to re-open the issue. Three in ten (27%) find this situation to be 'acceptable', 34% of Canadians 'don't care one way or the other', and 3% don't know how they feel about the issue.

A plurality (43%) believes that abortion 'should be permitted whenever a woman decides she wants one', up 2 points from a decade ago. Conversely, two in ten (21%) are of the opinion that abortion 'should not be permitted under any circumstance, except when the life of the mother is in danger', an increase of 4 points. Significantly fewer are staking out the middle-ground on the issue, as just one in three (31%) Canadians now believe that abortion 'should be permitted in certain circumstances' (down 10 points). Four percent (4%) of Canadians don't know if abortion should be permitted or not (up 2 points).

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Canwest News Service and Global Television from May 18 to 20, 2010. For the survey, a representative randomly-selected sample of 1,000 adult Canadians 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 of Canada 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. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

Majority (52%) of Quebecers Support Unrestricted Access to Abortion...

The data revealed some interesting regional divisions across the country:

- A majority (52%) of Quebecers believe that abortion should be permitted whenever a woman decides she wants one, the highest in the country, followed by those living in Ontario (45%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (39%), British Columbia (38%), Atlantic Canada (35%), and Alberta (33%).
- Atlantic Canadians (40%) are the most inclined to believe that abortion should be permitted in certain circumstances, while those living in British Columbia (37%), Ontario (33%), Alberta (32%), Quebec (27%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (17%) are less likely to believe this.
- Residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (31%) and Alberta (30%) are most likely across the country to think that abortion should not be permitted under any circumstances, except when the life of the mother is in danger, while British Columbians (22%), Quebecers (20%), Atlantic Canadians (19%) and Ontarians (18%) are less likely to align themselves with this point of view.

Gender and Generational Divide...

- Women (44%) and men (43%) are equally as likely to believe that abortion should be permitted whenever a woman decides she wants one. Furthermore, men (22%) and



women (20%) are equally as inclined to believe that abortion should not be permitted under any circumstance, except when the life of the mother is in danger.

- Individuals aged 35 to 54 are most likely (48%) across the generations to believe that abortion should be permitted whenever a woman decides she wants one, while younger adults (40%) and older adults (40%) are significantly less likely to think so.
- Interestingly, there are no significant differences based on urban-rural splits.
- Those with a university education (54%) are the most likely to believe that abortion should be permitted whenever a woman decides she wants one, while those with some post-secondary education (46%), only a high school diploma (36%) or no high school diploma (41%) are less supportive.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

*John Wright
Senior Vice President
Ipsos Reid
Public Affairs
(416) 324-2002*

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