

BOUNTIFUL, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Canadians Support Legal Action in BC Polygamous Community

Majority of respondents believe the criminal offence of polygamy trumps freedom of religion.

[VANCOUVER – Apr. 26, 2008] - Many Canadian adults would welcome legal action in a polygamous British Columbia community, with the highest levels of support coming from BC residents, women and older Canadians, an Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

Earlier this month, British Columbia Attorney-General Wally Oppal said he'll decide "soon" what to do about the polygamous community of Bountiful. A report by special prosecutor Leonard Doust recommended referring the issue to the B.C. Court of Appeal, to decide whether Canada's laws restricting polygamy could endure a court challenge on the grounds of religious freedom.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, respondents were provided with two statements that sum up the different legal views on the topic. A clear majority (62%) believe the residents of Bountiful should face prosecution because bigamy, or being legally married to more than one person, is a criminal offence in Canada.

A much smaller number (19%) think the residents of Bountiful are free to practice their beliefs under the terms of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, even if this includes polygamy. One-in-five respondents are undecided (20%).

In British Columbia—where Bountiful is located—support for prosecution reaches 72 per cent. Residents of Manitoba and Saskatchewan are more likely to side with religious freedom (34%) than other Canadians. Slightly more women (64%) than men (59%) suggest that legal action is required in Bountiful. Canadians aged 55 and over (74%) are also particularly supportive of prosecution.

KEY FINDINGS

- » **62% believe the residents of Bountiful should face prosecution because bigamy is a criminal offence in Canada**
- » **19% think the residents of Bountiful are free to practice their beliefs under the terms of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms**

More results are at the end of this release.

*From April 23 to April 24, 2008 Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of **1,001 adult Canadians**. The margin of error for the total sample is **+/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20**. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

Bountiful, British Columbia

As you may know, British Columbia Attorney-General Wally Oppal is considering whether to take legal action in a community called Bountiful, which is made up of members of a polygamous group. Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?

| | Canada | BC | Alta. | Prai. | Ont. | Que. | Atl. |
|--|--------|-----|-------|-------|------|------|------|
| Bigamy, or being legally married to more than one person, is a criminal offence in Canada, so the residents of Bountiful should face prosecution | 62% | 72% | 68% | 56% | 64% | 51% | 69% |
| Under the terms of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the residents of Bountiful are free to practice their beliefs, even if this includes polygamy | 19% | 14% | 21% | 34% | 17% | 20% | 12% |
| Not sure | 20% | 14% | 11% | 10% | 19% | 29% | 19% |

Bountiful, British Columbia

As you may know, British Columbia Attorney-General Wally Oppal is considering whether to take legal action in a community called Bountiful, which is made up of members of a polygamous group. Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?

| | Canada | Male | Female | Age 18-34 | Age 35-54 | Age 55+ |
|--|--------|------|--------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Bigamy, or being legally married to more than one person, is a criminal offence in Canada, so the residents of Bountiful should face prosecution | 62% | 59% | 64% | 48% | 62% | 74% |
| Under the terms of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the residents of Bountiful are free to practice their beliefs, even if this includes polygamy | 19% | 23% | 14% | 21% | 21% | 14% |
| Not sure | 20% | 18% | 21% | 31% | 17% | 12% |

Angus Reid Strategies is a full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995.

Angus Reid Strategies, along with its sister company, Vision Critical, is now the largest Canadian-owned market research enterprise. In addition to its four offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices San Francisco, New York and London, England. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

Over the last year, Angus Reid has covered five elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes. <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=194>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
www.angusreidstrategies.com**