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Respect for Human Life

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CANADIANS SHOW STRONG AGREEMENT ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES:POLL

A new poll shows a considerable degree of consensus among Canadians on social issues usually considered controversial. The Leger poll asked about stem cell research using human embryos, prenatal legal protection, and several abortion-related topics.

63% said they favored legal protection for human life before birth, 7% higher than a Leger poll in 2002. Women were more likely than men to favor legal protection from conception on.

70% of Canadians either disagreed with stem cell research using embryos (33%) or think it would be preferable to use sources of stem cells that do not destroy embryos (37%). Again, women were more likely to oppose this type of research. Quebec residents were more likely to oppose using embryos for research than Canadians from any other region. The Senate is currently considering the issue after the House of Commons passed a bill allowing embryonic stem cell research.

Over two-thirds of Canadians (69%) favor informed consent legislation on abortion, similar to laws adopted in the US states. Such laws require that, before a woman has an abortion, her physician must inform her about stages of fetal development, possible complications from an abortion and other alternatives.

"With two-thirds agreement on these issues Canadians are giving pretty clear direction to our politicians," said Jakki Jeffs of LifeCanada who commissioned the poll "but the question is, will they listen?"

Another area of agreement concerned abortions performed on minors. 67% said they should only be done with either parental consent (32%) or notification(35%). On abortion funding, 68% said it should either be privately funded or only funded "in medical emergencies such as a threat to the mother's life or in the case of rape or incest."

Mrs Jeffs, finds it ironic that public policy on these issues is out of step with public opinion. "Abortion is unrestricted at any stage of pregnancy in Canada, yet almost two-thirds want protection for the unborn. There is nothing requiring physicians and private, for profit abortion clinics to inform abortion-minded women about complications and side-effects of the procedure. And with more than 100,000 abortions a year in Canada, we have virtual abortion on demand, usually paid for by taxpayers".

LifeCanada fears the bill now before the Senate will lead to the laissez-faire destruction of embryos for research. "Canadians understand that human life is not a commodity but the House of Commons has declared that it is with this bill," said Mrs Jeffs. "Our senators have a momentous task with the highest of stakes - they can restore dignity to all human beings in this bill - or bow to the utilitarian philosophy of this new biotech age. We sincerely hope they will have the courage to listen to Canadians."

According to Leger, the October poll of 1505 to 1882 Canadians has a margin of error of 2.3 to 2.5% 19 times out of 20. To see detailed poll results, go to;

www.lifecanada.org

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