



# Media Release

## Political Crossfire – Legalizing Same-sex Marriages Generation and Faith Divide Canadians

Ottawa – September 7, 2003 – A national survey of Canadians released by polling firm SES Canada Research Inc. and the Sun Media Group indicates that although marginally more Canadians support legalizing same-sex marriage than oppose, the issue has exposed sharp differences between the young and old and between Canadians based on their religious commitment.

Canadians were asked the following question:

*As you may know, there will be a vote in the House of Commons to legalize same-sex marriages. This would give gay and lesbian couples the same legal recognition as heterosexual couples, that is, couples made up of a man and a woman.*

*[ROTATE] Some people think that same-sex couples should be allowed to be legally married and be recognized like couples made up of a man and a woman. Other people think that only marriages between a man and woman should be legally recognized. Which of these two opinions, if either, best reflects your views?*

Currently 47% of Canadians support the legalization of same-sex marriage while 44% think that only marriages between a man and a woman should be legally recognized (9% of Canadian were unsure. Support for same-sex marriages was the highest in Quebec and British Columbia (53% respectively). Conversely, Albertans were the least likely to support the legalization of same-sex marriage (28%).

Canadians under 30 years of age were more likely to support legalizing same-sex marriages (60%) compared to Canadians over 60 years of age (32% support). Canadians who self-identified themselves as individuals who attended church/religious services weekly were the least likely to support legalizing same-sex marriage (24%) compared to Canadians who never attend church/religious services (58% support).

Significantly, 60% of Canadians who opposed same-sex marriage would vote against their local MP. This compares to only 37% of same-sex supporters who would vote against their MP if he/she had a different position from their own.

“Same-sex marriage is shaping-up as a classic hot-button issue,” according to SES President Nikita Nanos. “Canadians opposed to legalizing same-sex marriage are much more likely to strategically vote against their local MP compared to those that support same-sex marriage.”



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When Canadians were asked who they trust on this issue, the number one response was “none of the above – it’s a personal decision” at 33%, followed by the Supreme Court 31%, Church/Religious Leaders (23%) and federal Members of Parliament (7%). Five percent of Canadians were unsure of whom to trust. Among Canadians who weekly attend church/religious services, 54% trusted their religious leaders. Canadians who never attend church were most likely to trust the Supreme Court (39%). Periodic churchgoers were most likely to trust no one (41%).

“This issue will pit the young against the old, and church going Canadians against non-church goers”, said Nanos. “The politicians who both support and oppose may find themselves in a political cross-fire.”

SES’s National Omnibus Survey is conducted every three months. It is based on a random telephone sample of 1,000 Canadians, 18 years of age and older and was conducted between August 24<sup>th</sup> and September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2003. The margin of accuracy for the aggregate survey results is 3.1 percentage points, plus or minus, 19 times out of 20. Within the larger sample sub-groups may have a wider margin of accuracy. Validation of the demographic profile of respondents indicates that the poll is a fair representation of the Canadian populace. The research initiative was registered with the Canadian Survey Research Council of which SES is a member. Established in 1987, SES Canada Research Inc. is a full service marketing and public opinion research firm.

For a detailed review of the survey tables, please visit the SES Research website at <http://www.sesresearch.com> in the on-line polling library.

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**QUESTION**

*As you may know, there will be a vote in the House of Commons to legalize same-sex marriages. This would give gay and lesbian couples the same legal recognition as heterosexual couples, that is, couples made up of a man and a woman.*

*[ROTATE] Some people think that same-sex couples should be allowed to be legally married and be recognized like couples made up of a man and a woman. Other people think that only marriages between a man and woman should be legally recognized. Which of these two opinions, if either, best reflects your views?*

**POLITICAL IMPACT**

*If your local Member of Parliament had different views from your own on the issue of same-sex marriages, would you vote against your local MP?*

**Canadians Who Support Legalizing Same-sex Marriage (471)**

	%
<b>Yes (vote against MP)</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>63</b>

**Canadians Who Believe Marriage is Comprised Only of a Man and a Woman (440)**

	%
<b>Yes (vote against MP)</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>40</b>

**THE METHODOLOGY**

Between August 24<sup>th</sup> and September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2003, SES conducted a total of 1,000 telephone interviews across Canada with eligible voters as part of the SES National Quarterly Omnibus. Aggregate results are accurate ± 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. Validation of the demographic profile of respondents indicates that the poll is a fair representation of Canadian voters and the initiative was registered with the Canadian Survey Research Council.

**SAME-SEX MARRIAGES (%)**

	Legalize Same-sex	Unsure	Marriage Man and a Woman
<b>Canada (1,000)</b>	47	9	44
<b>Atlantic (100)</b>	48	5	47
<b>Quebec (250)</b>	53	7	40
<b>Ontario (300)</b>	48	8	44
<b>MB/SK (100)</b>	40	14	46
<b>Alberta (100)</b>	28	9	63
<b>BC (150)</b>	53	13	33
<b>18 to 29 (207)</b>	60	10	30
<b>30 to 39 (224)</b>	58	9	34
<b>40 to 49 (208)</b>	43	11	46
<b>50 to 59 (165)</b>	39	9	52
<b>60 plus (196)</b>	32	6	62
<b>Church Attendance</b>			
<b>Weekly (183)</b>	24	2	74
<b>Most of time (94)</b>	37	2	61
<b>Periodically (286)</b>	50	9	41
<b>Never (385)</b>	58	12	30

**WHO CANADIANS TRUST (%)**

*Thinking about the issue of same-sex marriage, whose opinions do you trust the most. . . . [READ AND ROTATE]. . . The Supreme Court. . . Federal Members of Parliament. . . Your Church and Religious Leaders. . . None of the above – it’s a personal decision. . . Unsure.*

	Canada (1,000)	Church Weekly (183)	Most of Time (94)	Periodically (286)	Never (385)
<b>None of the above</b>	33	22	25	41	34
<b>Supreme Court</b>	31	16	32	31	39
<b>Church Leaders</b>	23	54	34	17	12
<b>MPs</b>	7	5	4	6	11
<b>Unsure</b>	5	3	5	5	5

**ABOUT SES**

Established in 1987, SES Canada Research Inc. is a full service public opinion research and management consulting firm.

In order to maximize turn-around time and increase efficiency, SES has a 110-line call centre complete with a predictive dialer. SES is regularly called upon by corporate, government and para-public clients in Canada and the United States to conduct research and provide strategic advice.

For more information on our full range of services please visit our website

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