

Issues & Ideas

In Canada's Charter we trust ...

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National Post

450 words

14 November 2005

National Post

National

A15

English

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The majority of Canadians believe they are offered more personal liberties by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms than Americans receive from their Constitution.

A new poll released by the Dominion Institute/CDFAI and conducted by **Innovative** Research Group found that 73% of Canadians feel the Charter of Rights and Freedoms allows for more individual freedom than American's receive under their Constitution's Bill of Rights.

The feeling is the strongest among younger Canadians, with 86% of those aged 18 to 24 saying they believe they receive more individual freedom than Americans.

Women, too, seem to have more trust in the Canadian protections, with 77% siding with the Charter as opposed to 68% of men.

There is also a regional disparity in the amount of faith Canadians put in the Charter. Residents of Atlantic Canada (82%) and Quebec (80%) are more likely than those in other regions, especially Ontario (68%) and ALberta (66%), to say the Charter provides more protection.

Respondents in Alberta were the least likely to side with the Canadian document, with 21% saying the American Bill of Rights provides greater individual freedom.

The Dominion Institute/CDFAI poll also found Canadians believe they would receive better health care in Canada than in the United States.

"Both Canadians and Americans appear to trust in their own country's health care system more than their neighbouring country's system," the report found. But a slightly higher proportion of Americans than Canadians believe that if they had a serious illness they would receive better treatment in their own country. Three-quarters (76%) of Americans say they would receive better treatment at home, compared to 71% of Canadians.

One in five Canadians, or 21%, feel they would receive better treatment in the States, while 17% of Americans said they would receive better treatment north of the border.

The study also found a regional disparity in these responses.

"Three in ten (29%) residents of Manitoba/Saskatchewan ... believe better care would be available in the United States, compared to just 17% in Alberta, the leading proponent of private sector involvement in the health care sector," the study concluded.

Older Canadians (77% and young adults (76%) are the most likely to believe their treatment would be better at home.

The poll surveyed 1,016 randomly selected Canadians between Oct. 20 and Oct. 25 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1% 19 times out of 20. It also relied on a survey of 1,000 randomly selected Americans polled between Oct. 21 and Oct. 23 that has the same margin of error.

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