

ATTENTION TO AFGHAN DETAINEE ISSUE FADING BUT SCEPTICISM OF GOVERNMENT REMAINS

SUPPORT FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE STRONG AND RISING

[Ottawa – March 25, 2010] - It appears that the opposition parties have had little success in keeping the detainee issue central in the minds of Canadians. With little new evidence and time marching on, the incidence of people paying close attention is fairly low (16% pay "close" attention, 41% follow it "somewhat" closely). Although a strong plurality (48%) think the laboucci will not solve lingering doubts about government withholding evidence that they should have released, there appears to be a cooling of public concern as the issue has been passed off.

On an unrelated note, we continued to update some key indicators of social conservatism which are part of the central debate about national direction. As in the case of capital punishment and decriminalization of marijuana (which we tested last week), this week's poll item also shows that it is the progressive view which is dominant and growing in Canadian society.

A strong majority of Canadians support same-sex marriage rights. Despite the recent controversy regarding the exclusion of same sex marriage in the new Citizenship Guide, in the broader society those who support same sex marriage outweigh those who oppose the right for gays and lesbians to marry each other by a margin of two to one (53% to 28%). Among Conservative supporters, the issue is evenly polarized but elsewhere, there is an overwhelming lean to supporting same-sex marriage.

Comparing these results to our past research, Canadians appear to be shifting towards a more liberalized view of same-sex marriage. Indeed, with opposition focussed among seniors and the growing level of support within the under 60 population, all indications suggest that this trend will continue.

Recent studies have claimed a shift to the right and more favourable attitudes to social conservatism. While debate about rising social conservatism is still very much open, these initial tests are suggesting we be wary of accepting the "blueing" of the centre thesis until more comprehensive testing is complete.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Public attention to the Afghan detainee issue:**
 - ▣ **16% follow very closely**
 - ▣ **41% follow somewhat closely**
 - ▣ **43% do not follow**

- **Perceived effectiveness of the government's response to the detainee issue:**
 - ▣ **24% MPs will get the information they need**
 - ▣ **48% MPs will NOT get the information they need**
 - ▣ **29% do not know / no response**

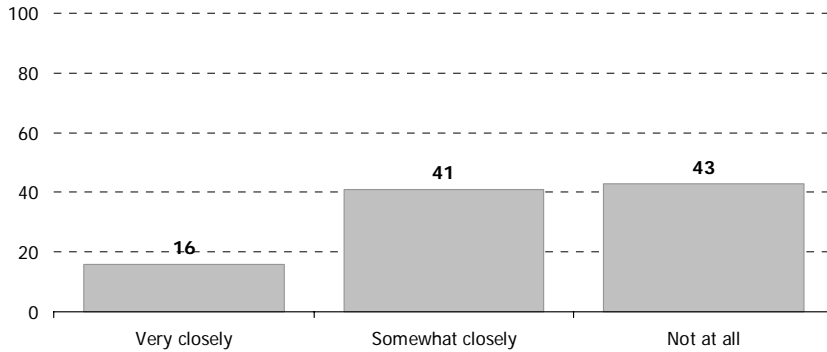
- **Support for same-sex marriage:**
 - ▣ **53% support**
 - ▣ **28% oppose**
 - ▣ **19% neither**

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

Top Line Results:

Public attention to Afghan detainee issue

Q. There has been a fair bit of attention over the past few months to the issue of how the Government of Canada has handled the transfer of Afghan detainees to the authorities in Afghanistan. How closely have you been following this issue?

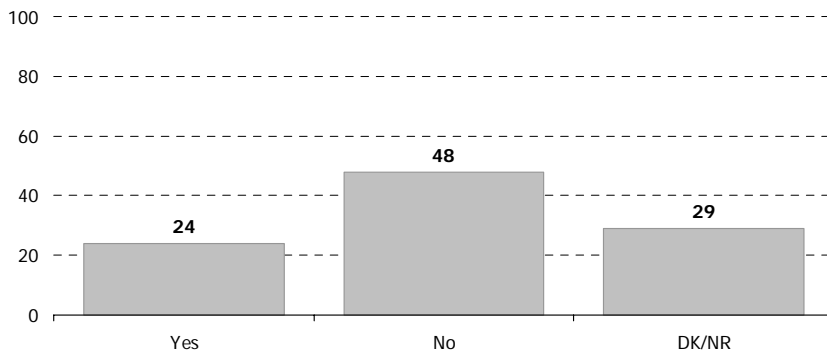


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BASE: Canadians; March 17-23 (n=2880)

Perceived effectiveness of federal response to detainee issue

Q. Until recently, the government has been withholding many documents relating to the treatment of Afghan detainees. Now, Prime Minister Harper has appointed a retired Supreme Court judge to decide which government documents should be released to Members of Parliament. Do you think this will give MPs enough information to get a full understanding of the Afghan detainee issue?



Higher among:
CPC (47%), Alberta
(31%), Men (28%),
Seniors (28%)

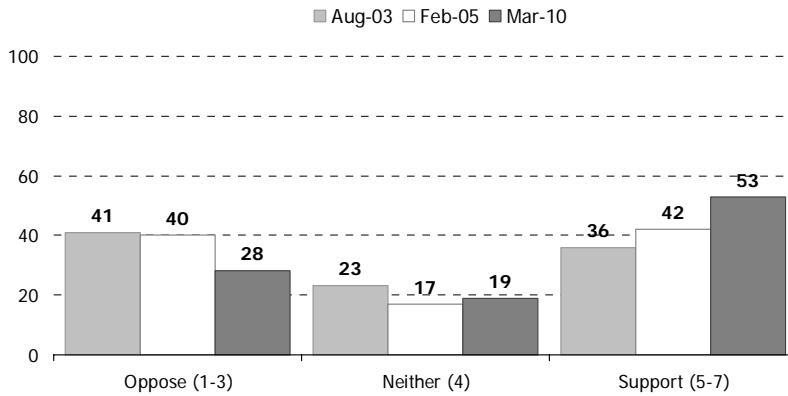
Higher among:
BQ (63%), LPC (62%),
NDP (62%), BC (54%),
Quebec (52%)

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BASE: Canadians; March 17-23 (n=2880)

Support for same-sex marriage

Q. Do you support or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry?



Higher among:
 CPC (40%), High school educated (34%), Alberta (33%), Men (32%), Seniors (32%)

Higher among:
 BQ (66%), GP (66%), University educated (62%), NDP (63%), Ages 25-44 (61%), LPC (60%), BC (60%)

Detailed Tables:

Public Attention to Afghan Detainee Issue

Q. There has been a fair bit of attention over the past few months to the issue of how the Government of Canada has handled the transfer of Afghan detainees to the authorities in Afghanistan. How closely have you been following this issue?

	Very closely	Somewhat closely	Not at all	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	16%	41%	43%	2880	1.8
REGION					
British Columbia	18%	42%	40%	316	5.5
Alberta	15%	42%	43%	276	5.9
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	11%	42%	47%	198	7.0
Ontario	21%	44%	35%	1078	3.0
Quebec	7%	35%	58%	780	3.5
Atlantic Canada	16%	44%	40%	232	6.4
GENDER					
Male	21%	40%	39%	1404	2.6
Female	10%	42%	48%	1476	2.6
AGE					
<25	11%	31%	59%	247	6.2
25-44	12%	34%	55%	877	3.3
45-64	16%	47%	37%	1170	2.9
65+	25%	51%	24%	586	4.1
EDUCATION					
High school or less	11%	37%	52%	853	3.4
College or CEGEP	13%	42%	45%	942	3.2
University or higher	21%	43%	36%	1085	3.0
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	17%	45%	39%	847	3.4
Liberal Party of Canada	25%	42%	34%	712	3.7
NDP	14%	45%	40%	384	5.0
Green Party	11%	36%	53%	238	6.4
Bloc Quebecois	7%	36%	56%	262	6.1
Undecided	19%	42%	39%	68	11.9

Perceived Effectiveness of the Government's Response to the Detainee Issue

Q. Until recently, the government has been withholding many documents relating to the treatment of Afghan detainees. Now, Prime Minister Harper has appointed a retired Supreme Court judge to decide which government documents should be released to Members of Parliament. Do you think this will give MPs enough information to get a full understanding of the Afghan detainee issue?

	They'll get the information they need	They will NOT get the information they need	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
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REGION					
British Columbia	22%	54%	25%	316	5.5
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Support for Same-Sex Marriage

Q. Do you support or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry? Please respond on a 7-point scale, where 1 means strongly oppose, 7 means strongly support, and the midpoint 4 means neither oppose nor support.

	Oppose (1-3)	Neither (4)	Support (5-7)	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	28%	19%	53%	2880	1.8
REGION					
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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.

The field dates for this survey are March 17 – March 23, 2010.¹ In total, a random sample of 2,880 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.