

# NEWS RELEASE



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### One half think abortion should always be legal

#### Nine-in-ten think it should be legal in at least some circumstances

Toronto, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012 – In a recent survey conducted by Forum Research among Canadians 18 years or older, it was found that 51% of respondents think abortion should be legal in all circumstances (51% believe abortion should be legal in all circumstances, 37% feel abortion should be legal in some circumstances, 10% feel abortion should be illegal in all circumstances and 2% have not yet formed an opinion on this issue). Regionally speaking, Quebec is the most liberal region on abortion (62% believe abortion should be legal in all circumstances, 33% feel abortion should be legal in some circumstances, 4% feel abortion should be illegal in all circumstances and 1% have not yet formed an opinion on this issue), whereas residents of the Prairie region were the most conservative on this topic (45% believe abortion should be legal in all circumstances, 36% feel abortion should be legal in some circumstances, 16% feel abortion should be illegal in all circumstances and 3% have not yet formed an opinion on this issue).

When analysing the poll by age demographics, there is a unique dynamic in the responses from those between the ages of 18 and 34. This group were the most likely to think abortion should be legal in all circumstances (58%), yet they were also the most likely to think abortion should be illegal in all circumstances (13%). Respondents under 35 were much more black and white in their analysis of this issue than their peers, in particular when compared to those over the age of 65. Those polled over the age of 65 were the most likely to say that abortion should be legal in some circumstances (49%), a stark contrast from those polled under the age of 45.

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#### TORONTO

February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012

#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- 51% believe abortion should be legal in all circumstances, 37% feel abortion should be legal in some circumstances, 10% feel abortion should be illegal in all circumstances and 2% have not yet formed an opinion on this issue
- Only 4% of Quebec respondents felt that abortion should be illegal in all circumstances.
- Respondents aged 18 to 34 were both the most likely to say abortion should be legal in all circumstances and the most likely to say that abortion should be illegal in all circumstances.

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## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- When asked when life begins, 44% of respondents felt that life begins at conception.
- “The subject of abortion illustrates a uniquely Canadian paradox; most recognize the fetus as alive, but at the same time respect a woman’s right to choose,” said Forum Research president Dr. Lorne Bozinoff. “Our numbers suggest that Canadians feel that abortion should be legal in at least some circumstances, with opinions differing on whether all or just some abortions should be granted this legality. It’s becoming less of a question of ‘yes’ or ‘no’, and more of a question of ‘when’ and ‘why’ among Canadians.”

## **Most think life begins at conception, few think it begins at birth**

When asked when life begins, 44% of respondents felt that life begins at conception. This opinion proved more popular than the argument that life begins when the fetus is capable of surviving on its own (39%) and much more popular than the argument that life begins only after birth (13%). Opinion on when life begins does vary by region, with Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta all polling the highest in believing that life begins at conception (all provinces polled at 50% on this issue), with the Atlantic provinces trailing close behind (48%), while British Columbia and Quebec were the least likely to agree with this sentiment (these provinces polled at 32% and 37% in terms of having this opinion). Another point of separation on this issue is by opinion held by those of different income brackets. The lower the annual income of the person polled, the more likely they would respond that life begins at conception (54% <\$20K, 46% \$20K -\$4K, 45% \$40K -\$60K, 40% \$60K -\$100K, 40% \$100K+).

“The subject of abortion illustrates a uniquely Canadian paradox; most recognize the fetus as alive, but at the same time respect a woman’s right to choose,” said Forum Research president Dr. Lorne Bozinoff. “Our numbers suggest that Canadians feel that abortion should be legal in at least some circumstances, with opinions differing on whether all or just some abortions should be granted this legality. It’s becoming less of a question of ‘yes’ or ‘no’, and more of a question of ‘when’ and ‘why’ among Canadians.”

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**TORONTO****February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012****Methodology**

The poll was conducted by Forum Research with the results based on an interactive voice response telephone survey of 1210 randomly selected residents of Canada aged 18 or older. The poll was conducted on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

Results based on the total sample are considered accurate +/- 2.8%, 19 times out of 20. Subsample results will be less accurate. Margins of error for subsample (such as age, gender) results are available at [www.forumresearch.com/samplestim.asp](http://www.forumresearch.com/samplestim.asp).

Where appropriate, the data has been statistically weighted to ensure that the sample reflects the actual population according to the latest Census data.

This research is not necessarily predictive of future outcomes, but rather, captures opinion at one point in time. Forum Research conducted this poll as a public service and to demonstrate our survey research capabilities.

With offices across Canada and around the world, 100% Canadian-owned Forum Research is one of the country's leading survey research firms.

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### *The Legality of Abortion*

*'Should abortion be legal in all circumstances, should it be legal in some circumstances or should it be illegal in all circumstances?'*

*[All Respondents]*

### *Age / Gender*

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
sample	1210	166	146	246	324	328	574	636
Legal In All Circumstances	51	58	56	48	50	41	50	53
Legal In Some Circumstances	37	28	34	42	39	49	38	37
Illegal In All Circumstances	10	13	9	8	8	9	11	9
Don't Know	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1

### *Household Income*

%	Total	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000 - \$40,000	\$40,000 - \$60,000	\$60,000 - \$100,000	More than \$100,000
sample	1210	151	244	185	136	118
Legal In All Circumstances	51	47	43	52	52	59
Legal In Some Circumstances	37	34	46	36	40	32
Illegal In All Circumstances	10	17	10	11	7	8
Don't Know	2	2	2	0	1	1

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### *Region*

%	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	BC
sample	1210	92	287	498	196	137
Legal In All Circumstances	51	48	62	47	45	54
Legal In Some Circumstances	37	41	33	40	36	36
Illegal In All Circumstances	10	10	4	11	16	8
Don't Know	2	2	1	2	3	1

### *Current Vote Preference*

%	Total	Con	Lib	NDP	Green	Bloc	Other
sample	1210	400	278	278	70	55	67
Legal In All Circumstances	51	40	59	61	51	79	45
Legal In Some Circumstances	37	43	35	32	31	17	42
Illegal In All Circumstances	10	16	6	5	17	3	9
Don't Know	2	1	1	3	1	0	4

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### *The Question of When Life Begins*

*'Do you believe life begins at conception, when the fetus is capable of surviving on its own or only after birth?'*

[All Respondents]

#### *Age / Gender*

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
sample	1210	166	146	246	324	328	574	636
Life Begins At Conception	44	46	44	46	43	41	40	48
Life Begins When The Fetus Is Capable Of Surviving On Its Own	39	39	37	39	40	42	40	39
Life Begins Only After Birth	13	14	15	11	10	12	15	10
Don't Know	4	1	5	4	7	5	4	4

#### *Income*

%	Total	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000 - \$40,000	\$40,000 - \$60,000	\$60,000 - \$100,000	More than \$100,000
sample	1210	151	244	185	136	118
Life Begins At Conception	44	54	46	45	40	40
Life Begins When The Fetus Is Capable Of Surviving On Its Own	39	32	31	41	45	43
Life Begins Only After Birth	13	10	16	11	12	15
Don't Know	4	5	7	3	4	2

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**Region**

% sample	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	BC
Life Begins At Conception	44	48	37	50	50	32
Life Begins When The Fetus Is Capable Of Surviving On Its Own	39	45	41	34	35	54
Life Begins Only After Birth	13	5	18	12	12	9
Don't Know	4	2	4	5	2	5

**Current Vote Preference**

% sample	Total	Con	Lib	NDP	Green	Bloc	Other
Life Begins At Conception	44	51	39	39	53	27	44
Life Begins When The Fetus Is Capable Of Surviving On Its Own	39	35	48	44	30	44	25
Life Begins Only After Birth	13	11	11	12	12	24	26
Don't Know	4	3	2	5	5	4	5

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