

SUPREME COURT

# Canadians Disagree with Court on Interrogations Without Legal Counsel

*Most respondents agree with the way the Supreme Court handled the cases related to journalistic sources and sexual abuse by a priest.*

[VANCOUVER – Nov. 15, 2010] – Many Canadians believe the Supreme Court made the right decisions on two recent cases, but question a ruling related to the legal rights of suspects who are being interrogated, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,014 Canadian adults, 76 per cent of respondents agree with the decision taken by the Supreme Court on the case of Shirley Christensen.

The Supreme Court ruled last month that Christensen—a Quebec woman who was sexually abused as a child at the hands of a priest—can launch a lawsuit against the Catholic Church.

Two-thirds of Canadians (65%) agree with a recent decision that looked into the issue of journalistic sources. The Supreme Court ruled that journalists have a qualified right to protect their confidential sources, if such protection outweighs the public interest in the disclosure that the law would normally require.

The case stemmed from an investigative report into the federal sponsorship scandal, in which *Globe and Mail* reporter Daniel Leblanc relied on a confidential source, identified only as “MaChouette.”

## KEY FINDINGS

- **76% agree with the decision to allow a Quebec woman who was sexually abused as a child by a priest to launch a lawsuit against the Catholic Church**
- **65% agree with the ruling that allows journalists to have a qualified right to protect their confidential sources**
- **54% disagree with decision which states that suspects do not have a right to legal counsel while they are being interrogated**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

*From October 29 to October 30, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,014 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—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.*

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On a third case, the Supreme Court does not get the endorsement of most Canadians. More than half of respondents (54%) disagree with the ruling which states that suspects do not have a right to legal counsel while they are being interrogated.

Last month's 5-4 decision effectively signifies that, if suspects reveals information to officers or detectives during an interrogation, this information may be admitted into evidence in a legal process against them.

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### Supreme Court

Next, we'd like to ask you recent decisions taken by the Supreme Court of Canada. Do you agree or disagree with each one of these decisions? –

***The Supreme Court has ruled that, while suspects have a right to consult a lawyer and to be informed of that right, they don't have a right to legal counsel while they are being interrogated.***

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Agree	34%	35%	26%	38%	31%	42%	32%
Disagree	54%	56%	72%	55%	54%	44%	59%
Not sure	12%	9%	2%	6%	15%	14%	9%

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***The Supreme Court has ruled that a Quebec woman who was sexually abused as a child at the hands of a priest can launch a lawsuit against the Catholic Church.***

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Agree	76%	73%	70%	79%	76%	75%	82%
Disagree	15%	19%	23%	11%	13%	17%	9%
Not sure	9%	9%	7%	9%	10%	8%	9%

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**Supreme Court**

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***The Supreme Court has ruled that journalists have a qualified right to protect their confidential sources, if such protection outweighs the public interest in the disclosure that the law would normally require.***

	Region						
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
<b>Agree</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>

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*Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical 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 Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995*

*Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.*

*Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum ([www.angusreidforum.com](http://www.angusreidforum.com)), Springboard America ([www.springboardamerica.com](http://www.springboardamerica.com)) and Springboard UK ([www.springboarduk.com](http://www.springboarduk.com)) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.*

*Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial 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.*

*Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election. More information on our electoral record in Canada and the United States can be found at:*

*<http://www.angus-reid.com/services/record-of-accuracy/>*

*More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angus-reid.com/about/>*

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

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:  
<http://www.angus-reid.com>**

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