

## Gender split reveals deep divide between men, women on issues surrounding the sex trade

*But politics drives split in support for Canadian government's proposed new prostitution laws*

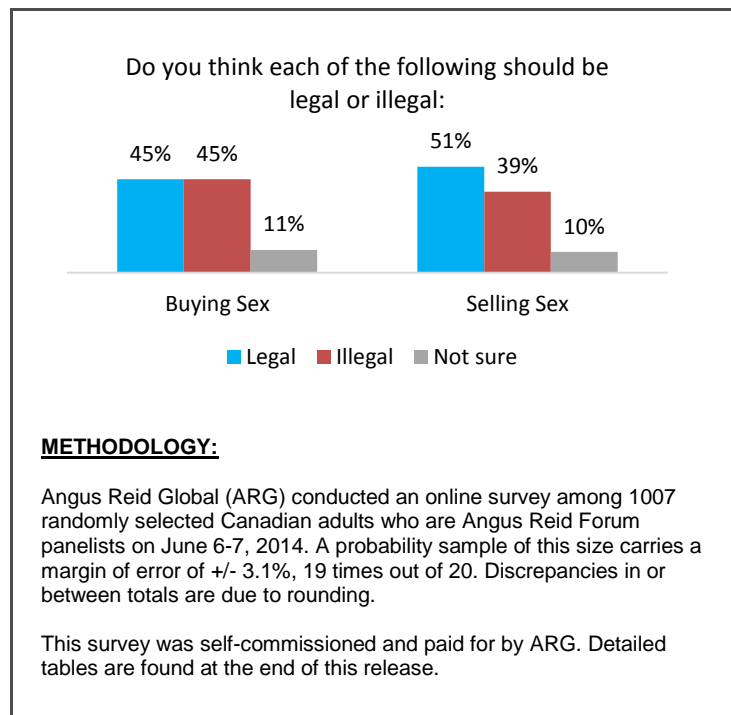
**June 10, 2014** – Canadian women and men hold significantly divergent views on the buying and selling of sex, but those differences do not extend to their overall opinions of Bill C-36 - the Harper government's proposed new prostitution law.

Those are the findings of the latest online survey from Angus Reid Global. The poll asks Canadian adults their opinions about specific aspects of the sex trade, as well as their support or opposition to Bill C-36.

### The Gender Gap:

When it comes to specific issues addressed in the proposed legislation, including the buying and selling of sex in Canada, men and women do not agree.

- While the majority of men (62%) believe **selling sex** should be legal in Canada (it currently is, and would remain so under C-36), fewer than half of women (40%) feel the same way.
- On the issue of **buying sex**, views are inverted by gender. Where more than half of men - 56 per cent - say it should be legal to buy sex, only one-third (34%) of women say the same. However, 55 per cent of women say it should be illegal to buy sex in Canada, while 34 per cent of men say the same.
- Canadian men support advertising the sale of sex two-to-one over women. While 39 per cent of men say this should be legal, 20 per cent of women say the same.
- More men than women support the legal operation of brothels. 57 per cent of men say this should be legal, while 38 per cent of women say the same.
- There is one piece of the proposed legislation where gender does not spilt opinion: whether it should be illegal to sell sex in public places where children may be present. On this, men and women –



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indeed – almost all Canadians regardless of their demographic makeup – are in agreement, saying it should be illegal (89% of Canadians overall, including 88% of men and 90% of women).

### **Legality versus Morality:**

Separate from the issue of whether the buying and selling of sex should be legal, Angus Reid Global also canvassed opinions on whether it was justifiable.

Again, the gender divide was clear. Two-in-five women (43%) say selling sex can **never** be justified, nearly twice the number of men who say the same (23%). Half of women (50%) say that buying sex can **never** be justified; compared to a quarter (27%) of men who say the same.

### **Support for Bill C-36:**

Overall, Canadian respondents are not particularly supportive of Bill C-36. About a third - 35 per cent – support the proposed law, compared to almost half - 47 per cent - who say they oppose it, and 18 per cent who say they aren't sure.

This is notable, considering the strong views women have on the illegality of several aspects of the sex trade, and the fact that Bill C-36 makes most of these aspects illegal. While majorities of women's views on all but the selling of sex are in step with the proposed law, women are split; with most (41%) saying they oppose the law, 35 per cent saying they support it, and nearly one-quarter (24%) saying they aren't sure.

By contrast, just over half of men (53%) say they oppose the law. This compares to 35 per cent who support it and 12 per cent who say they aren't sure.

Rather than seeing public opinion split over gender lines, divisions are more evident depending on which political party respondents have supported in the past. Support for C-36 is highest among past Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) voters (45%). Opposition is highest among past Liberal Party voters (62%) followed by past NDP voters (56%).

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**Detailed tables are on the following pages.**

**First, how would you describe the overall legal environment we have had for prostitution in recent years in Canada:**

	Total	Gender		Education		
		Men	Women	High School or Less	College/ Technical School	University +
Too strict	31%	41%	21%	25%	31%	41%
About right	22%	22%	21%	23%	23%	19%
Too loose	24%	20%	28%	28%	22%	20%
Not sure	23%	16%	30%	25%	24%	21%

**Now we'd like to ask your opinions on some specific aspects of the sex trade, and whether you think they should be legal or illegal:  
Selling sex**

	Total	Gender		Education		
		Men	Women	High School or Less	College/ Technical School	University +
Legal	51%	62%	40%	42%	52%	63%
Illegal	39%	28%	49%	45%	37%	30%
Not sure	10%	10%	11%	13%	11%	7%

**Now we'd like to ask your opinions on some specific aspects of the sex trade, and whether you think they should be legal or illegal:  
Buying sex**

	Total	Gender		Education		
		Men	Women	High School or Less	College/ Technical School	University +
Legal	45%	56%	34%	38%	46%	53%
Illegal	45%	34%	55%	51%	43%	36%
Not sure	11%	10%	11%	11%	11%	10%

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<b>Now we'd like to ask your opinions on some specific aspects of the sex trade, and whether you think they should be legal or illegal: Selling sex in public places where children might be</b>						
	Total	Gender		Education		
		Men	Women	High School or Less	College/ Technical School	University +
Legal	4%	6%	2%	3%	2%	8%
Illegal	89%	88%	90%	92%	90%	84%
Not sure	7%	6%	7%	5%	8%	8%

<b>Now we'd like to ask your opinions on some specific aspects of the sex trade, and whether you think they should be legal or illegal: Advertising the sale of sex</b>						
	Total	Gender		Education		
		Men	Women	High School or Less	College/ Technical School	University +
Legal	29%	39%	20%	25%	28%	37%
Illegal	56%	47%	64%	63%	53%	48%
Not sure	15%	14%	16%	12%	19%	15%

<b>Now we'd like to ask your opinions on some specific aspects of the sex trade, and whether you think they should be legal or illegal: The operation of brothels</b>						
	Total	Gender		Education		
		Men	Women	High School or Less	College/ Technical School	University +
Legal	47%	57%	38%	44%	47%	53%
Illegal	41%	32%	49%	46%	40%	35%
Not sure	12%	11%	12%	11%	13%	12%

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The federal government is proposing a new law where it would be illegal to buy sex. It would also be illegal to advertise the sale of sex, or to communicate for the purposes of selling sex in any place where children might be. However, it would still be legal to sell sex.

Some people say this proposed law will protect people working in the sex trade by cracking down on “johns” (clients) and pimps. Other people say this law is too tough and it will have the effect of driving the sex trade underground, where prostitutes will be less safe than they are now.

Based on what you know about this proposed law, including what you’ve read in this survey, which statement comes closer to your point of view?

	Total	Federal Vote Last		
		Conservative Party of Canada	Liberal Party of Canada	New Democratic Party of Canada
Support the law	35%	45%	28%	32%
Oppose the law	47%	37%	62%	56%
Not sure	18%	18%	10%	13%

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Based on what you know about this proposed law, including what you’ve read in this survey, which statement comes closer to your point of view?

	Total	Gender		Education		
		Men	Women	High School or Less	College/ Technical School	University +
Support the law	35%	35%	35%	38%	34%	33%
Oppose the law	47%	53%	41%	42%	47%	56%
Not sure	18%	12%	24%	20%	20%	12%

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Do you personally think selling sex can be justified?						
	Total	Gender		Education		
		Men	Women	High School or Less	College/ Technical School	University +
It can always be justified	21%	27%	15%	19%	24%	22%
It can sometimes be justified	45%	49%	41%	42%	45%	50%
It can never be justified	33%	23%	43%	39%	31%	28%

Do you personally think buying sex can be justified?						
	Total	Gender		Education		
		Men	Women	High School or Less	College/ Technical School	University +
It can always be justified	17%	23%	12%	17%	19%	18%
It can sometimes be justified	44%	50%	38%	39%	46%	50%
It can never be justified	38%	27%	50%	45%	36%	32%

*Angus Reid Global* is headed by Dr. Angus Reid, Canada's best known and longest practicing pollster. He's spent more than four decades asking questions about what people feel, how they think and who they will vote for. He is supported by a team of practitioners conducting high quality research for corporations, governments and non-profit organizations.

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