FRANK GRAVES LOOKS AT THIS WEEK'S CBC VIEWER-SUGGESTED QUESTION: GUN CONTROL

IN ASSOCIATION WITH CBC NEWS NETWORK'S POWER AND POLITICS, EKOS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES IS CONDUCTING SURVEYS USING QUESTIONS AND TOPICS SUBMITTED BY VIEWERS. EKOS PRESIDENT, FRANK GRAVES LOOKS AT THE RESULTS OF THIS WEEK'S SURVEY.

[Ottawa – November 19, 2009] – This week's special question looks at the issue of gun control in general, and the long-gun registry in particular. The results are highly revealing of a deeply fractured public on an emotionally charged issue. The research also shows that opposition to the long-gun registry may not be a good indicator of broader attitudes to gun control. In fact many people who oppose the registry support much more restrictive forms of gun control.

The conventional wisdom has been that the majority of Canadians support the long-gun registry but that it is highly unpopular in rural areas, particularly in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Vote to abolish the gun registry:**
  ¤ **38% would vote to abolish it**
  ¤ **31% would vote to keep it**
  ¤ **31% undecided/would not vote**

- **Attitudes towards gun ownership:**
  ¤ **54% should be outlawed**
  ¤ **46% gun ownership is a right**

- **Banning guns in urban areas:**
  ¤ **64% support**
  ¤ **27% oppose**
  ¤ **9% do not know/no response**

Please note that the methodology is provided at the end of this document.

As our recent survey results show, the Conservatives may have known something we didn't because this is no longer the case. A very slim plurality of 38% wants to abolish the long-gun registry. Only 31% of respondents want to keep it. Support for retention was much higher amongst the university-educated, non-CPC voters, and those living in Ontario and Quebec.

An unusually high number of respondents did not indicate an opinion, which may suggest ambivalence on the issue.

So there is no overwhelming mandate from the public to eliminate the registry, but there is even less enthusiasm for retaining it.

Another question we asked shows a paradoxical result: a much higher percentage of Canadians support the much tougher measure of banning gun ownership outright. In fact a very slim overall majority of 54% favoured no guns whatsoever except for law enforcement.

Men, people living in Alberta, the Prairies and Atlantic Canada, and Conservative supporters are all adamantly opposed to a ban on guns. However, large majorities of women, Quebeckers, Ontarians, Liberal and Bloc Québécois supporters support this much tougher measure. So clearly the reactions to the gun registry appear to be a mixture of attitudes to guns themselves with attitudes about the efficacy and costs of the registry.

Drawing from an interesting suggestion from a viewer, we also tested what on the surface appears to be a fairly enlightened solution to the urban/rural split. We found that a clear majority of Canadians (64%) agree that guns should be strictly banned in urban areas; only 27% disagree. In no demographic group did a majority oppose the idea of restricting guns in the cities.

Finally we compared the results of our survey with an online poll conducted by the CBC. Both explore the issue of abolishing the gun registry, but our poll was based on random probability sampling whereas the on line results were based on anyone who "opted into" the online poll.

The comparison is quite interesting and should be noted because of the proliferation of online polls which don't use probability sampling. In the online poll, a huge majority wanted to abolish the long-gun registry. Furthermore, the very large undecided group apparent in the probability sample virtually disappeared in the online poll as everyone who volunteered their views had a clear opinion (mostly in favour of abolition).

So what should we take from this? Despite the much larger numbers in the online opt-in poll, the 74% overall support for abolishing is unquestionably unreliable. Clearly the online poll disproportionately attracted the supporters of abolition, who were much more likely to volunteer their views.

This example is important because it underlines the continued importance of random sampling to accurately reflect the overall public. In an era replete with a proliferation of instant polls from Poll Daddy and Survey Monkey the public are bombarded with a plethora of conflicting "polls" which reflect nothing more than the views of those who answer them. This is all great fun but when the issues are of significance to the public interest it's important to disentangle entertainment and science.

Top Line Results:

Views on abolishing the long gun registry

Q. A bill to abolish the long gun registry was voted on Wednesday, November 4 in the House of Commons and passed by the majority of MP's. How would you vote on this, if you could?
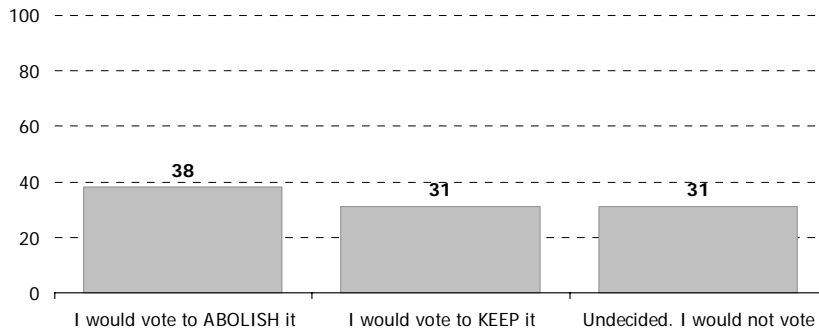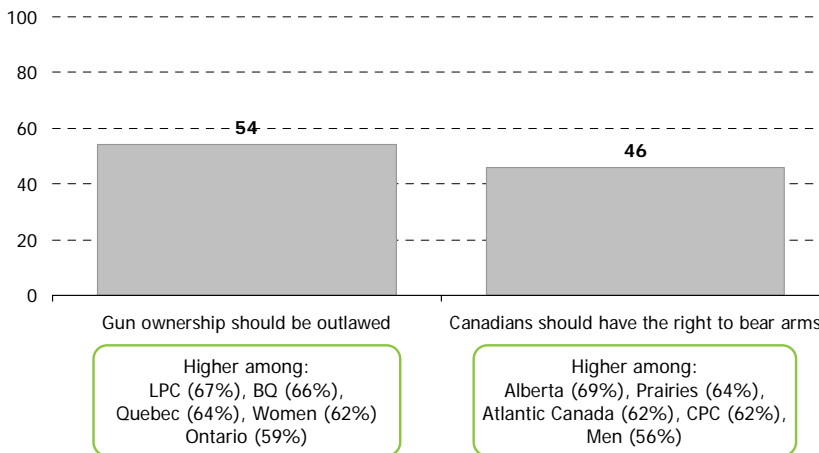
BASE: Canadians; Nov. 9-10 (n=1492)

Attitudes towards gun ownership

Q. Which of the following two statements comes closest to your own point of view: 1) with the exception of law enforcement, gun ownership should be outlawed completely; or 2) all Canadian citizens should have a legal right to bear arms?
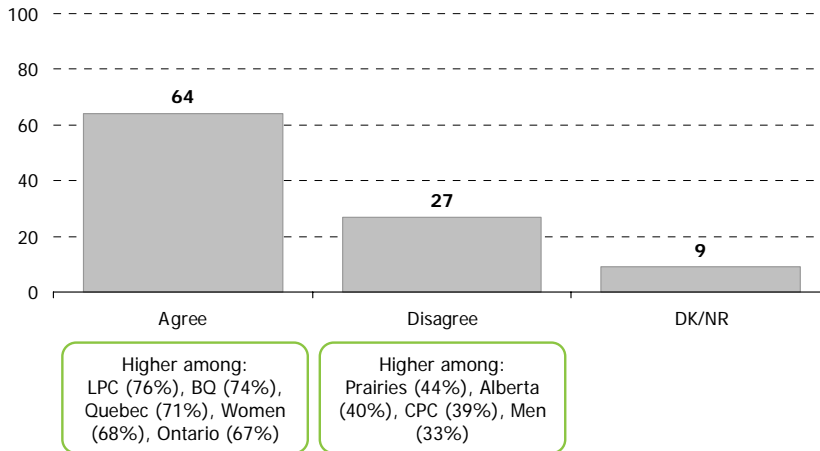

| Higher among: LPC (67%), BQ (66%), Quebec (64%), Women (62%) Ontario (59%) | Higher among: Alberta (69%), Prairies (64%), Atlantic Canada (62%), CPC (62%), Men (56%) |

BASE: Canadians; Nov. 11-17 (n=3051)

Gun control in urban areas

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I think there should be a strict ban on guns in urban areas.

Higher among:
LPC (76%), BQ (74%),
Quebec (71%), Women
(68%), Ontario (67%)

Higher among:
Prairies (44%), Alberta
(40%), CPC (39%), Men
(33%)

BASE: Canadians; Nov. 11-17 (n=3051)

Views on the gun registry - CBC online poll vs EKOS poll
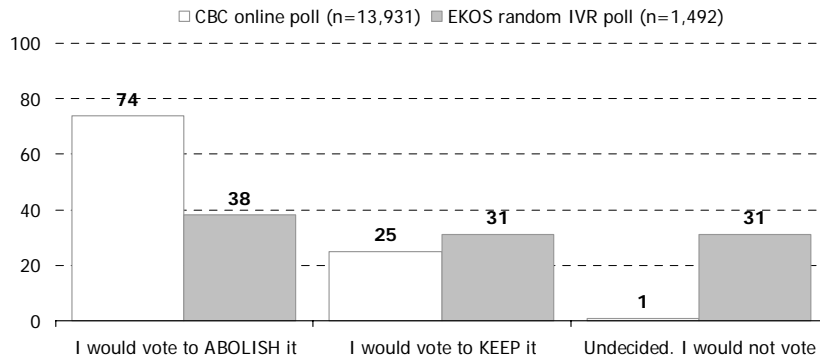
☐ CBC online poll (n=13,931) ▇ EKOS random IVR poll (n=1,492)

BASE: Nov. 4-18 for the CBC online poll and Nov. 9-10 for the EKOS random IVR poll

Views on Abolishing the Long Gun Registry

Q. A bill to abolish the long gun registry was voted on Wednesday, November 4 in the House of Commons and passed by the majority of MP's. How would you vote on this, if you could?

	Abolish	Keep	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	**38%**	**31%**	**31%**	**1492**	**2.5**
REGION					
British Columbia	43%	31%	26%	116	9.1
Alberta	57%	18%	25%	154	7.9
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	58%	17%	25%	93	10.2
Ontario	33%	32%	35%	569	4.1
Quebec	29%	38%	33%	452	4.6
Atlantic Canada	44%	25%	31%	108	9.4
GENDER					
Male	47%	31%	22%	683	3.8
Female	30%	31%	40%	809	3.5
AGE					
<25	29%	33%	38%	126	8.7
25-44	36%	25%	38%	506	4.4
45-64	39%	34%	27%	594	4.0
65+	45%	33%	22%	266	6.0
EDUCATION					
High school or less	39%	23%	37%	467	4.5
College or CEGEP	42%	27%	31%	475	4.5
University or higher	34%	38%	27%	550	4.2
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	56%	20%	23%	447	4.6
Liberal Party of Canada	27%	47%	26%	311	5.6
NDP	35%	29%	36%	181	7.3
Green Party	29%	32%	40%	131	8.6
Bloc Quebecois	20%	47%	33%	128	8.7
Undecided	33%	25%	42%	250	6.2

EKOS POLITICS

Attitudes Towards Gun Ownership Rights

Q. Which of the following two statements comes closest to your own point of view: 1) with the exception of law enforcement, gun ownership should be outlawed completely; or 2) all Canadian citizens should have a legal right to bear arms?

	Gun ownership should be outlawed completely	All Canadians should have a legal right to bear arms	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	**54%**	**46%**	**3051**	**1.8**
REGION				
British Columbia	53%	47%	341	5.3
Alberta	31%	69%	286	5.8
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	36%	64%	231	6.5
Ontario	59%	41%	1171	2.9
Quebec	64%	36%	823	3.4
Atlantic Canada	38%	62%	199	7.0
GENDER				
Male	44%	56%	1476	2.6
Female	62%	38%	1575	2.5
AGE				
<25	52%	48%	353	5.2
25-44	52%	48%	1084	3.0
45-64	54%	46%	1105	3.0
65+	57%	43%	509	4.3
EDUCATION				
High school or less	49%	51%	887	3.3
College or CEGEP	52%	48%	1051	3.0
University or higher	59%	41%	1113	2.9
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION				
Conservative Party of Canada	38%	62%	959	3.2
Liberal Party of Canada	67%	33%	669	3.8
NDP	58%	42%	364	5.1
Green Party	54%	46%	267	6.0
Bloc Quebecois	66%	34%	258	6.1
Undecided	54%	46%	428	4.7

Gun Control in Urban Areas

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I think there should be a strict ban on guns in urban areas.

	Agree	Disagree	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	**63%**	**27%**	**9%**	**3051**	**1.8**
REGION					
British Columbia	59%	31%	10%	341	5.3
Alberta	52%	40%	8%	286	5.8
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	44%	44%	12%	231	6.5
Ontario	67%	24%	9%	1171	2.9
Quebec	71%	20%	9%	823	3.4
Atlantic Canada	62%	30%	8%	199	7.0
GENDER					
Male	59%	33%	9%	1476	2.6
Female	68%	22%	10%	1575	2.5
AGE					
<25	65%	25%	10%	353	5.2
25-44	65%	28%	7%	1084	3.0
45-64	64%	27%	9%	1105	3.0
65+	59%	30%	12%	509	4.3
EDUCATION					
High school or less	59%	31%	10%	887	3.3
College or CEGEP	62%	29%	9%	1051	3.0
University or higher	67%	24%	9%	1113	2.9
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	51%	38%	11%	959	3.2
Liberal Party of Canada	76%	18%	6%	669	3.8
NDP	67%	26%	7%	364	5.1
Green Party	66%	25%	9%	267	6.0
Bloc Quebecois	74%	21%	5%	258	6.1
Undecided	61%	25%	14%	428	4.7

Methodology:

EKOS' weekly tracking polls are conducted using Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) technology, which allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator.

In an effort to reduce the coverage bias of landline only RDD, we created a dual land-line/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with both a landline and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and landline only households. This dual frame yields a near perfect unweighted distribution on age group and gender, something almost never seen with traditional landline RDD sample or interviewer-administered surveys.

This week's report contains results from two separate surveys. The field dates for the first survey are November 9 – November 10, 2009. In total, a random sample of 1,492 Canadians responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the sample is +/-2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The field dates for the second survey are November 11 – November 17, 2009.[1] In total, a random sample of 3,051 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-1.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.

---

[1] Please note that these dates are not inclusive of the weekends, as we do not survey on Saturday or Sunday.