

## Majority of Canadians support legalizing or decriminalizing marijuana, new poll suggests

Ian Vandaelle Jan 17, 2012



Canadians have green on their minds, but not in the environmental sense, according to a new poll.

Released on Tuesday, the poll suggests 66% of Canadians are in favour of the legalization or decriminalization of marijuana, with just 20% supporting leaving the laws as they are now.

The poll, conducted by Toronto-based Forum Research Inc., showed that residents of British Columbia were the most likely to support marijuana laws reform, with 73% of respondents indicating laws should be changed. Quebec had the lowest support for reforms, though the majority of respondents, 61%, supported changing marijuana legislation.

%	Total	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	British Columbia
sample	1160	97	303	430	194	136
Legalize/ Decriminalize	66	67	61	67	66	73
It should be legalized and taxed	40	42	36	38	40	50
It should be decriminalize d for small amounts	26	26	25	29	26	23
The law should be left as is	20	15	21	20	20	21
Penalties should be increased	11	17	14	10	13	3
Don't know	2	1	3	3	1	3

This public support comes on the heels of a [new party policy](#) approved at the Liberal Party of Canada's renewal convention pushing for the legalization and regulation of marijuana. While it was the Liberals' youth wing who initially put forward the motion, the poll shows it's baby boomers who are the most likely to respond favourably to new marijuana legislation.

Respondents aged 55- to- 64 were the most likely to support legalization or decriminalization, with 73% supporting a shift. All other demographics polled in the mid- to- high- 60s in support of marijuana law reform.

"The public no longer favours devoting the time and resources required to restrict marijuana use and possession, while many feel the best strategy is to legalize and tax its sale," wrote Lorne Bozinoff, president of Forum Research Inc., in a press release accompanying the research. "For a majority of Canadians, the war on this particular drug needs to end."

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
sample	1160	151	157	238	312	302	541	619
Legalize/ Decriminalize	66	64	66	64	73	65	67	65
It should be legalized and taxed	40	41	43	35	42	36	45	34
It should be decriminalize d for small amounts	26	23	23	29	31	29	22	31
The law should be left as is	20	22	21	17	17	23	19	21
Penalties should be increased	11	13	10	16	7	7	12	11
Don't know	2	0	2	3	2	5	2	3

But for all the fuss made at the Liberal renewal convention, respondents who voted for the party in the 2011 election lagged behind the NDP in their support for new regulations. Of Liberal-voting respondents, 64% supported marijuana law reform, only polling higher than Conservative voters, of which only 59% are in favour of change. NDP voters were 71% in favour. Green Party-voters were the most likely to support reform, according to the poll, with 78% of respondents in favour.

The poll was conducted December 13th in an interactive voice response telephone survey of 1,160 residents 18 or older, with a margin of error of plus or minus 2.9%, 19 times out of 20.

***Past Vote (2011 Federal Election)***

<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Cons</b>	<b>Lib</b>	<b>NDP</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Bloc</b>
<b>sample</b>	<b>1160</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Legalize/ Decriminalize</b>	66	59	64	71	78	76
<b>It should be legalized and taxed</b>	40	35	36	42	53	39
<b>It should be decriminalize d for small amounts</b>	26	25	28	29	25	37
<b>The law should be left as is</b>	20	27	24	16	6	11
<b>Penalties should be increased</b>	11	12	9	11	15	11
<b>Don't know</b>	2	1	3	2	1	3