

**Polls Show Once Public Understands the Issue: Doctor-Assisted Suicide Fails**

Californians Against Assisted Suicide  
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Proposition 161, an initiative in 1992 to legalize doctor-assisted suicide originally polled — Yes 74 percent, No 24 percent and 2 percent undecided. (No on 161 campaign polling numbers). This measure was sponsored by the Hemlock Society (now Compassion & Choices).

On Election Day, November 3, 1992, Prop 161 FAILED by 8 points. The “No on 161” side garnered 54 percent of the vote while the pro-assisted suicide advocates received only 46 percent.

Again in 1999, when euthanasia/assisted suicide advocates pushed legislation to legalize the practice in California, initial polling suggested that 75 percent of Californians supported assisted suicide, 20 percent opposed and 5 percent were undecided. (Field Poll, 1999) The author of that bill declined to bring it to a vote of the Legislature.

Recent Polls

Fairbank, Maslin and Maullin — February 2006, found 64 percent of California Latinos Oppose doctor assisted suicide and only 29 percent Support. (Telephone survey of 325 Latinos in the State of California)

Pew Research — August 2005, found only 44 percent of people “Favor making it legal for doctors to Assist in suicide.” (Nationwide sample of 1,502 adults, 18 years of age or older)

Gallup — May 2005, found 49 percent found doctor-assisted suicide “acceptable” and 42 percent found it “wrong”. (Telephone interviews with 1,005 national adults, aged 18 and older)

CBS — November 2004, asks the question, “If a person has a disease that will ultimately destroy their mind or body and they want to take their own life, should a doctor be allowed to assist the person in taking their own life, or not?” Results show only 46 percent answering “Yes,” 45 percent answering “No” and 9 answering “Undecided.” (CBS poll was a nationwide sample of 885 adults)

According to CBS, “Public support for physician-assisted suicide is now at the lowest point since the CBS News/New York Times Poll began asking the question in 1990. Prior to this poll, more than half of the public had said physician-assisted suicide should be allowed.”

For more information please go to <http://www.ca-aas.com>

**Euthanasia Prevention Coalition poll (March 2005) found similar response.**

In March 2005, the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition was involved in a comprehensive poll concerning euthanasia and assisted suicide. (Newsletter #54 - May 2005).

The poll involved 1122 participants who were involved with an online survey company.

The poll produced some very interesting results:

- 77% thought that vulnerable Canadians might be euthanized without consent, even with safeguards in place.
- 75% thought that recent assisted suicide cases are not reason enough to change the current law.
- 69% agreed that the law should discourage suicide by restricting the promotion of devices and methods.

- 69% were more concerned about protecting vulnerable Canadians than legalizing assisted suicide.
- 67% agreed that legalizing assisted suicide would increase the suicide rate overall.
- 54% thought that guaranteeing pain control and good palliative care is a higher priority than legalizing euthanasia or assisted suicide.
- **45% thought that euthanasia/assisted suicide should be legal, 39% were opposed and 16% were undecided.**

**The EPC poll results were encouraging because they confirmed that there is no consensus to change the law in Canada. Canadians do support excellence in palliative care.**











