

**Hot Button Issues in the Federal Campaign—
Creationism and Evolution, Death Penalty and Law
Enforcement, Gender, Race, and Affirmative Action, Race and
Immigration, Choice, Life, and Third Trimester Abortions**



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Theology and Politics

Darwin vs. the Bible within the Margin of Error

Despite the predominance of secular, public school over denominational and religious schooling, Canadians are about evenly divided in their views about the origins of life. As evidenced in the table below, those who believe in the theory of evolution are closely matched with those who adhere to a Biblical understanding.

Turning to one final topic, religion, as you know [rotate] some people believe in the theory of evolution to explain the origins of life while other people believe in a Biblical understanding of creation. Which viewpoint is closer to your own?

	%
Some people believe in the theory of evolution to explain the origins of life	43
Other people believe in a Biblical understanding of creation	38
DNK/REF	19

Canadians are more likely to believe in the theory of evolution if they

- attend religious services infrequently (63% declining to 51% a few times a year, 27% monthly, 11% weekly)
- are young (57% under 30 years of age, 46% in 30's, 40% in 40s, 35% in 50s, and 33% 60 years of age and older)
- French-speaking (51% vs. 40% English-speaking)
- Male (48% vs. 36% female).

Adherents of evolution are generally better educated (27% of those with high school or less vs. 38% of those with some college vs. 60% among university graduates). However, the small subsample of those with post-graduate university education tend to depart from the pattern with a large number saying that they do not know which school of thought to favour. The inclination of the best educated to not know may reflect the most recent scientific evidence that casts a few doubts on the simplicity of the original Darwinian version.

Apart from the Quebec vs. TROC difference mirroring the English-French difference, there are no discernible regional differences but some party differences emerge. The proportions favouring evolution are highest among New Democrats (56%) and Bloc voters (57%), followed by Tories (53%), Liberals (42%) and Alliance voters (37%).



A Striking Lack of Religious Pluralism

Over the last generation, Canadians have become increasingly tolerant or accepting of minority religious groups. For example, Protestant Ontario has become increasingly accepting of Roman Catholics while much of Canada became increasingly accepting of Jews and, more recently, of Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, and other groups. But this inter-denominational acceptance is not fully paralleled by theological acceptance. Thus, two-fifths of Canadians say that they would be at least somewhat concerned if their Prime Minister held views opposite to their own about the origins of life, as evidenced in the table below.

Suppose Canada had a Prime Minister with a personal view opposite to your own on this matter. Would this make you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not really concerned, or not at all concerned?

	%
Very concerned	14
Somewhat concerned	25
Not really concerned	25
Not at all concerned	33
DNK/REF	4

Adherents of Biblical and evolutionary perspectives are about equally concerned lest a Prime Minister not share their viewpoint. Among Bible adherents, 39% say that they would be concerned (12% very concerned) compared to 40% among adherents of the theory of evolution (18% very concerned).

When the voter segments are compared, it emerges that Bloc and Alliance voters are the most accepting and NDP voters the least accepting of a Prime Minister with views different from their own. The proportions of voters who would be at least somewhat concerned if the head of government had different views from their own are 30% among Bloc voters, 34% among Alliance voters, 39% among Tories, 41% among Liberals, and 44% among New Democrats. Thus, the most pluralist

Affirmative Action, Gender, and Visible Minorities

Division on Gender AA, Opposition to Visible Minority AA

As evidenced in the tables below, Canadians are divided about affirmative action in respect of women while being essentially opposed to affirmative action intended to redress conundra facing visible minorities.



One issue in the news is affirmative action or employment equity law intended to help women employees in the workforce. Some people say that [ROTATE CATEGORIES BELOW]... Which opinion is closer to your own

	%
It is vital for governments to give women priority in hiring and promotion in order to make up for what they say is serious unfairness to women employees that cannot be made right in any other way while	36
Other people say that women employees have many laws to protect them against discrimination and that affirmative action discriminates seriously against men and destroys the principle of fairness.	40
UNPROMPTED: In between	13
UNPROMPTED: DNK	12

Francophones Most Supportive of Both Types of Affirmative Action

Some of the patterns of opinion about affirmative action for women are predictable. For example, 58% of women support it vs. 42% of men. Meanwhile, francophones are much more supportive of it than Anglophones—52% vs. 32%. B.C. and Alberta are less supportive (24%) than Ontario (32%), which in turn is much less supportive than Quebec (52%). With respect to parties, Bloc voters are the most supportive (54%), followed by New Democrats (48%), Liberals (41%), Tories (37%), and Alliance voters (16%).

The pattern of attitude towards affirmative action for visible minorities resembles attitudes towards affirmative action towards women up to a point. Thus, francophones and Quebecers are more sympathetic to it. But, women, who favour affirmative action for women, are essentially indistinguishable from men in their attitudes towards affirmative action for minorities. It may be a case of “where I sit is where I stand.” Though Quebecers on balance oppose affirmative action for minorities, they are less opposed to it than Ontarians, who in turn are less opposed than Albertans and BCers.

Age plays a different role in attitudes to each type of affirmative action. Each successive younger cohort tends to be more accepting of affirmative action for minorities than its neighbouring cohort. But there is not strong age pattern with respect to affirmative action for women. The receptivity of some older cohorts to affirmative action for women may well reflect benefits that these respondents or their female relatives may have received.



Another issue in the news is affirmative action law intended to help visible minorities or non-white employees in the workforce. Some people say that [ROTATE CATEGORIES BELOW]... Which opinion is closer to your own

	%
It is vital for governments to give visible minorities priority in hiring and promotion in order to make up for what they say is serious unfairness to visible minority employees that cannot be made right in any other way while	26
Other people say that visible minorities have many laws to protect them against discrimination and that affirmative action discriminates seriously against whites and destroys the principle of fairness.	52
UNPROMPTED: In between	14
UNPROMPTED: DNK	8

Abortion

Powerful Majorities for Pro-Choice in Principle and Constraints on Third Trimester Abortions in Practice

As evidenced in the tables below, two-thirds majorities oppose constraints on abortions in principle while an equally strong majority favours constraints on third trimester abortions. Those who favour allowing abortions in the case of 3-6 month old fetuses outnumber their opponents but do not constitute a big majority.

Pro-choice respondents were informed that in a given year 200,000 abortions may be performed—equal to the population of the City of Regina. About one-fifth of pro-choice respondents conclude that legal constraints should be introduced given the volume of such procedures.

Turning to the subject of abortion, as you may know Canada currently has no laws relating to abortion. Some people say [ROTATE CATEGORIES BELOW]... Which opinion is closer to your own

	%
That abortion involves taking the life of a defenceless human, that hospitals often devote a lot of medical resources to save fetuses who are no older than those that are aborted, and that abortion should be prohibited except when the mother is in danger or in the case of rape or incest	26



Other people say that women should have the absolute right to make abortion decisions for themselves and that making abortion illegal would do a lot more harm than good causing pregnant women to go to back street abortionists	66
DON'T PROMPT BUT RECORD: In between	6
DON'T PROMPT BUT RECORD: DNK	2

There are various middle positions on abortion. Please me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following: [NO ROTATION]

	Agree	Disagree	DNK/Ref
There should be some limits on abortions involving foetuses that are at least 6 months old or would be old enough to survive outside the mother.	68	23	9
How about the idea that there should be some limits on abortion involving foetuses that are at least 3 months old	47	38	15

ASK ONLY IF Q6=PRO-CHOICE: 8. Some people say that abortion should be completely legal and available as long as it doesn't happen too often but that there should be limits on abortion when people start using it too often. In practice, there are about 115,000 abortions in Canada each year, about the population of Prince Edward Island. On hearing this number, do you feel that

	%
This number is a reasonable number and the law should be left as it is	14
The number is too high and Canada should think about some legal limitations	23
The number of abortions that are done should not be a factor in deciding the law.	55
DNK/REF	9



Immigration

- ☑ 9. Turning now to the subject of immigration, do you feel that Canada admits too many immigrants each year, about the right number, or too few? DON'T PROMPT BUT RECORD DNK

	%
Too many	33
About the right number	43
Too few	11
UNPROMPTED: DNK	12

- ☑ 10. In one recent year, about 200,000 immigrants came to Canada—that's about the population of Regina, Saskatchewan. Thinking of this particular number, would you say Canada ought to admit a lot more than this number, somewhat more, somewhat fewer, or a lot fewer?

	%
A lot more than this number	6
Somewhat more	21
Somewhat fewer	32
A lot fewer	24
DNK/REF	18

- ☑ 11. When deciding which immigrants to let into the country, which of the following factors should be considered, positively or negatively in your view [rotate and record each that apply as yes or no]

	Yes	No	DNK/Ref
Having close family already in Canada...should this be considered	71	26	4
Good English or French language skills	53	44	3
A good education	68	29	3
A criminal record	74	25	2
Race or skin colour	6	91	4



Crime and Punishment

- ☑ 12. Turning now to the subject of crime and punishment, would you say that the penalties for crimes involving violence are far too soft, too soft, too harsh, or far too harsh? DON'T PROMPT BUT RECORD

	%
Far too soft	40
Too soft	48
Too harsh	1
Far too harsh	1
About right	4
UNPROMPTED: DNK/REF	6

- ☑ 13. Thinking of defendants in criminal cases, would you say that the justice system makes it far too difficult, too difficult, too easy, or far too easy for the accused in such cases to defend themselves?

	%
Far too difficult	5
Too difficult	10
Too easy	46
Far too easy	15
About right	11
UNPROMPTED: DNK/REF	14

- ☑ 14. Are you in favour of capital punishment or the death penalty in any of the following situations...[rotate, record yes or no]

	Yes	No	DNK/Ref
Where a police officer has been murdered	51	43	7
Where more than one person was murdered in a crime	59	34	7
Where the convicted murderer has been convicted of murder in more than one trial for separate and unrelated murders	66	29	5
Where torture or rape was involved	55	40	5
Where the murder was motivated by ethnic or other group hatred	43	49	8

