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THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION CONNECTING EDUCATIONAL PRO-LIFE GROUPS ACROSS CANADA

Media Release

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Two-thirds of Canadians support legal protection for unborn

The fifth annual poll on Canadians' opinions on abortion has found that almost two-thirds of the 2,021 people surveyed by Environics Research Group support laws to protect human life before birth.

Only three in ten support the current Canadian policy in which there is no legal protection for human beings at any stage of development before birth.

The poll was commissioned by LifeCanada, the national educational pro-life group, and includes questions on parental consent for abortion, informed consent and views on tax-funding of abortion.

LifeCanada's President Joanne Byfield noted that support for legal protection has increased this year to 64%, from 60% in 2005. "This may reflect the high profile murders of pregnant women over the past year and the frustration that the police cannot charge the perpetrators with two murders," she said. "Our laws do not recognize these babies as human beings with rights, so killing them is not a crime."

She pointed out that a proposed bill brought forward by Alberta MP Leon Benoit would have changed the law to allow murder charges to be laid when an unborn baby is killed in an act of violence against the mother. The bill was declared unvotable by a Commons committee.

The poll also found 70% support for informed consent laws which would require that women be informed about fetal development and all health risks and complications before they choose to have an abortion.

On the issue of parental consent, 55% of those polled supported a law requiring parental consent for minors under the age of 18 to have an abortion. Currently in Canada there is no parental consent requirement. Girls as young as 13 and 14 can obtain abortions without parental consent.

Canadian taxpayers pay for most abortions in Canada, said Byfield, yet two-thirds of those polled said that abortions should either be funded privately (18%) or only funded in medical emergencies (48%).

"Why do our governments insist on using scarce health care dollars to pay for this personal choice?" she asked.

Byfield pointed out that Canadian public opinion has been clearly expressed in these polls for five years in a row. "We pose the questions in terms of rights," said Byfield. "We're looking at the right to life, enshrined in section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; the rights of women to be informed about the procedure they are about to undergo; the rights of families to protect their children; and the rights of taxpayers to decide how their money should be spent."

"Canadian politicians, federally and provincially, avoid dealing with this issue. We urge them to read these results, listen to Canadians and craft laws and policies that reflect the wishes of the people."

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