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FEWER CANADIANS FAVOUR LEGALIZED ABORTION UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE

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TORONTO, ON – Gallup queried Canadians in November on whether abortions should be legal, and in what circumstances, and found that somewhat fewer Canadians favoured legalized abortions this year than last year when Gallup asked these same questions. Thirty-two percent (32%) of Canadians believe that abortions should be legal in all circumstances, down from 37% in 2000. Similar to last year, about half (52%) believe that abortions should only be legal in certain circumstances, while fourteen percent (14%) would make abortions illegal in all circumstances, up from 9% last year. Two percent (2%) hold no opinion on the question.

Atlantic Canadians Least Likely to Favour Abortions Under Any Circumstance

Thirteen percent (13%) of Atlantic Canadians believe that abortions should be legal in all circumstances, the lowest such figure of any region in Canada. Elsewhere, support for unconditional abortions rises to 23% in the Prairie Provinces, 30% in Ontario, a figure that is down from 43% last year, 36% in British Columbia and 44% in Quebec.

There is also a substantial amount of variation regionally in those who oppose abortion in all circumstances. Specifically, 19% in the Atlantic Provinces, 18% in the Prairies, 17% in B.C., 15% in Ontario, and 9% in Quebec believe abortions should be illegal in all circumstances.

Age, Education A Key Determinant

Exploring the data by the respondent's education reveals that Canadians with more formal education are most likely to support unconditional abortions. Fully, 44% of Canadians with a university education

compared to 14% of those with a public school education favour legalized abortion in all circumstances. There is very little difference of opinion based on gender (30% of males vs. 33% of females).

Acceptable Circumstances

Gallup asked those respondents who stated that abortions should be legal under certain circumstances to judge which of seven specific instances would be acceptable. Almost all of these respondents, 96%, believe that abortions should be legal if the woman's health is endangered by the pregnancy. Eighty-nine percent (89%) hold the same view of abortions for pregnancies from rape or incest, while 75% believe that abortions should be legal if there is a strong chance of serious defect in the child.

A substantial majority of Canadians (65%) who favour legalized abortion under certain circumstances feel that an agreement between a woman and her physician is an acceptable circumstance, up from 58% last year, and 57% feel that abortions in the first trimester of pregnancy should be legal. Significantly less support for legalized abortions exists when the main reason is a low family income (28%) or if the abortion is within 5 months of conception (23%).

Methodology

Today's results are based on 1003 telephone interviews with adults, 18 years of age and older, conducted November 14-19, 2001. A sample of this size is accurate within a 3.1 percentage point margin of error, 19 in 20 times. A stratified random sample is used with age and gender weights. The margins of error are higher for the regions reflecting smaller sample sizes.

For example, in Quebec, 262 interviews were conducted with a margin of error of 6.1 percentage points, 19 in 20 times.

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The questions asked were:

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

Attitudes Concerning Abortion

	Legal Under Any Circumstance	Only Under Certain Circumstance	Illegal in All Circumstances	No Opinion
2001 Nov 14-19	32%	52%	14%	2%
2000 Nov 13-19	37	51	9	3
1999 Nov 15-22	28	55	15	3
1998 Nov 9-15	30	55	12	3
1997 Nov 17-23	34	49	14	3
1995 Aug 7-13	35	49	13	3
1993 Jun 22-03	31	56	10	3
1992 Sep 10-14	31	57	10	2
1991 May 1-4	24	60	14	2
1989 Dec 6-9	27	59	12	3
1989 Aug 9-12	26	63	10	2
1989 Feb 8-11	27	59	13	2
1988 Sep 7-10	20	65	13	2
1988 Jun 1-4	25	59	15	2
1988 Feb 3-6	28	55	13	4
1983 Jul 7-9	23	59	17	1
1978 Mar 2-4	16	69	14	1
1975 Jul 3-5	23	60	16	1

Region Today:

Atlantic	13	67	19	1
Quebec	44	46	9	2
Ontario	30	53	15	3
Prairies	23	59	18	0
British Columbia	36	46	17	2

Age:

18-29 years	35	51	14	*
30-39 years	33	50	16	1
40-49 years	27	56	15	2
50-64 years	39	50	10	2
65+ years	24	56	17	3

	Legal Under Any Circumstance	Only Under Certain Circumstance	Illegal in All Circumstances	No Opinion
<u>Education:</u>				
Public School	14%	61%	22%	4%
High School	20	60	19	1
Community College	35	49	14	3
University	44	45	10	1
<u>Gender:</u>				
Male	30	54	14	2
Female	33	51	15	1

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

(Asked of those who support legalized abortion in certain circumstances, n=523) "In which of these specific cases would you think an abortion should be legal? **(RANDOM ORDER)**

- if there is a strong chance of a serious defect in the baby
- if the woman's health is seriously endangered by the pregnancy
- if agreed upon by a woman and her physician
- if the family has a very low income and cannot afford any more children
- if it is within 5 months of conception
- if it is within 3 months of conception
- if conception is due to rape or incest"

Acceptable Circumstances for Abortion – 1990's - 2001										
	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1995	1993	1992	1991	1990
If woman's health endangered by pregnancy	96%	96%	96%	94%	95%	95%	81%	90%	80%	82%
If conception due to rape or incest	89	89	88	91	91	88	70	80	70	73
If strong chance of serious defect in baby	75	74	75	75	74	73	64	76	65	69
If agreed upon by woman & physician	65	58	58	63	59	58	42	48	47	50
If within 3 months of conception	57	51	57	58	52	48	33	39	41	45
If family has very low income	28	28	27	24	27	25	19	24	34	38
If within 5 months of conception	23	20	22	21	19	16	12	15	29	30

FRENCH TRANSLATION:

"Croyez-vous que l'avortement devrait être légal dans tous les cas, légal seulement dans certains cas, ou illégal dans tous les cas?"

"Dans lesquels des cas précis suivants pensez-vous que l'avortement devrait être légal? **(RANDOM ORDER)**

- s'il y a une forte chance que le bébé souffre de malformation congénitale grave
- si la santé de la femme est sérieusement compromise par la grossesse
- si la femme et son médecin le décident
- si le revenu de la famille en question est très bas et qu'elle n'a pas le moyens d'élever d'autres enfants
- si c'est dans un délai de 5 mois après la conception
- si c'est dans un délai de 3 mois après la conception
- si la conception est le résultat d'un viol ou d'inceste"

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