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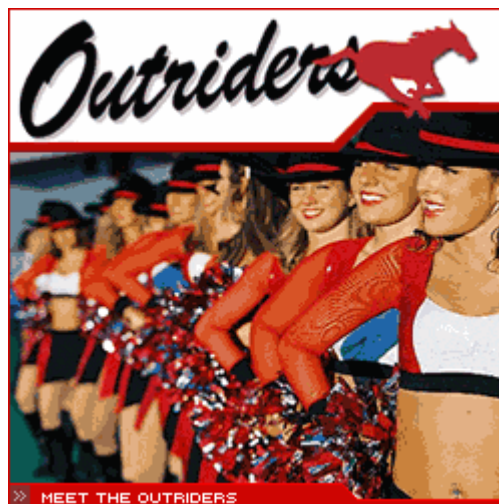
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## Same-sex issue key to opposing voters: poll

**BILL RODGERS, Free Press Parliamentary Bureau  
Chief**

2003-09-07 06:01:31

OTTAWA -- Sixty per cent of Canadians who oppose same-sex marriage say they would vote against their MP in the next election if he or she favours the controversial legislation, according to an SES/Sun Media poll. The national survey of a thousand Canadians, conducted between Aug. 24 and Sept. 2, shows the opposite is true for supporters of same-sex marriage. Sixty-three per cent of Canadians who support it say they would not take it out on their MP if he or she had an opposite view.



Across the country, 45 per cent said there would be a political price to pay on election day, while 55 per cent said the same-sex marriage issue wouldn't affect their vote.

"There's no avoiding this issue," said Nik Nanos, the president and CEO of SES Canada Research Inc.

"People are going to have to stand up and clarify their position either way and be prepared to take it on the chin."

The survey also found 33 per cent of Canadians do not trust the opinion of the courts, their religious leaders or their MPs on the issue, saying it's a personal

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decision.

Meanwhile, 31 per cent say they would trust the Supreme Court, and 23 per cent their religious leaders. Only 7 per cent said they would trust their MP's opinion on the hot-button issue.

The poll shows an even split on the Chretien government's plan to legalize same-sex marriage. About 47 per cent say such marriages should be allowed, but 44 per cent say marriage should be between a man and a woman only. Nine per cent of those surveyed were unsure.

Canadians in Quebec and British Columbia were the most likely to back changing the definition of marriage, each with a showing of 53-per-cent support. Alberta was the least likely to support it at 28 per cent, as 63 per cent say marriage should be left alone.

Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Atlantic provinces more closely reflected the national split.

Sixty per cent of Canadians under age 30 support same-sex marriage. Support decreases with age, with 32 per cent over the age of 60 in favour.

The survey is considered accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

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