

## ABORTION

# Most Canadians Unaware of Lack of Restrictions on Abortions

*Four-in-ten respondents think a woman can have an abortion only during the first three months of her pregnancy.*

[MONTREAL – Aug. 3, 2010] – Many Canadians ignore the fact that abortion procedures are not subject to any restrictions, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,022 Canadian adults, only 21 per cent of respondents know that in Canada a woman can request an abortion at any time during her pregnancy, with no restrictions whatsoever.

Conversely, 41 per cent of Canadians are under the impression that abortions are only available to women during the first three months of gestation.

Fifteen per cent of respondents think abortions are only allowed in the first trimester and only if the woman's life is in danger, if there has been a rape, or if the foetus has serious complications. One-in-ten think women can only have an abortion if their life is in danger, if there has been a rape, or if the foetus has serious complications.

### Regulating Abortion

As for what Canadians would like abortion regulations to look like, the two most accepted options are the status quo (no restrictions) at 27%); and limiting the procedure to the first trimester without restrictions and then during the next six months but only if the woman's life is in danger,

### KEY FINDINGS

- **21% know abortions are not restricted in Canada**
- **30% would re-open abortion debate**
- **44% say health care system should always fund abortions; 39% would consent to this practice only in emergencies**
- **48% want abortion to always be legal; 42% want legal abortions only in certain cases**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

*From July 7 to July 8, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,022 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

### CONTACT:

Jaideep Mukerji, Vice President, Public Affairs, 514-409-0462, [jaideep.mukerji@angus-reid.com](mailto:jaideep.mukerji@angus-reid.com)

if they have been the victim of rape, or if the foetus has serious defects (22%). No other option has the support from more than 15 per cent of Canadians.

Four-in-ten Canadians (41%) say they personally feel that abortions should be legal in all cases. A quarter (23%) support legal abortions but with some restrictions; 18 per cent only want legal abortions in cases of emergency; and nine per cent would only allow abortions to save a woman's life.

Personal feeling differs slightly with what Canadians think the laws should regulate. Almost half of respondents (48%) say abortions should remain unrestricted, 42 per cent say they should be legal but restricted, and only six per cent say they should always be illegal.

### **Health Care**

Canadians are divided on whether the state-run health care system should fund abortions or not: 44 per cent support funding in all cases, whereas 39 per cent support funding only in emergency situations.

### **Information and Consent**

A majority of Canadians (55%) think women under the age of 18 should require consent from their parents or legal guardians to get an abortion; one third of respondents (32%) disagree.

While half of respondents (50%) consider that pregnant women have enough access to information about different options such as counselling and adoption, 31 per cent say they do not. A large majority (79%) would support provincial legislation demanding that health workers give information about alternatives to abortion to pregnant women.

### **A New Debate?**

Although most Canadians (55%) think there is no point in re-opening the debate on abortion in the country, three-in-ten respondents (30%) believe it is time to re-open the discussion.

*Our previous poll on abortion in Canada, conducted in January 2010, is available [here](#)*

*For all our abortion polls, including our most recent in the U.S. and Britain and more, go to our [website](#) / Follow us on [Twitter](#)*

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Jaideep Mukerji, Vice President, Public Affairs, 514-409-0462, [jaideep.mukerji@angus-reid.com](mailto:jaideep.mukerji@angus-reid.com)

**Abortion**

Speaking about abortion in Canada, which of the following do you think is true?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
A woman can have an abortion at any time during her pregnancy, with no restrictions whatsoever	21%	24%	14%	15%	24%	22%	15%	26%	17%
A woman can have an abortion at any time during her pregnancy, but only if her life is in danger, if she has been the victim of rape, or if the fetus has serious defects	10%	7%	9%	4%	8%	16%	9%	13%	7%
A woman can have an abortion only during the first three months of her pregnancy, with no other restrictions	41%	44%	37%	50%	39%	42%	42%	34%	48%
A woman can only have an abortion during the first three months of her pregnancy, and only if her life is in danger, if she has been the victim or rape, or if the fetus has serious defects	15%	5%	27%	13%	17%	10%	18%	12%	17%
Not sure	13%	19%	12%	18%	12%	10%	16%	15%	12%

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## Abortion

Abortion is currently not regulated in Canada, meaning that a woman can legally have an abortion at any time during her pregnancy, with no restrictions. Thinking about this, which one of these options would you prefer to regulate abortion in Canada?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
<b>The status-quo: Women being able to have an abortion at any time during their pregnancy, with no restrictions whatsoever</b>	27%	38%	16%	22%	32%	25%	19%	31%	24%
<b>Women being able to have an abortion at any time during their pregnancy, but only if their life is in danger, if they have been the victim of rape, or if the fetus has serious defects</b>	8%	3%	14%	5%	8%	7%	9%	9%	6%
<b>Women being able to have an abortion only during the first three months of their pregnancy, with no other restrictions</b>	15%	13%	15%	19%	11%	22%	15%	11%	19%
<b>Women being able to have an abortion during the first three months of their pregnancy, and only if their life is in danger, if they have been the victim of rape, or if the fetus has serious defects</b>	12%	14%	16%	7%	13%	11%	9%	11%	14%
<b>Women being able to have an abortion during the first three months with no restrictions and then during the last six months but only if their life is in danger, if they have been the victim of rape, or if the fetus has serious defects</b>	22%	18%	28%	29%	20%	17%	32%	20%	23%
<b>Women being forbidden from having an abortion under any circumstances</b>	6%	6%	5%	10%	5%	6%	2%	6%	5%
<b>Not sure</b>	10%	7%	7%	7%	12%	10%	13%	11%	9%

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**Abortion**

What is your personal feeling about abortion?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Abortion should be permitted in all cases	41%	48%	32%	25%	43%	48%	30%	41%	42%
Abortion should be permitted, but subject to greater restrictions than now	23%	23%	28%	42%	17%	23%	27%	22%	24%
Abortion should be permitted only in cases such as rape, incest and to save the woman's life	18%	14%	20%	6%	21%	16%	24%	21%	16%
Abortion should only be permitted to save the woman's life	9%	5%	13%	12%	11%	6%	6%	10%	8%
Not sure	8%	9%	7%	16%	8%	6%	13%	7%	9%

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**Abortion**

Do you think abortion should be legal under any circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
<b>Legal under any circumstances</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Legal only under certain circumstances</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Illegal in all circumstances</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>4%</b>

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**Abortion**

In Canada, abortions are provided on request to Canadian citizens and permanent residents, and are funded by the health care system. Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
The health care system should fund abortions whenever they are requested	44%	47%	31%	38%	45%	49%	37%	38%	49%
The health care system should only fund abortions in the event of medical emergencies	39%	33%	56%	37%	39%	38%	41%	42%	37%
The health care system should not fund abortions at all	10%	13%	11%	18%	8%	9%	7%	12%	7%
Not sure	7%	7%	2%	7%	9%	4%	16%	7%	8%

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**Abortion**

In your view, should women under the age of 18 require the consent of their parents or legal guardians in order to have an abortion?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
<b>Yes</b>	55%	52%	65%	71%	58%	42%	65%	57%	54%
<b>No</b>	32%	36%	22%	22%	31%	42%	20%	31%	34%
<b>Not sure</b>	12%	12%	13%	7%	11%	16%	15%	13%	12%

**Abortion**

From what you have seen, read or heard, would you say that pregnant women in Canada have access to enough information about alternatives to abortion, such as adoption, counseling for pregnant women, etc.?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
<b>They DO have enough access to information about alternatives</b>	50%	51%	49%	58%	49%	46%	62%	49%	51%
<b>They DO NOT have enough access to information about alternatives</b>	31%	29%	27%	26%	31%	35%	24%	28%	33%
<b>Not sure</b>	19%	20%	24%	16%	21%	18%	13%	23%	16%

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### Abortion

Thinking about your own province, would you support or oppose your provincial health authority demanding that all health care workers offer information about alternatives to abortion, such as adoption, counseling for pregnant women, etc., to all women as soon as they notify them of their pregnancy?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
<b>Support</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Oppose</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>7%</b>

### Abortion

Finally, which of the following statements comes closest to your own point of view?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
<b>There is no point in re-opening a debate about abortion in Canada right now</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>A debate about abortion is long overdue in Canada, and the discussion should be re-opened</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>17%</b>

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*Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995*

*Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.*

*Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum ([www.angusreidforum.com](http://www.angusreidforum.com)), Springboard America ([www.springboardamerica.com](http://www.springboardamerica.com)) and Springboard UK ([www.springboarduk.com](http://www.springboarduk.com)) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.*

*Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election.*  
<http://bit.ly/4zxf1S>

*Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.*

*More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at*  
<http://bit.ly/3z0u1l>

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**For more information, please contact  
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:  
<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>**

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