

February 6, 2024

BY EMAIL: ctvnews.caproducers@bellmedia.ca

Richard Gray
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CC: Melissa Gilligan (melissa.gilligan@bellmedia.ca), Dawn Walton (Dawn.Walton@bellmedia.ca)

Subject: National Public Research Canada survey reported by CTV News Calgary

Dear Mr. Gray:

We are writing to express our concern with an article published on CTVNewsCalgary.ca on February 5th, *"Majority of Albertans support parental consent and/or notification for minor to get abortion: Survey"* that was revised and published under a different headline on February 6th, *"Questions raised over survey on parental consent for abortions in Alberta."*

The February 5th article covers the results of a poll conducted by National Public Research Canada (NPRC) related to parental rights and minors seeking abortions. The article gives credence to the poll yet provides little information about its methodology and statistical rigour.

Were National Public Research Canada a member of CRIC – they are not – the release of their poll without adequate supporting information about methodology and the steps taken to ensure the statistical accuracy of its findings **would be a clear violation of CRIC's standards**. CRIC requires its members to disclose sufficient information about how the research was conducted and how the data was gathered to allow for independent review and peer verification of the research claims. With no clear adherence to internationally-recognized standards around disclosure, it is difficult for your readers and viewers to assess the quality and validity of the poll showcased in the article.

The revised article of February 6th begins with a statement that the veracity of said poll may be in question and several paragraphs are devoted to CTV's attempts to find out more about the poll and the company that conducted it.

While we appreciate that CTV News has revised the article, we do not believe those efforts go far enough as the article still reports on the poll's findings and uses those as a platform for the balance of the article that deals with the abortion debate in Alberta.

By showcasing the findings of the poll, CTV News continues to give credence to it, despite being unable to verify its accuracy and statistical rigour. In fact, in the first sentence in the article, Ms. Gilligan writes, **"The company behind a new poll on parental rights in Alberta for minors seeking abortions is refusing to disclose information about itself, casting doubt on the veracity of the survey"** (emphasis added). She also states that "NPRC does not have a website and CTV News has been unable to get a representative

to disclose where its offices are located.” She also writes “One reputable pollster says he hasn't heard of the company.”

Why then, if CTV could not verify the accuracy of the poll or who is behind it, would the article go on to report on its findings and even include a margin of error, giving some semblance of credibility to a poll that Ms. Gilligan has already stated the credibility may be in question?

If CTV News could not ensure the accuracy of poll, then it should not have reported on it at all.

The reporting of a questionable poll's findings is at odds with CTV's journalistic standards that at their foundation, dictates that information should not blankly published without proper scrutiny.

We quote from your Mission Statement, “...our mission is to be Canada's most trusted news source... while adhering to the highest standards of journalism at all times.” The statement goes on to say: “We take many steps to ensure accuracy: We investigate claims with skepticism; question assumptions; challenge conventional wisdom; confirm information with subject-matter experts; and seek to corroborate what sources tell us by talking with other informed people or consulting documents. We verify content, such as technical terms, stats, etc., against source documents or make clear who is providing the information.”

We also point to Clause 5(1) of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' Code of Ethics that states that: (1) It shall be the responsibility of broadcasters to ensure that news shall be represented with accuracy and without bias. Broadcasters shall satisfy themselves that the arrangements made for obtaining news ensure this result. They shall also ensure that news broadcasts are not editorial.”

When assessing whether to publish the results of a poll, the media need to apply the same degree of journalistic critical practices and skepticism that they would to any other source of information. Survey data has the power to combat misinformation but only when done following the highest transparency standards.

CRIC's standards provide an important tool for journalists to ask the right questions about polls. We invite Ms. Gilligan and all members of the CTV newsroom to review CRIC's list of [10 questions journalists should ask](#) before publishing the results of a survey.

The Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC) is the voice of Canada's research, analytics, and insights industry. CRIC represents the highest standards, ethics, and best practices in research that protect the public interest. We intervene in public matters where the actions of members non-members can bring the field of public opinion research into disrepute.

We look forward to your response and are available to meet should you like to discuss at greater length.

Sincerely,

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