

ILLEGAL DRUGS

Canadians Want Federal Government to Retain Drug Harm Reduction Programs

Most Canadians would legalize marijuana, not other hard drugs.

[VANCOUVER – May 12, 2008] – Canadians continue to offer mixed reviews on the federal government’s plans to deal with illegal drug use, a new Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 71 per cent of respondents endorse the decision to call for mandatory minimum prison sentences and large fines for marijuana grow operators and drug dealers.

A larger proportion of Canadians—86 per cent—support the creation of a National Anti-Drug Strategy, which includes drug-awareness campaigns.

However, 57 per cent of respondents believe the administration headed by Stephen Harper would be wrong to eliminate “harm reduction” programs, such as supervised injection sites and needle-exchange programs.

In British Columbia—where Vancouver’s Insite facility has been operating since 2003—opposition to ending supervised injection sites climbs to 64 per cent.

The poll also shows that a majority of Canadians continue to hold tolerant views on marijuana consumption. A majority of respondents (56%) oppose the current government’s decision to scrap the marijuana decriminalization legislation that was discussed during Paul Martin’s tenure as prime minister.

KEY FINDINGS

- » **57% oppose ending harm reduction programs, such as supervised injection sites**
- » **44% think Canada has a serious drug abuse problem**
- » **53% support marijuana legalization**
- » **71% support government proposal to ensure minimum prison sentences and fines for marijuana grow operators and drug dealers**

More results are at the end of this release.

*From May 8 to May 9, 2008, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of **1,004 adult Canadians**. The margin of error for the total sample is **+/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20**. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

In addition, 53 per cent of Canadians actually support the legalization of cannabis. Less than 10 per cent of respondents believe five other illegal substances—crack cocaine, powder cocaine, ecstasy, heroin, and methamphetamine or "crystal meth—should be legalized.

More than two-in-five respondents (44%) believe Canada has a serious drug abuse problem that affects the whole country, while 35 per cent believe Canada's drug abuse problem is confined to specific areas and people. Only 15 per cent of respondents—including 20 per cent in Ontario—think Canada does not have a serious drug abuse problem.

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Illegal Drugs

Do you support or oppose each of these measures proposed by the federal government to deal with drug abuse?
("Moderately support" and "strongly support" answers only)

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Ensuring mandatory minimum prison sentences and large fines for marijuana grow operators and drug dealers	71%	73%	74%	72%	69%	73%	69%	70%	72%
Introducing a National Anti-Drug Strategy, including a nationwide awareness campaign to discourage young Canadians from using drugs	86%	85%	90%	96%	83%	86%	86%	87%	85%

Illegal Drugs

Do you support or oppose each of these measures proposed by the federal government to deal with drug abuse?
("Moderately oppose" and "strongly oppose" answers only)

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Scrapping the previous government's marijuana decriminalization legislation	56%	48%	54%	65%	58%	58%	45%	57%	55%
Eliminating "harm reduction" programs, such as supervised injection sites and needle-exchange programs	57%	64%	52%	74%	57%	53%	51%	53%	60%

Illegal Drugs

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Canada has a serious drug abuse problem and it affects the whole country	44%	46%	58%	51%	35%	40%	63%	39%	48%
Canada's drug abuse problem is confined to specific areas and people	35%	42%	29%	43%	37%	31%	26%	38%	32%
Canada does not have a serious drug abuse problem	15%	10%	10%	6%	20%	17%	6%	17%	13%
Not sure	7%	3%	3%	0%	8%	11%	6%	6%	8%

Illegal Drugs

Do you support or oppose the legalization of each of the following drugs?
("Strongly support" or "Moderately support" answers only)

	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Marijuana	53%	53%	48%	65%	55%	49%	50%	53%	53%
Crack cocaine	8%	10%	1%	9%	6%	12%	3%	7%	8%
Powder cocaine	9%	13%	3%	5%	7%	13%	5%	9%	8%
Ecstasy	9%	12%	2%	9%	7%	13%	4%	9%	9%
Heroin	8%	14%	2%	5%	6%	13%	4%	9%	8%
Methamphetamine or "crystal meth"	7%	9%	1%	9%	5%	12%	3%	7%	8%

Angus Reid Strategies is a full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995.

Angus Reid Strategies, along with its sister company, Vision Critical, is now the largest Canadian-owned market research enterprise. In addition to its four offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices San Francisco, New York and London, England. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

Over the last year, Angus Reid has covered five elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes. <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=194>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

- 30 -

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our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
www.angusreidstrategies.com**