

Six-in-ten Canadians support legalizing marijuana, but say it's not a top justice priority

Fifteen per cent say of Canadians say pot legalization should be at top of government's justice to-do list

August 12, 2014 – As attention is focused on the return of marijuana legalization activist Marc Emery to Canada, recent survey results show the majority of people in this country support his cause.

They do not, however, view legalizing pot as a top justice priority.

An Angus Reid Global (ARG) survey of 1510 Canadian adults shows 59 per cent say they think the use of marijuana should be legalized, while 41 per cent say it should remain illegal. These findings are not significantly changed from an earlier [ARG poll](#) conducted in 2012.

However, while the most recent survey findings indicate majority backing for pot legalization, they also show that Canadians do not see the need to change existing laws as the issue the federal government should focus its attention on first.

Support for Legalization:

Overall, three-in-five (59%) Canadians say the use of marijuana should be legalized in this country. This support is strongest in BC (70%), Atlantic Canada (68%) and Manitoba/Saskatchewan (63%). It is lowest in Alberta (53%) and Quebec (53%).

Nationally, men are slightly more supportive of legalization than women (62% versus 56%). Older Canadians are only slightly less supportive than younger respondents (see tables at the end of this release).

Voting patterns do affect opinion on this issue.

Respondents who said they voted for the Conservative Party of Canada in the last federal election were significantly less likely than those who voted for the Liberal or New Democratic parties to support legalization (43% versus 70% and 68% respectively).

METHODOLOGY:

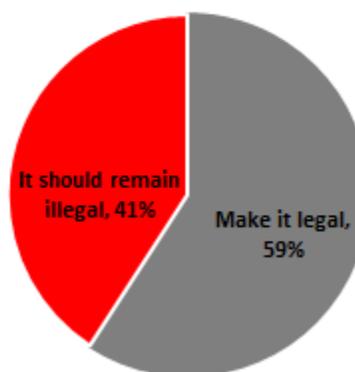
Angus Reid Global (ARG) conducted an online survey among 1510 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists on May 23-24, 2014.

A probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

This survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARG.

Detailed charts, tables and regional results are found at the end of this release.

Do you think the use of marijuana in Canada should be made legal, or not?



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Priority for Legalization:

While the survey results do suggest broad support for legalization of marijuana, the issue is not top of mind on the spectrum of other crime/safety/justice issues.

When asked which crime/safety/justice issues the federal government should consider a top priority, respondents chose “tougher penalties for those found guilty of serious crimes” (63%) as first or second priority four-to-one over “legalizing the possession and use of marijuana” (15%).

Other justice issues deemed more pressing by respondents than marijuana legalization included cracking down on white collar crime (38%), addressing community crime (34%), addressing terrorism and security (28%), and increasing the transparency of the RCMP (16%).

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Detailed tables are on the following pages.

Do you think the use of marijuana in Canada should be made legal, or not?							
	Total (1510)	Region					
		BC (196)	AB (162)	MB/SK (101)	ON (565)	PQ (371)	ATL (114)
Yes, make it legal	59%	70%	53%	63%	59%	53%	68%
No, it should remain illegal	41%	30%	47%	37%	41%	47%	32%

Do you think the use of marijuana in Canada should be made legal, or not?						
	Total (1510)	Gender		Age		
		Men	Women	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Yes, make it legal	59%	62%	56%	61%	61%	55%
No, it should remain illegal	41%	38%	44%	39%	39%	45%

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Do you think the use of marijuana in Canada should be made legal, or not?				
	Total (1510)	Federal Vote Last		
		CPC	Liberal Party	NDP
Yes, make it legal	59%	43%	70%	68%
No, it should remain illegal	41%	57%	30%	32%

Please select the issues that you think should be the federal government's top priorities on the overall crime/safety and justice front. (Rank 1 & 2)							
	Total (1510)	Region					
		BC (196)	AB (162)	MB/SK (101)	ON (565)	PQ (371)	ATL (114)
Tougher penalties for those found guilty of serious crimes	63%	66%	68%	61%	62%	59%	71%
Getting tougher on white collar crime, especially tax evaders	38%	30%	28%	26%	36%	55%	36%
Addressing crime in our communities	34%	37%	34%	41%	34%	31%	33%
Efforts on terrorism and security	28%	16%	39%	19%	32%	27%	26%
Focusing on more accountability/transparency in RCMP	16%	25%	16%	18%	15%	10%	19%
Legalizing the possession and use of marijuana	15%	23%	9%	26%	16%	12%	11%
Re-introducing abortion legislation	5%	3%	6%	9%	4%	5%	4%

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Please select the issues that you think should be the federal government's top priorities on the overall crime/safety and justice front. (Rank 1 & 2)						
	Total (6318)	Gender		Age		
		Men	Women	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Tougher penalties for those found guilty of serious crimes	63%	60%	67%	56%	65%	67%
Getting tougher on white collar crime, especially tax evaders	38%	42%	35%	36%	34%	46%
Addressing crime in our communities	34%	31%	37%	35%	39%	29%
Efforts on terrorism and security	28%	25%	31%	24%	28%	31%
Focusing on more accountability/transparency in RCMP	16%	20%	12%	23%	13%	13%
Legalizing the possession and use of marijuana	15%	18%	13%	19%	16%	12%
Re-introducing abortion legislation	5%	5%	4%	7%	5%	2%

Angus Reid Global is headed by Dr. Angus Reid, Canada's best known and longest practicing pollster. He's spent more than four decades asking questions about what people feel, how they think and who they will vote for. He is supported by a team of practitioners conducting high quality research for corporations, governments and non-profit organizations.

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