

Two Thirds (64%) of Canadians Want Senate to Pass Bill

Legalizing Single Event Sports Betting

Most Agree Legalization Would Provide More Government Revenue (76%),

Reduce Black-Market Betting (75%) and Allow for Greater

Regulation and Oversight (74%)

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Toronto, ON – Two thirds (64%) of Canadians believe that the Senate should pass a bill before it that would legalize betting on the outcome of a single sporting event, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Canadian Gaming Association. Conversely, four in ten (36%) are of the opinion that the Senate should ‘defeat the bill and stop it from becoming law’. The bill, currently being considered by the Senate, passed 3rd reading in the House of Commons with unanimous support from all parties, and has also received the support of eight provincial governments.

Currently in Canada, betting on the outcome of a single sporting event is illegal. Provincial lottery and gaming corporations offer a system where bets can be made on multiple sports games (parlays) but not on a single game.

While most (64%) Canadians haven’t heard anything about the bill that parliament is considering, others have heard something but didn’t recall the details (19%), have heard a bit about it (14%) or a lot (3%). At first blush, a majority (53%) of Canadians ‘support’ (10% strongly/43% somewhat) ‘the legalization of single event sports betting in Canada in provinces that choose to allow it and regulate it’. Conversely, nearly half (47%) ‘oppose’ (19% strongly/28% somewhat) such a bill. Interestingly, among those who have heard at least a bit

about the bill before completing the poll, seven in ten (71%) ‘support’ (24% strongly/48% somewhat) it, while there in ten (29%) ‘oppose’ it (11% strongly/18% somewhat).

The Canadian Gaming Association estimates that Canadians currently bet in excess of \$10 billion on sports annually with illegal bookies, and an additional \$4 billion annually through offshore online sports books. It is also estimated that only 5% of sports betting in Canada is done legitimately through provincially-regulated betting and lottery systems, while 95% is done illegally. It appears that knowing this information causes support for the legalization of this type of betting to rise as, knowing this, two thirds (65%) of Canadians ‘support’ (20% strongly/45% somewhat) ‘the legalization of single event sports betting in Canada in provinces that choose to allow it and regulate it’, while one in three (35%) Canadians still ‘oppose’ the idea (16% strongly/20% somewhat).

Thinking about some of the impact that legalizing this type of betting could have, three quarters (74%) of Canadians ‘agree’ (22% strongly/52% somewhat) that ‘legalizing single event sports betting in Canada would allow for greater regulation and oversight of sports betting’, while one quarter (24% ‘disagree’ (9% strongly/18% somewhat) that it would.

Moreover, three quarters (76%) ‘agree’ (27% strongly/49% somewhat) that ‘legalizing single event sports betting would provide more revenue for government to invest in social programs or to cut deficits’, while one quarter (24%) ‘disagrees’ (9% strongly/16% somewhat). Further, three quarters (75%) ‘agree’ (24% strongly/50% somewhat) that it ‘would reduce the amount of money bet in black markets and through illegal bookies’, while one quarter ‘disagrees’ (8% strongly/17% somewhat) that legalizing betting in this way would reduce black-market activity.

Some might argue that “single-game sports betting should not be made legal because it would jeopardize the integrity of professional sports through game fixing and rigging, and lead to more sports betting, overall, in Canada”. Other might say that “single event sports betting in Canada should be made legal because the increased regulation and oversight would reduce the amount of illegal betting, be a new source of revenue for the government and it would attract Americans to Canadian casinos in border towns to bet on single-game sports, because they can’t do so in their home state”. Reflecting on these two points of view, six in ten (63%) Canadians would adopt the position that ‘single-game sports betting should be made legal’, while four in ten (37%) would side with the argument that it ‘should not be made legal in Canada’.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between November 30th to December 5th, 2012, on behalf of the Canadian Gaming Association. For this survey, a sample of 2,019 Canadians from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 2.5 percentage points had all Canadians been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.



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