

The following article, written by Hillel Fendel, is quoted from IsraelNationalNews.com. It was posted February 23, 2008.

Sabbath-Sunday Bill Survey Shows Support

MK Zevulun Orlev (NRP) has announced the findings of a poll showing 56% support amongst Israelis for his proposed legislation making Sunday a day of rest and allowing some public transportation and entertainment on the Sabbath.

Orlev's bill would change the official approach to Sabbath as the country's day of rest. Though businesses and government offices would continue to be closed, places of entertainment would be permitted to open - and public transportation, now banned in most cities on the Sabbath, would be available. The bill stipulates that such transportation and entertainment would be carried out with maximum sensitivity to the religious public.

A survey commissioned by Orlev finds that 56% of the public support his initiative, while 30% object. The poll was carried out by Brain Base (Maagar Mochot) Institute, headed by Prof. Yitzchak Katz.

Orlev's bill, which he proposed last week, also calls for a second day of rest during the week - Sunday - during which businesses and offices would be closed. This would enable Sabbath-observant families to spend more time together, Orlev explains. Work hours lost to Sunday would be made up largely by increasing the workday on Mondays through Fridays from 8 to 9 hours.

The survey divides the respondents into religious categories, such as secular, hareidi-religious, etc. However, it lumps together the religious-Zionist public with those who consider themselves "traditional," i.e., minimally observant. The poll finds that 64% of this joint "sector" supports the new bill.

The two groups were combined in the poll, despite the expectation that the two would not have similar views of the issue. Other findings of the poll show, in fact, that support for the bill increases as level of religious observance decreases. For instance, 64% of the secular

public supports the bill, compared to only 6% of the hareidi-religious public.

Asked to explain, Orlev's spokesman Moshe Inbar told Arutz-7 that the breakdown was determined by the pollster, "in consultation with me." Inbar said that lumping the two sectors together is in keeping with the NRP's new policy of "opening its gates" to the traditional community.

Arutz-7: "But information is missing from the poll, in that we do not know how many of the mainstream NRP voters - the religious-Zionist public - supports this bill."

In response, Inbar first suggested that "you can commission your own poll," but then added, "You can extrapolate from the other findings..."

Orlev said his bill was formulated with the help of leading religious-Zionist rabbis, and does not openly permit activities that are forbidden by the Torah, "but rather does not mention them."

MK Yitzchak Levy of the National Union party said the bill paves the way for further deterioration in the character of the Sabbath in the State of Israel. The National Union and the NRP joined forces for the last national election, merging into one electoral list.