

ILLEGAL DRUGS

Canadians support some of the federal government's policies; express concern about a national drug abuse problem

Most Canadians are tolerant with marijuana, but not with other hard drugs.

[VANCOUVER – Oct. 17, 2007] – Just days after the Conservative government announced its "two-pronged" national anti-drug strategy, Canadians seem to agree only halfheartedly with the plan, a new Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 74 per cent of respondents back a proposal that would enforce jail sentences and large fines for marijuana growers and drug dealers. A second measure that would create a National Anti-Drug Strategy—including drug-awareness campaigns—also enjoys high support (89%).

However, two other proposals included in Prime Minister Stephen Harper's drug plan were not as well received by Canadians. Fifty-one per cent of respondents—including 43 per cent of those who voted Conservative in the last federal election—oppose scrapping the previous Liberal government's plan to decriminalize marijuana. An additional 56 per cent want the feds to keep harm-reduction programs, including safe injection sites, untouched. Harper said on Oct. 4 that he personally opposes harm-reduction programs, but the government agreed to keep them running for now.

Most Canadians (51%) would support the legalization of Marijuana, but less than 10 per cent would allow for crack cocaine, powder cocaine, ecstasy and heroin to become readily available.

KEY FINDINGS

- » **51% say Canada has a serious drug abuse problem**
- » **51% support marijuana legalization**
- » **74% endorse a government proposal to ensure minimum prison sentences and fines for marijuana grow operators and drug dealers**
- » **56% decry Harper's plan to end harm-reduction programs**

More results are at the end of this release.

*From October 11 to 12, 2007, 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.*

A majority of poll respondents who will vote for the Conservatives in the next election support all of Harper's proposals, officially unveiled earlier this month. Nevertheless, at least 71 per cent of those planning to vote for the Bloc Québécois, the NDP or the Liberal Party highly support two of the government's proposed measures: creating a national anti-drug strategy, and punishing grow operators and drug dealers.

The greatest resistance to the Tories' plan to scrap the marijuana decriminalization legislation is found in British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, all with 58 per cent. In every single province, but more noticeably in Western Canada, people want to keep the harm-reduction programs alive.

Notably, more educated respondents tend to express a higher degree of support for keeping harm-reduction programs up and running. While 45 per cent of those with high school education or less support this approach, the same is true for 58 per cent of Canadians with college or technical school education, and for 65 per cent of those with at least a university degree.

People in BC (61%), Alberta (60%) and Atlantic Canada (61%) are especially worried about Canada having a national drug-abuse problem. Support for legalizing marijuana is particularly high in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (67%), Atlantic Canada (61%), Alberta (56%) and Ontario (52%). Male respondents (54%) seem also more prone to accept this course of action than women (49%). Conversely, those earning more than \$100,000 a year and those with less education are more inclined to oppose marijuana legalization than people in other demographics.

Most Canadians support ensuring mandatory jail sentences and fines for marijuana growers and dealers, and creating a National Anti-Drug Strategy

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)

	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Ensuring mandatory minimum prison sentences and large fines for marijuana grow operators and drug dealers	74%	83%	67%	69%	71%	80%	70%	72%	77%
Introducing a National Anti-Drug Strategy, including a nationwide awareness campaign to discourage young Canadians from using drugs	89%	96%	88%	80%	86%	89%	93%	87%	91%

Most Canadians oppose scrapping Liberal plan to decriminalize marijuana, and ending harm-reduction programs

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)

	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Scrapping the previous government's marijuana decriminalization legislation	51%	58%	51%	58%	50%	48%	50%	57%	46%
Eliminating "harm reduction" programs, such as supervised injection sites and needle-exchange programs	56%	58%	58%	60%	54%	56%	53%	60%	52%

Most Canadians support ensuring mandatory jail sentences and fines for marijuana growers and dealers, and creating a National Anti-Drug Strategy

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)

	Will Vote in Next Federal Election				
	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	BQ	Green
Ensuring mandatory minimum prison sentences and large fines for marijuana grow operators and drug dealers	86%	70%	71%	73%	54%
Introducing a National Anti-Drug Strategy, including a nationwide awareness campaign to discourage young Canadians from using drugs	92%	83%	91%	93%	86%

Most Canadians oppose scrapping Liberal plan to decriminalize marijuana, and ending harm-reduction programs

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)

	Will Vote in Next Federal Election				
	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	BQ	Green
Scrapping the previous government's marijuana decriminalization legislation	39%	63%	57%	61%	69%
Eliminating harm reduction programs, such as supervised injection sites and needle-exchange programs	42%	60%	64%	72%	80%

51% think Canada has a national drug abuse problem

Q. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Canada has a serious drug abuse problem and it affects the whole country	51%	61%	60%	51%	49%	42%	61%	45%	57%
Canada's drug abuse problem is confined to specific areas and people	32%	31%	34%	27%	30%	38%	27%	36%	28%
Canada does not have a serious drug abuse problem	11%	4%	6%	15%	15%	12%	6%	14%	8%
Not sure	6%	4%	1%	7%	7%	7%	6%	5%	7%

51% would legalize marijuana

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

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Marijuana	51%	34%	56%	67%	52%	50%	61%	54%	49%
Crack cocaine	7%	5%	5%	3%	8%	9%	2%	7%	6%
Powder cocaine	8%	7%	6%	4%	10%	11%	3%	10%	7%
Ecstasy	9%	7%	7%	8%	10%	14%	4%	11%	8%
Heroin	9%	8%	5%	7%	9%	12%	5%	11%	7%
Methamphetamine or "crystal meth"	7%	5%	5%	3%	8%	9%	1%	8%	6%

Angus Reid Strategies is a North American 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. Located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal, our team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research.

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.

Angus Reid Strategies has been successful in predicting the outcome of this year's provincial elections:

In Quebec: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=37>

In Manitoba: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=56>

In Ontario: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=129>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF%20WHITE%20PAPER.pdf>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

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