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Halifax Residents Divided Over Banning of Police Street Checks

- Half of Halifax residents support a permanent ban on street checks, while four in ten oppose it.
- Six in ten support a police apology for the use of street checks in the past.

May 9, 2019: Halifax-area residents are divided on the question of whether police ‘street checks’ should be permanently banned in the province.

A new study by **Narrative Research** shows that half of Halifax adult residents (53%) support a permanent ban on street checks, including three in ten (28%) who “completely support” a ban. Meanwhile, a smaller but still significant number of Halifax residents (42%) oppose a permanent ban on the practice, including two in ten (18%) who “completely oppose” a ban.

On April 17, Nova Scotia Justice Minister Mark Furey announced a temporary moratorium on police street checks in the province, following an extended public debate on the controversial police practice of stopping and questioning people. In March, an independent report for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission said that black people are six times more likely to be street checked than white people. In response, Furey imposed a moratorium on the practice, but stopped short of a permanent ban, saying street checks are a valuable public safety tool when used appropriately.

Leaders of the African Nova Scotian community are calling on the province to impose a permanent ban.

Last month the Halifax Police Commission recommended that Halifax Regional Police and the Halifax district RCMP apologize to black Nova Scotians for the use of street checks in the past. The **Narrative Research** survey results show that six in ten Halifax residents (62%) support a police apology for street checks, including three in ten (31%) who “completely support” an apology, while three in ten (28%) oppose a police apology.

“Our research shows that while more Halifax residents are in favour of an apology and a permanent ban, a substantial share of the city’s population is not in favour,” says Margaret Brigley, CEO of **Narrative Research**. “The debate over street checks is far from settled, as least in terms of public opinion in the Halifax area.”

The survey results are part of Narrative Research’s **Urban Report**, an independent quarterly telephone survey in the Maritimes’ major cities. The questions on street checks were asked of 400 adult Halifax-area residents from April 17 to May 6, 2019. Results are considered accurate to within +/- 4.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

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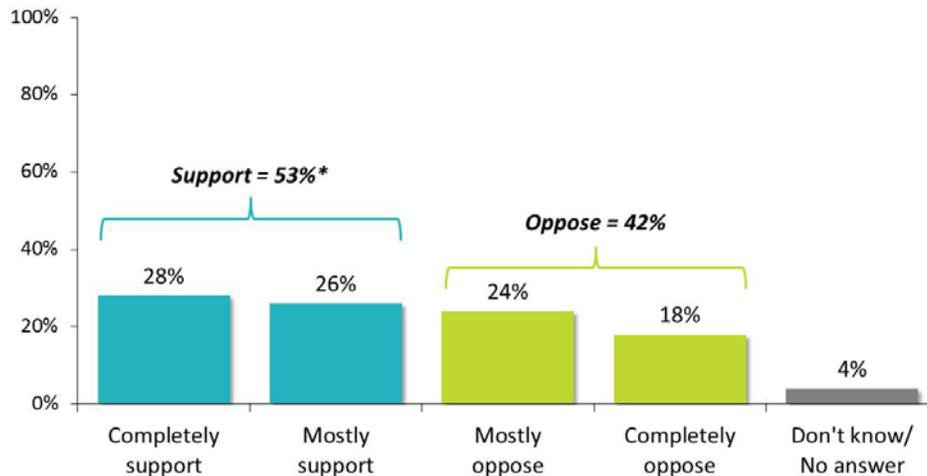
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Opinion of Permanently Banning Police Street Checks in Nova Scotia



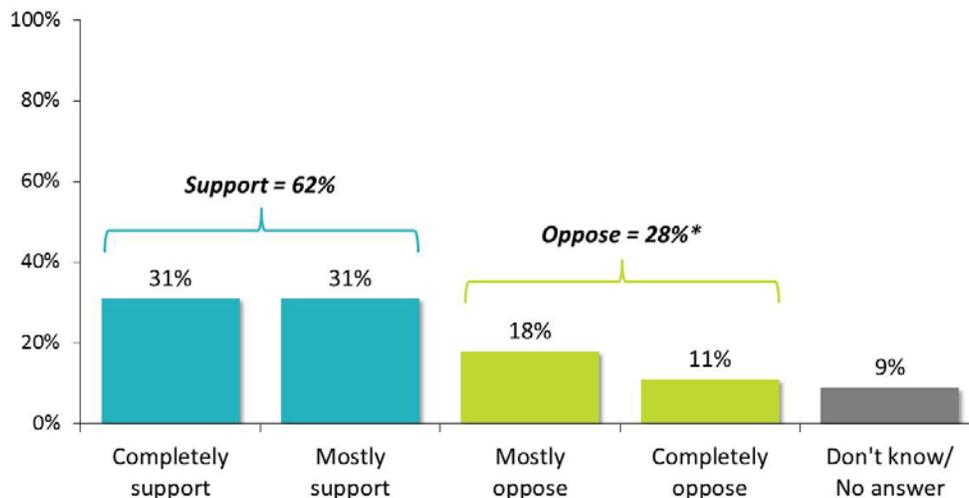
Question: The term "street checks" describes the police practice of stopping people without cause and checking their ID. While some consider this a necessary public safety tool, a report for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission says street checks discriminate against members of the Black community as black people are six times more likely to be street checked than white people. Do you completely support, mostly support, mostly oppose, or completely oppose the permanent banning of police street checks in Nova Scotia? **Due to rounding.*

Sample: 400 Halifax CMA residents (18 years plus). **Interview Dates:** April 17 to May 6, 2019.

Overall Margin of Sampling Error: ±4.9 percentage points, 95% confidence level.



Opinion of a Police Apology for Street Checks



Question: The Halifax Police Commission has recommended that the HRM Police and the Halifax district RCMP apologize to black Nova Scotians for the way street checks were used. Do you completely support, mostly support, mostly oppose, or completely oppose a police apology for street checks? **Due to rounding.*

Sample: 400 Halifax CMA residents (18 years plus). **Interview Dates:** April 17 to May 6, 2019.

Overall Margin of Sampling Error: ±4.9 percentage points, 95% confidence level.

