

EUTHANASIA

Americans Split Over Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

Democrats and Independents are more likely to voice support for either concept than Republicans.

[NEW YORK – Feb. 10, 2010] – People in the United States are divided in their assessment of euthanasia and assisted suicide, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,001 American adults, 42 per cent of respondents are in favor of legalizing euthanasia in the United States, while 36 per cent oppose this notion.

While almost half of Democrats (47%) and Independents (also 47%) support legalizing euthanasia in the U.S., a majority of Republicans (51%) are against this idea.

Arguments

A large majority of respondents believe legalizing euthanasia would give people who are suffering an opportunity to ease their pain (70%) and establish clearer guidelines for doctors to deal with end-of-life decisions (60%).

However, 52 per cent of Americans think legalizing euthanasia would leave vulnerable people without sufficient legal protection. Respondents are evenly split on whether legalizing euthanasia would send the message that the lives of the sick or disabled are less valuable (44% agree, 44% disagree).

KEY FINDINGS

- **42% support legalizing euthanasia in the United States**
- **35% believe parents who assist a terminally ill son or daughter to die should not be punished**
- **37% think people who help a person to commit suicide should not be prosecuted**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From February 4 to February 5, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,001 American adults who are Springboard America panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%. 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 the United States.

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Assisted Suicide

Overall, 37 per cent of respondents think people who help a person to commit suicide should be prosecuted, while 34 per cent disagree. Republicans (45%) are more likely to support prosecution in these cases than Democrats (36%) and Independents (32%).

In this survey, respondents were asked to select the appropriate punishment for a parent who is found guilty of assisting a terminally ill son or daughter to die. While just over a third of Americans (35%) would apply no penalty at all, 12 per cent would levy a fine, 21 per cent would prefer a prison sentence at the discretion of a judge, and six per cent would impose a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment.

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Euthanasia

Next, we'd like to ask you some questions about euthanasia. Generally speaking, do you support or oppose legalizing euthanasia in the United States?

	Total	Party ID		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly support	14%	17%	9%	16%
Moderately support	28%	30%	21%	31%
Moderately oppose	14%	13%	12%	16%
Strongly oppose	23%	16%	39%	18%
Not sure	22%	24%	19%	18%
Support – NET	42%	47%	30%	47%
Oppose - NET	36%	29%	51%	34%

Euthanasia

There are many arguments for and against legalizing euthanasia. Do you agree or disagree with each one of the following arguments?

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Legalizing euthanasia would leave vulnerable people without sufficient legal protection	52%	32%	15%
Legalizing euthanasia would send the message that the lives of the sick or disabled are less valuable	44%	44%	12%
Legalizing euthanasia would establish clearer guidelines for doctors to deal with end-of-life decisions	60%	24%	16%
Legalizing euthanasia would give people who are suffering an opportunity to ease their pain	70%	19%	11%

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Euthanasia				
If a parent is found guilty of assisting a terminally ill son or daughter to die, what do you think should be the appropriate punishment?				
	Total	Party ID		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent
A mandatory sentence of life imprisonment	6%	7%	7%	4%
A prison sentence at the discretion of a judge	21%	20%	29%	18%
A fine, but no time in prison	12%	15%	10%	12%
No penalty at all	35%	35%	27%	39%
Not sure	26%	23%	27%	27%

Euthanasia				
Do you think people who help a person to commit suicide should be prosecuted?				
	Total	Party ID		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	37%	36%	45%	32%
No	34%	37%	23%	41%
Not sure	28%	27%	32%	27%

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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), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (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 can be found at:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/record-of-accuracy>

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at
<http://www.visioncritical.com/what-we-do/practices/angus-reid-public-opinion/>

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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.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>

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