

CANADIANS DECISIVELY PRO-CHOICE ON ABORTION

NO CHANGE OVER THE DECADE

[Ottawa – April 1, 2010] - A majority of Canadians describe themselves as leaning pro-choice with regard to abortion. A little more than a quarter prefer "pro-life", with the remainder undecided.

This finding of a 2-1 margin in favour of the pro-choice position is almost unchanged from the answers Canadians gave to the identical question a decade ago.

The lean to pro-choice holds true across virtually all demographic groups, although the margin is less clear with Conservative supporters and seniors. Among urbanites and the more educated, the pro-choice preference is overwhelming. Interestingly, there is no significant difference on the issue between men and women.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Public views on abortion rights:**
 - **52% pro-choice**
 - **27% pro-life**
 - **10% neither**
 - **11% do not know / no response**

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

The issue of abortion is one of the most emotionally charged of all social issues. It has arisen once again in the context of the debate about child and maternal health in the developing world – one of the Harper government's priorities for the upcoming G-8 summit, which will be hosted by Canada.

This week, the American Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, who was visiting Canada, commented pointedly that the United States administration considers maternal health to include the availability of "safe and legal abortions." The Canadian government's position on the issue remains unclear.

"The abortion issue has also come up lately as an indicator of Canadians' ideological direction," said EKOS President Frank Graves. "A recent study commissioned by the Manning Centre suggested that most Canadians believe abortion is morally wrong. That may be true as a matter of personal moral values. However, as a political matter – whether abortion should be permitted for those who choose – the evidence is that Canadians are decisively pro-choice."

"Moreover, since we asked this identical question ten years ago, we can say with confidence that on this issue there is not, in fact, a trend to more conservative views," said Graves. "In fact, Canadians' views on this issue are amazingly stable."

Recent evidence from the respected Pew organization in the United States suggests that Canadians differ from Americans in this respect. Americans have moved decisively away from

support of abortion rights.

Since the publication of the Manning Centre study, EKOS has been updating a variety of indicators germane to the question of whether Canadian attitudes are indeed “blueing” – or becoming more conservative. We are not yet in a position to consolidate our research, but the early evidence suggests that on issues of social behaviour, the trend seems to be, if anything, in the opposite direction. We will be submitting a more complete analysis in coming weeks but when measured over time, we have found that on indicators such as same-sex marriage, the decriminalization of marijuana, and capital punishment, Canadians’ are becoming less conservative, not more.

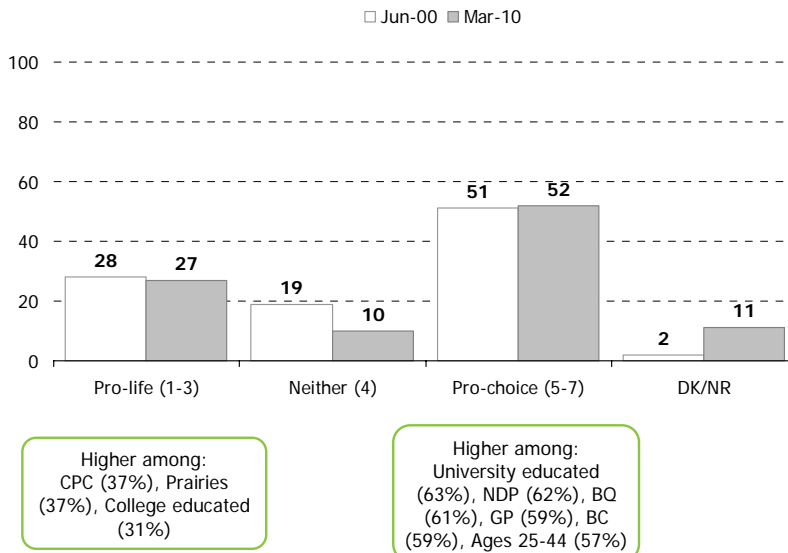
In trying to assess social change it is methodologically essential to ask the same question over time in a semantically consistent fashion from random samples of the overall population.

EKOS hopes to present a more comprehensive report on the question the direction of social values in the coming weeks.

Top Line Results:

Public views on abortion rights

Q. Thinking about your general views on abortion, would you say you are more pro-life or pro-choice?



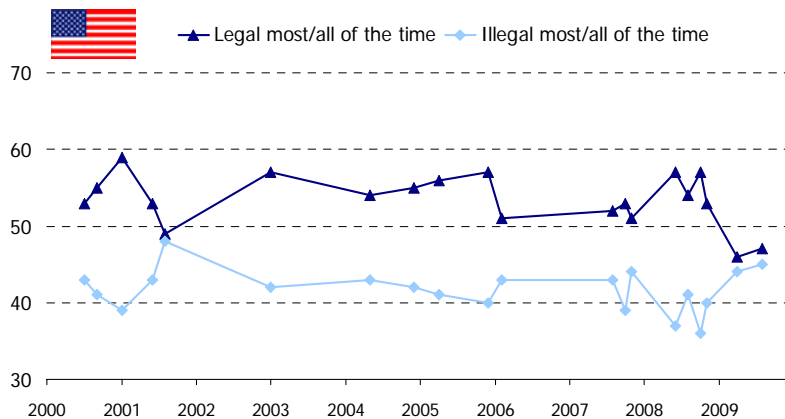
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BASE: Canadians; Most recent data point March 24-30 (n=2162)

Public views on abortion rights in the United States

Source: Pew Research Center; 2009 Annual Religion and Public Life Survey; October 1, 2009

Q. [Americans] Do you think abortion should be legal in all cases, legal in most cases, illegal in most cases, or illegal in most cases?



Base: Americans; Most recent data point March 31-April 21, 2009 (n=1,521)

Sources: 1995-2005 ABC News/Washington Post
2007-2009 Pew Research Center

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Detailed Tables:

Public Views on Abortion Rights

Q. Thinking about your general views on abortion, would you say you are more pro-life or pro-choice? Please use a 7-point scale where 1 means strongly pro-life, 7 means strongly pro-choice, and the midpoint 4 means neither.

	Pro-Life (1-3)	Neither (4)	Pro-Choice (5-7)	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	27%	10%	52%	11%	2162	2.1
REGION						
British Columbia	25%	8%	59%	9%	286	5.8
Alberta	30%	8%	52%	10%	236	6.4
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	37%	13%	40%	10%	151	8.0
Ontario	29%	8%	52%	11%	730	3.6
Quebec	20%	16%	53%	11%	558	4.2
Atlantic Canada	29%	10%	52%	9%	201	6.9
GENDER						
Male	27%	11%	52%	9%	1075	3.0
Female	26%	10%	52%	11%	1087	3.0
AGE						
<25	28%	11%	50%	12%	205	6.8
25-44	24%	9%	57%	10%	702	3.7
45-64	28%	11%	52%	9%	847	3.4
65+	29%	11%	44%	15%	408	4.9
EDUCATION						
High school or less	30%	13%	43%	14%	661	3.8
College or CEGEP	31%	10%	49%	10%	707	3.7
University or higher	21%	8%	63%	9%	794	3.5
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION						
Conservative Party of Canada	37%	9%	45%	10%	614	4.0
Liberal Party of Canada	24%	11%	56%	9%	499	4.4
NDP	22%	7%	62%	9%	289	5.8
Green Party	23%	10%	59%	8%	218	6.6
Bloc Quebecois	17%	12%	61%	10%	175	7.4
Undecided	45%	7%	34%	14%	60	12.7

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.

The field dates for this survey are March 24 – March 30, 2010.¹ In total, a random sample of 2,162 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-2.1 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.