

Fifi forced out? Spike sent packing? Canadians weigh in on whether landlords should be able to prohibit pets

Nearly two-thirds say landlords should be able to refuse renters with pets; renters themselves are divided

March 29, 2018 – Finding a place to live in one of Canada's largest cities is a [notoriously painful exercise](#). And it's one often made [even more painful](#) for those looking for a new home with the pets.

Across the country, landlords who don't want animals in their buildings can – and do – refuse to rent to pet-owners, something activists [have been pushing to change](#).

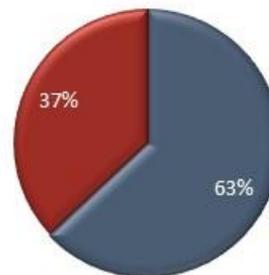
A newly released analysis of polling data from the Angus Reid Institute finds a majority of Canadians inclined to disagree with those petitioning for increased rights for pet-owners, though opinion on this varies depending on whether one is a homeowner or a tenant.

Overall, more than six-in-ten Canadians (63%) say landlords should be able to refuse to rent their properties to pet owners, but the percentage holding this view rises to seven-in-ten among homeowners (70%), and falls to roughly half (50%) among renters.

More Key Findings:

- Residents of Quebec (43%) and Ontario (39%) are more likely than residents of other provinces to say landlords should not be able to refuse to rent to pet owners
- While half of renters (50%) say landlords shouldn't be allowed to refuse to rent to them if they have pets, more than three-quarters of landlords (76%) hold the opposite view
- Younger respondents (those ages 18 – 34) and those with household incomes below \$50,000 are more likely than other groups to favour tenants with pets in this conflict, though small majorities (56% and 54%, respectively) in each group still say landlords should have the right not to rent to pet-owners

Which of the following is closest to your opinion?



- Landlords should be able to refuse to rent their properties to pet owners
- Landlords should NOT be able to refuse to rent their properties to pet owners

METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute analyzed the results of an online survey conducted from December 7 – 14, 2017, among a representative, randomized sample of 5,413 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). The survey data were donated by [MARU/Matchbox](#). The sample plan included large over-samples in many provinces, weighted back to provide a national snapshot. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size with this sample plan would carry a margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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The regional story

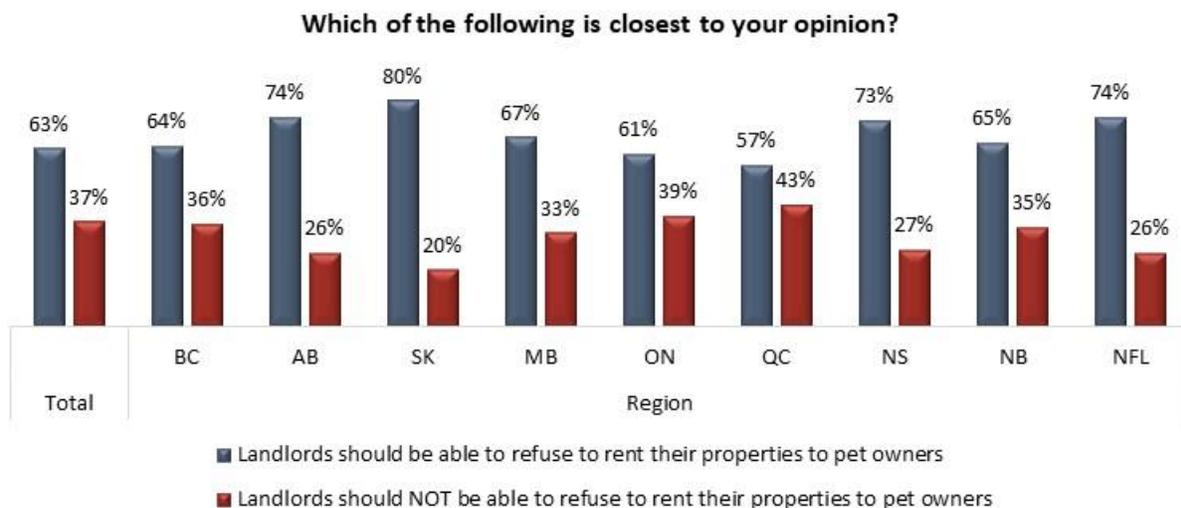
The Canadian Animal Health Institute estimates that there are [more than 15 million pet cats and dogs](#) in Canada today, and [surveys have found](#) as many as six-in-ten Canadians own some type of pet animal. Many of these pet-owning Canadians are also homeowners, but for those who aren't, their furry friends can be a significant obstacle to finding a place to live.

Tenancy law varies from province to province, but the current legal landscape is fairly consistent across the country with respect to people who have pets seeking rental housing. As seen in [CMHC-created fact-sheets](#) for each province, landlords across the country can legally choose not to rent to prospective tenants who have pets.

Moreover, in every provincial jurisdiction except Ontario, landlords can prohibit tenants from adopting a pet after they have signed a lease on a unit. These "no pets" clauses are void under Ontario law, which means landlords cannot prohibit current tenants from getting a pet, though they can still decide not to rent to a would-be tenant who has one.

For people who currently have pets, the need to find a pet-friendly landlord limits the number of options available when apartment-hunting – a problem that becomes all the more acute in highly competitive rental markets such as Vancouver and Toronto.

But does this conundrum for cat and dog owners merit a policy change? Most Canadians say no. Asked to choose between the current status quo ("landlords should be able to refuse to rent their properties to pet owners") and the alternative ("landlords should NOT be able to refuse to rent their properties to pet owners"), majorities in each province choose the former, as seen in the following graph:



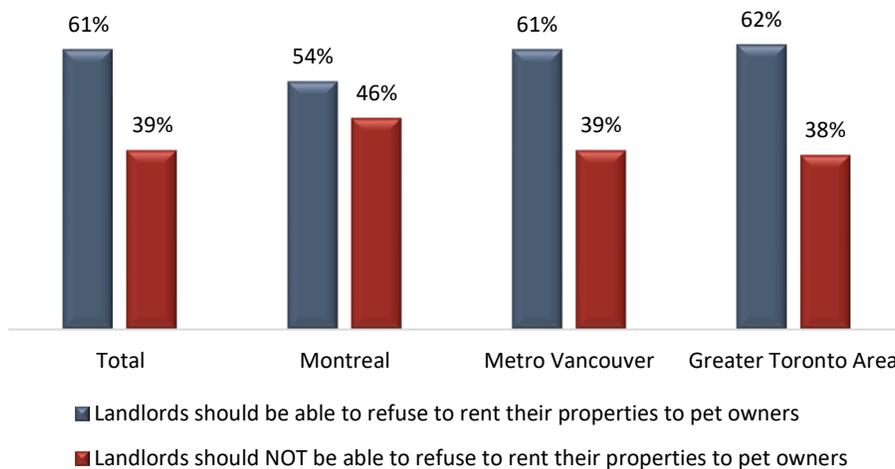
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Though Ontario is the only province to prohibit “no pets” clauses in tenancy agreements, its residents are only slightly more sympathetic to the renters’ side of this face-off than the national average. Neighbouring Quebec is more divided, a finding likely attributable to the higher percentage of Quebecers who rent their homes (some 38% do, compared to fewer than 30% in every other province, according to the [Canadian Rental Housing Index](#), which is based on census data).

Notably, while metro areas have been the site of many of the protests for renter’s rights on this issue, Canada’s largest metros follow a trend similar to the regional story. Vancouver and Toronto are close to the average for their provinces, while Montreal residents are closer to split, mirroring Quebec overall:

Which of the following is closest to your opinion:

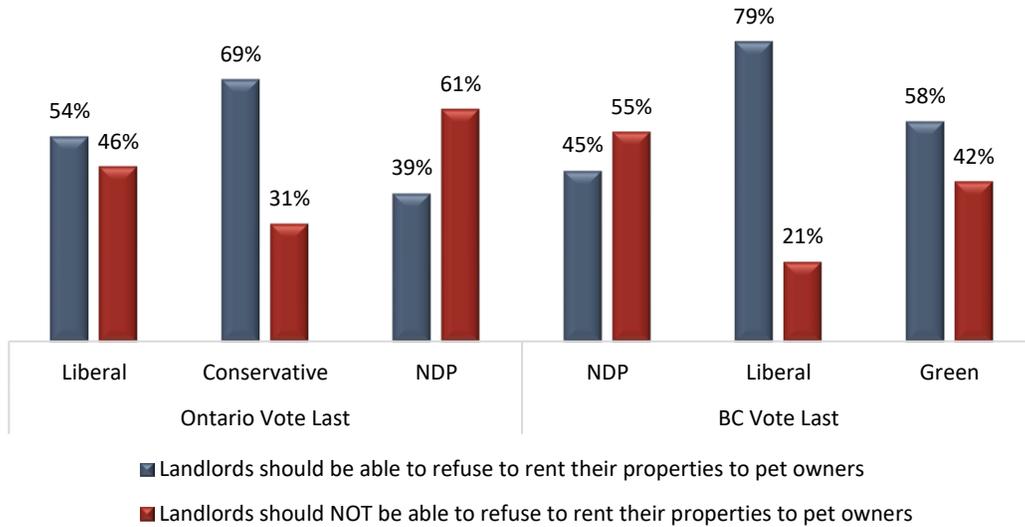


There is a political divide on this issue in British Columbia and Ontario. In B.C., where the New Democratic Party took the reigns of government last June, 55 per cent of that party’s voters say that landlords should not be allowed to refuse properties to pet owners. In both provinces, more conservative voters have a much different assessment than their more-left-leaning counterparts:

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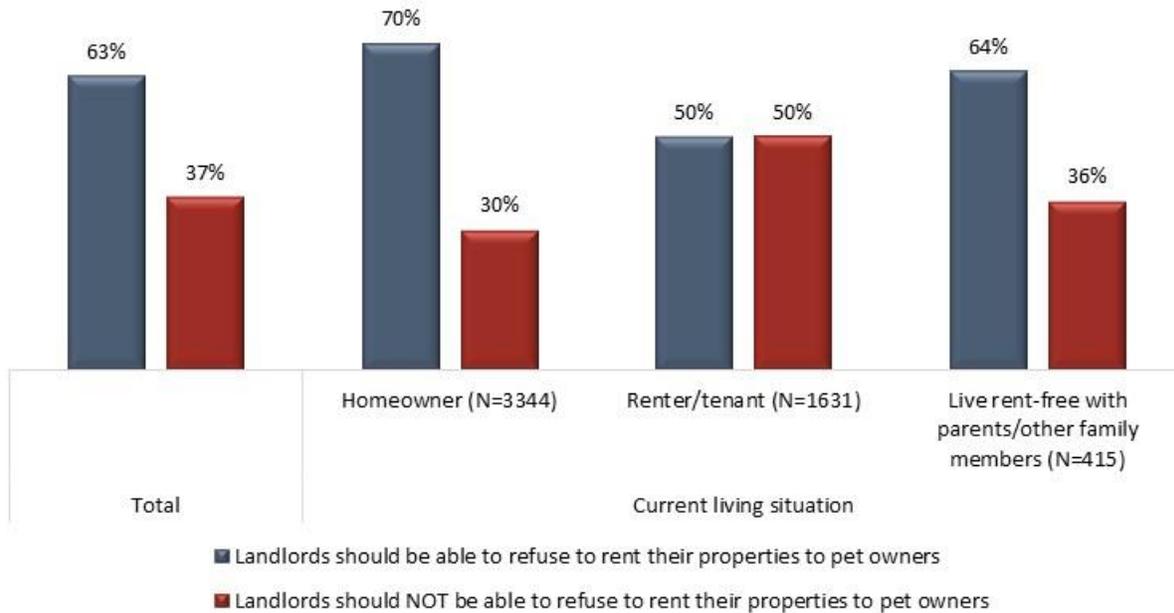
Tenants more divided than owners

One's current living situation appears to be correlated with one's opinion on this question. The vast majority (71%) of those respondents who own their homes support the right of landlords to refuse to rent to people with pets, while those who currently rent are much more evenly divided on this issue.

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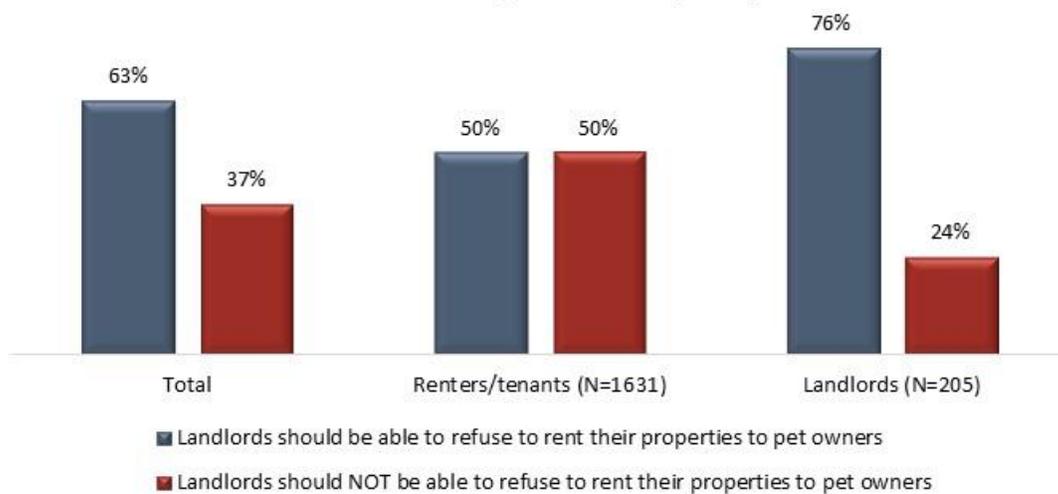
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Which of the following is closest to your opinion?



In a similar vein, people who are currently landlords – a subset of the other groups highlighted in the preceding graph – are even more adamant about their right to consider pet-ownership to be a disqualifying characteristic in a prospective tenant. More than three-quarters in this group say this is the case:

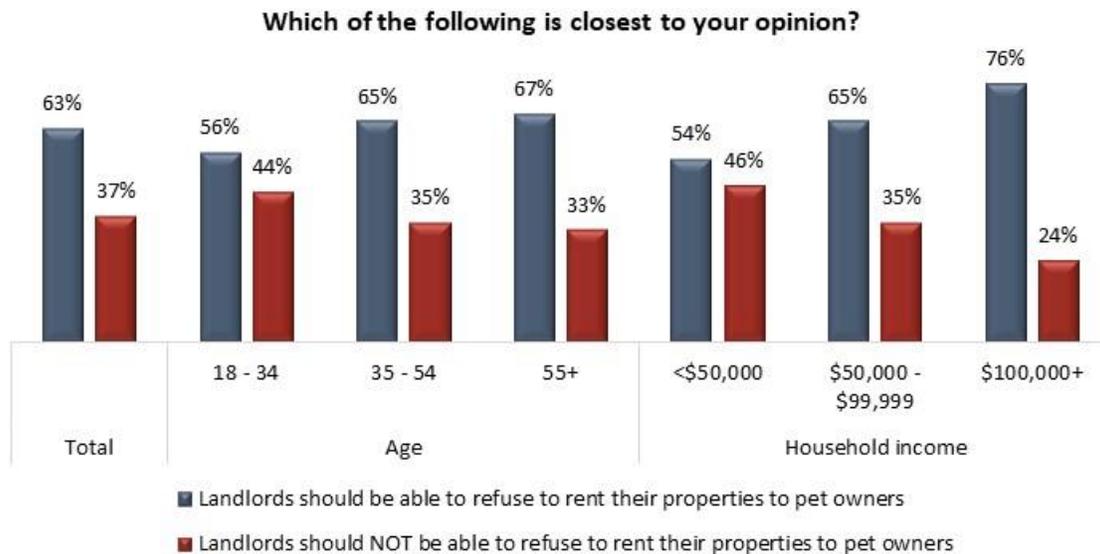
Which of the following is closest to your opinion?



The higher proportion of renters who say landlords should be prohibited from refusing to lease to pet-owners is likely a key driver of variations in opinion on this question across demographic groups.

As mentioned, Quebec has a higher proportion of renters and also a higher proportion of respondents who believe refusing to rent to people who have pets should not be allowed.

Relatedly, younger respondents and those with lower household incomes – groups that are statistically more likely to be renting their homes – are also more likely to say landlords should not be able to refuse to rent to pet-owners, as seen in the following graph:



*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

Summary tables follow

Which of the following is closest to your opinion?		
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (5413)	Current living/property ownership situation (categories not mutually exclusive)

		Home owner (3344)	Renter/Tenant (1631)	Landlord (205)	Living with parents/family members, rent free (415)
Landlords should be able to refuse to rent their properties to pet owners	63%	70%	50%	76%	64%
Landlords should NOT be able to refuse to rent their properties to pet owners	37%	30%	50%	24%	36%

Which of the following is closest to your opinion?										
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (5413)	Province								
		BC (622)	AB (607)	SK (1049)	MB (751)	ON (817)	QC (607)	NS (297)	NB (287)	NFL (282)
Landlords should be able to refuse to rent their properties to pet owners	63%	64%	74%	80%	67%	61%	57%	73%	65%	74%
Landlords should NOT be able to refuse to rent their properties to pet owners	37%	36%	26%	20%	33%	39%	43%	27%	35%	26%

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Which of the following is closest to your opinion?							
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (5413)	Age			Household Income		
		18 - 34 (1548)	35 - 54 (2026)	55+ (1839)	<\$50,000 (1763)	\$50,000 - \$99,999 (1853)	\$100,000+ (981)
Landlords should be able to refuse to rent their properties to pet owners	63%	56%	65%	67%	54%	65%	76%
Landlords should NOT be able to refuse to rent their properties to pet owners	37%	44%	35%	33%	46%	35%	24%

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