

ICV-National Post Values Survey

**Part 1: Religious Liberty under Same Sex Legislation—
How Much Freedom Should Clergy Have and
How Far Should Parliament Protect Freedom**



**COMPAS Inc.
Public Opinion and Customer Research
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1.0 Introduction

Following enactment of same sex legislation, COMPAS was commissioned by *The National Post* and the Institute for Canadian Values to gauge the public's attitudes towards freedom of religion under the law.

Respondents in a national, representative survey were asked about freedom for individual clergy not to conduct gay marriages if this ran against their personal beliefs. In the case of this and three other scenarios, clear majorities of Canadian support the right to religious freedom. In the case of clergy, support outnumbers opposition by about 3:1. Support amounts to a smaller majority in the case of marriage commissioners.

Respondents were asked for their opinions about having Parliament review same sex legislation for the purpose of providing complete or partial protection for religious freedom. The question asked whether Parliament should review the same sex law to make sure that freedom of speech and freedom of religion are fully protected, review the same sex law to decide when freedom of speech and freedom of religion should or should not be protected, or not review the freedom-related aspects of the law.

Support for a Parliamentary review of freedom issues¹ outdraws opposition by more than 2.5:1 (64% vs. 24%). About one quarter of Canadians oppose a religious freedom review while one half favour a review to ensure that freedom of speech and freedom of religion are fully protected. About one-seventh favour a review to decide when such freedoms should or should not be protected.

These are the key findings on religious freedom from a national survey (n=502) conducted for *The National Post* and the Institute for Canadian Values. A separate report details Canadians' views and values with respect to another

¹ Respondents were asked about Parliament's reviewing the impact of the law on religious freedom. They were *not* asked to consider whether Parliament should re-examine the core issue of whether gay marriage should remain legal.



values issue, polygamy—whether it should be legalized and the role of government in protecting its offspring.

2.0 Widespread Support for Freedom of Religion—Very Strong for Clergy, Strong for Marriage Commissioners

Respondents in a national poll were asked for their views about the rights to freedom of religion for clergy and three other groups in hypothetical situations involving gay marriage and gay issues. As summarized in table 2A and detailed in tables 2B-C, Canadians believe that clergy—ministers, rabbis, imans—should have the legal right not to officiate at a gay marriage if doing so runs against their personal beliefs. The margin of support for clerical freedom is about 3:1.

Table 2A: Summary of Findings on Support for Freedom of Religious Thought or Action, as Detailed in Table 2B

Freedom for...	Yes: definitely + probably	No: definitely + probably	DNK
... clergy not to marry same sex couple	72	23	4
...teacher to write letter-to-the-editor disagreeing with same sex law	68	28	4
... printer not to print gay group brochure	61	33	6
...marriage commissioner not to officiate at gay marriage	57	37	6

In declining numbers, majorities of Canadians also support the right of a teacher to express his/her personal disagreement with same sex laws in a letter-to-the-editor and the right of a commercial printer not to print the brochures of a gay group.



A majority also believes that commissioners ought not to be forced to officiate at gay ceremonies if this runs against their beliefs provided that other willing commissioners are available. The majority for the freedom of commissioners is smaller than the majority for the freedom of clergy.

Table 2B: Detailed Attitudes for all Canadians and by Gender (Q1) Turning to same sex marriage, same sex marriage is now legal in Canada but the law is not entirely clear about how much freedom of speech or freedom of religion Canadians are allowed to have. I'd like your thoughts. For example,...

	Definitely	Probably	Probably not	Definitely not	DNK
Should an individual minister, rabbi, imam or other clergy have the freedom not to marry a same sex couple if this were against the clergy's religious beliefs?					
Total	58	14	9	14	4
Male	59	12	12	15	2
Female	58	17	7	13	6
Should a school teacher have the freedom to disagree with the same sex law in a letter to a newspaper?					
Total	51	17	13	15	4
Male	54	17	11	16	2
Female	48	18	15	14	6
Should a religious person who prints brochures for a living have the freedom to recommend another printer to a homosexual group wanting some brochures printed?					
Total	41	20	13	20	6
Male	45	21	13	19	3
Female	37	20	13	21	9
So long as there are enough marriage commissioners available for gay marriages, should individual commissioners be allowed not to officiate at gay marriages if this is against their religious beliefs?					



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	Definitely	Probably	Probably not	Definitely not	DNK
Total	39	18	11	26	6
Male	40	19	10	26	4
Female	37	18	11	26	8

Table 2C: Detailed Attitudes for all Canadians and by Language (Q1) Turning to same sex marriage, same sex marriage is now legal in Canada but the law is not entirely clear about how much freedom of speech or freedom of religion Canadians are allowed to have. I'd like your thoughts. For example,...

	Definitely	Probably	Probably not	Definitely not	DNK
Should an individual minister, rabbi, iman or other clergy have the freedom not to marry a same sex couple if this were against the clergy's religious beliefs?					
Total	58	14	9	14	4
English	62	14	8	13	3
French	44	16	14	20	5
Should a school teacher have the freedom to disagree with the same sex law in a letter to a newspaper?					
Total	51	17	13	15	4
English	52	17	13	13	4
French	48	17	12	20	3
Should a religious person who prints brochures for a living have the freedom to recommend another printer to a homosexual group wanting some brochures printed?					
Total	41	20	13	20	6
English	40	20	14	20	6
French	43	21	8	20	7
So long as there are enough marriage commissioners available for gay marriages, should individual commissioners be allowed not to officiate at gay marriages if this					



	Definitely	Probably	Probably not	Definitely not	DNK
is against their religious beliefs?					
Total	39	18	11	26	6
English	41	17	11	25	7
French	30	22	10	31	6

3.0. Canadians Favour at Least Partial Review to Protect Freedom of Religion by a Factor of > 2.5:1

Canadians favour by a large margin review of existing legislation for the purpose of assuring the protection of religious freedom, as shown in summary form in table 3A and in detail in subsequent tables. Supporters (64%) of a review outnumber opponents (24%) by more than 2.5:1. Support for a review is nominally greater among women than men and among Anglophones as opposed to Francophones.

Overall, about half of Canadians favour “review [of] the same sex law to make sure that freedom of speech and freedom of religion are fully protected.” Another seventh support a more limited re-assessment. Thus, 15% support a “review [of] the same sex law to decide *when* [emphasis added] freedom of speech and freedom of religion should or should not be protected.” About one in four oppose any review.

Table 3A: Summary of Opinion about Review of the Law to Protect Religious Freedom, as Detailed in Table 3B

	Total	Male	Female	Eng	Fr
Total for partial or full review to assure religious freedom	64	62	67	65	59
Total against review	24	27	21	24	25
Don't know	12	11	13	11	15



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*Table 3B: Detailed Attitudes of All Canadians and by Gender
(Q2) Thinking of these and other sometimes complex situations,
do you think Parliament should...*

	Total	Male	Female
Review the same sex law to make sure that freedom of speech and freedom of religion are fully protected	49	46	53
Review the same sex law to decide when freedom of speech and freedom of religion should or should not be protected	15	16	14
Not review the freedom-related aspects of the law	24	27	21
Don't know	12	11	13

*Table 3C: Detailed Attitudes of All Canadians and by Language
(Q2) Thinking of these and other sometimes complex situations,
do you think Parliament should...*

	Total	English	French
Review the same sex law to make sure that freedom of speech and freedom of religion are fully protected	49	51	41
Review the same sex law to decide when freedom of speech and freedom of religion should or should not be protected	15	14	18
Not review the freedom-related aspects of the law	24	24	25
Don't know	12	11	15



4.0. Methodology

A national representative survey was conducted October 18-27, 2006 among n=502. By convention, samples of this size are deemed accurate to within 4.5 percentage points 19 times out of 20. The survey was conducted on behalf of *The National Post* and the Institute for Canadian Values. The principal investigator was COMPAS President Conrad Winn Ph.D.

