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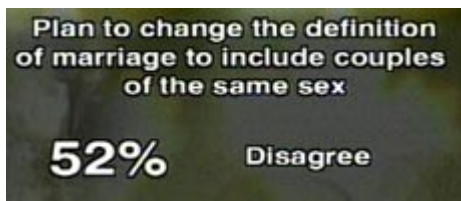
## Canadians deeply split on same-sex marriage, poll suggests

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[CBC News](#)

As MPs prepare to vote on an amendment to the same-sex marriage bill, a CBC poll suggests Canadians are very divided on the issue – especially along age and cultural lines.

Slightly more than half – 52 per cent – of the 1,203 respondents said they disagreed with the Liberal government's plan to change the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples.

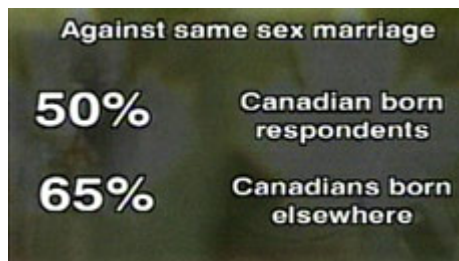
Nearly as many people – 44 per cent of respondents – said they supported Bill C-38, the legislation that would make the change law.



The poll, conducted by Environics Research Group for the CBC in late March, was released Sunday, just two days before MPs are expected to vote on a Conservative amendment to the bill introduced by the Liberal government.

The amendment would reverse the intent of the act by specifying that marriage must continue to be defined as a union between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others.

If it passes, it would amount to an act of parliamentary defiance against courts in many provinces, which have ruled that keeping gay couples from marrying violates their equality rights under the Charter.



The national divide on the issue was starkly apparent on the weekend, as thousands of people marched in demonstrations across the country – both for and against same-sex marriage.

### Canadians split along age lines

The CBC poll suggests the deepest divisions over same-sex marriage arise between different age groups.

The younger respondents – 61 per cent of those between ages 18 and 29 – agree with redefining marriage to include same-sex couples, the survey found.

More than two-thirds of those 60 years and older – 71 per cent – disagreed.

### Bill's opponents court foreign-born Canadians

There is also polarization among Canadians born outside the country and those born in it, the poll suggests.

Half of the Canadian-born respondents are against same-sex marriage, but the disapproval jumps to 65 per cent among Canadians born elsewhere.

That's why so much political attention in the debate has focused on ethnic communities.

Conservative Leader Stephen Harper, who introduced the amendment that would scuttle Bill C-38, has warned that same-sex marriage threatens a social institution that is fundamental to minorities.

"New Canadians know that their cultural values are likely to come under attack if this law is passed," he recently told Parliament.

Prime Minister Paul Martin has countered by pointing out that the Charter of Rights drives the need to change the law – and that same Charter protects all minorities.

"If a prime minister and a national government are willing to take away the rights of one group, what is to say they will stop it?"

The results of the CBC survey are based on 1,203 telephone interviews with Canadian residents age 18 or older, conducted by Environics from March 26 to 30, 2005. The results are considered accurate to within approximately + 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

### Questions:

1. What values are described in this article?

2. In what ways are Canadians divided on this issue? Provide statistical data as support.

3. Would the same sex marriage bill have passed 30 years ago? Explain