

# **Press Release**

**By The Iona Institute**

**Embargoed till 1am Monday, January 8, 2007**

## **Majority support still marriage and the two parent family**

### **Poll commissioned by new institute**

A majority of Irish people continue to support marriage and the two-parent family, a new opinion poll has found. The poll, conducted by Lansdowne Market Research, and commissioned by a new organisation - The Iona Institute - has found that there is a two-to-one majority of Irish people in favour of marriage and/or the two-parent family.

The main findings of the poll are (more details can be found at: [www.ionainstitute.ie](http://www.ionainstitute.ie) under 'Latest from Iona'):

- 58% vs 27pc believe that marital and family breakdown is harmful to society;
- 56% vs 27% believe the State should support policies that encourage mothers and fathers to stay together;
- 52% vs 29pc believe it is better if the parents of a child are married;
- 54% v 29% believe the absence of a father from the home is potentially harmful to children;
- 57% vs 28% regard marriage as a mainly child-centered institution as distinct from a mainly adult-centered one;
- 45% vs 34pc agree with the statement: "While all families should be given some support by the State, the State should nonetheless continue to support marriage over and above other family forms."
- 80% believe that income tax ought to be reduced for families with children.

(In each of the above cases the percentage of respondents answering 'Neither' or 'Don't know' was in the region of 15pc).

A nationally representative sample of 950 people was interviewed for the survey which was conducted in November and December.

**The Iona Institute is headed by religious and social affairs commentator, David Quinn, a columnist with The Irish Independent and The Irish Catholic.**

Commenting on the poll results Mr Quinn said: "The results are not surprising. There is significant research to show that children are less likely to experience difficulties at all stages of their lives if they are reared by their mother and father, especially when the parents are married. Common sense tells us this as well. The fact that a majority of Irish people still support, and want the State to support, the two-parent family and marriage is something legislators must take into account as they consider potentially far-reaching changes to family law."

**ENDS**

## **Notes to Editors**

- The Iona Institute is a new non-governmental organisation dedicated to the strengthening of civil society. It believes that social problems such as crime, substance abuse and suicide are caused in part by family breakdown and the decline in religious practice and it hopes to highlight this linkage.
- The Iona Institute intends to carry out its aims through the commissioning of relevant position papers by experts in their fields, including social scientists; lawyers and psychiatrists; through the formulation of social policies; through sponsoring research and opinion polls; and, through organising seminars on relevant topics.
- The Iona Institute hopes to provide a key voice in debates on issues such as marriage and the family, religious practice, religious freedom, and on the causes of crime, substance-abuse, and other related social problems facing Irish society.
- This poll is one the first opinion polls ever commissioned in Ireland to discover, in detail, public attitudes to the issue of the two-parent family and to marriage. It has been commissioned as legal proposals are being discussed that will dilute the special status of marriage in the law by creating 'civil partnerships' which will have many of the same rights and obligations as marriage.

### **For more information please contact:**

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Further details about the Institute, and about the opinion poll, can be found at [www.ionainstitute.ie](http://www.ionainstitute.ie)