

CANADIANS SUPPORT DECRIMINALIZATION OF MINOR POT POSSESSION AND LEAN TO NOT REINTRODUCING DEATH PENALTY

10 YEARS LATER WE ARE MORE PROGRESSIVE ON THESE INDICATORS

[Ottawa – March 18, 2010] - EKOS tested two indicators of social conservatism as part of an ongoing societal monitoring program. The indicators are interesting for a number of reasons.

One asks whether the public agree that we should NOT have legal penalties for possessing small amounts of marijuana. The other asks whether the respondent supports the reintroduction of the death penalty. In both cases, the current results were compared with benchmark testing conducted 10 years ago.

These indicators are interesting social barometers at any time but they become even more interesting in the current political context. First, both the Prime Minister and Leader of Opposition have spoken on the issue of pot legalization as a response to the Prime Minister's foray into the unscripted world of Web 2.0. Secondly, Preston Manning and his foundation have released and commented on a study which claims that there has been a "blueing" of the centre. Mr. Manning is a highly respected spokesperson and his research was headed by two of Canada's most respected pollsters. Moreover, this report comes amid growing controversy and debate on the role of social conservatism in the current government's agenda.

While the overall claims made by Mr. Manning clearly have some evidence in favour of them, these are extremely important issues and the overall conclusion as to whether or not the centre is now blue is still an open question.

In the case of both of the measures presented here, the "progressive" views outweigh the socially conservative views. Moreover, the 10 year later judgement suggests the trajectory leans to a more, not less, progressive view.

In the case of decriminalized pot, only 30% support legal penalties for personal possession. In the case of capital punishment, only 40% support reintroducing the death penalty. Interestingly, among Conservative supporters, findings for both of these measures are dramatically reversed.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Support for decriminalization of marijuana:**
 - ▣ **50% agree**
 - ▣ **30% disagree**
 - ▣ **20% neither**

- **Support for reintroduction of capital punishment:**
 - ▣ **40% agree**
 - ▣ **46% disagree**
 - ▣ **14% neither**

Please note that the methodology is provided at the end of this document.

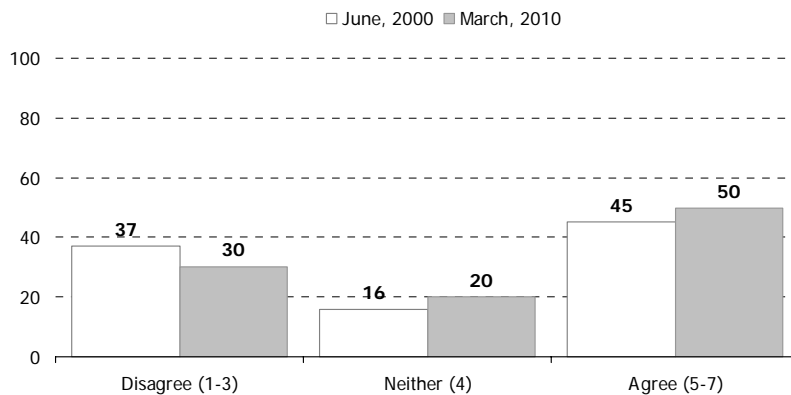
In addition to the strong differences across Conservatives and other supporters, Albertans and males are more pro capital punishment. Among university educated Canada, there is very strong rejection of capital punishment. In the case of decriminalizing pot, the biggest divides are (unsurprisingly) age and party identification. Younger voters are very receptive to decriminalization, Conservative supporters are not.

In another poll finding, only 33% support the Conservatives after more than six years of a united right. So the jury is still out on this fascinating question regarding the broad trajectory of Canadian society.

Top Line Results:

Support for decriminalization of marijuana

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use should not be a crime.



Higher among:
CPC (41%), Alberta (37%), Seniors (35%)

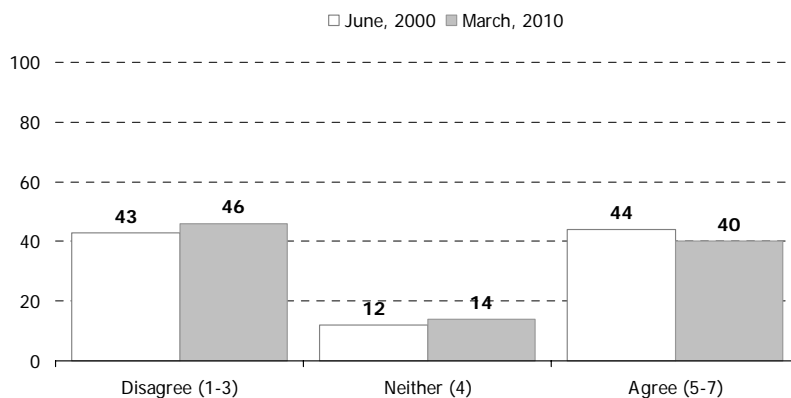
Higher among:
NDP (63%), GP (59%), BQ (58%), Youth (58%), Men (54%)

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BASE: Canadians; most recent data point March 10-16 (n=2302)

Support for reintroduction of capital punishment

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I would support the reintroduction of capital punishment.



Higher among:
University educated (60%), LPC (58%), Youth (53%), NDP (52%)

Higher among:
CPC (53%), Alberta (48%), High school grads (48%), College grads (46%), Seniors (45%), Men (43%)

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BASE: Canadians; most recent data point March 10-16 (n=2302)

Detailed Tables:

Support for Decriminalization of Marijuana

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use should NOT be a crime. Please use a 7-point scale where 1 means you strongly disagree, 7 means you strongly agree and the mid-point 4 means you neither agree nor disagree.

	Disagree (1-3)	Neither (4)	Agree (5-7)	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	30%	20%	50%	2302	2.0
REGION					
British Columbia	27%	20%	54%	309	5.6
Alberta	37%	21%	42%	264	6.0
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	34%	21%	45%	164	7.7
Ontario	30%	17%	53%	830	3.4
Quebec	28%	21%	51%	557	4.2
Atlantic Canada	30%	24%	46%	178	7.4
GENDER					
Male	30%	16%	54%	1189	2.8
Female	30%	23%	48%	1113	2.9
AGE					
<25	28%	14%	58%	188	7.2
25-44	29%	18%	53%	749	3.6
45-64	29%	19%	52%	963	3.2
65+	35%	27%	38%	402	4.9
EDUCATION					
High school or less	32%	22%	47%	705	3.7
College or CEGEP	29%	19%	52%	725	3.6
University or higher	30%	18%	53%	872	3.3
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	41%	20%	39%	709	3.7
Liberal Party of Canada	29%	17%	53%	576	4.1
NDP	20%	17%	63%	311	5.6
Green Party	28%	13%	59%	206	6.8
Bloc Quebecois	21%	22%	58%	188	7.2
Undecided	25%	27%	48%	48	14.1

Support for Reintroduction of Capital Punishment

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I would support the reintroduction of capital punishment. Please use a 7-point scale where 1 means you strongly disagree, 7 means you strongly agree and the mid-point 4 means you neither agree nor disagree.

	Disagree (1-3)	Neither (4)	Agree (5-7)	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	46%	14%	40%	2302	2.0
REGION					
British Columbia	50%	12%	38%	309	5.6
Alberta	40%	13%	48%	264	6.0
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	40%	18%	42%	164	7.7
Ontario	47%	13%	40%	830	3.4
Quebec	47%	14%	39%	557	4.2
Atlantic Canada	47%	16%	38%	178	7.4
GENDER					
Male	44%	13%	43%	1189	2.8
Female	47%	15%	38%	1113	2.9
AGE					
<25	53%	17%	30%	188	7.2
25-44	47%	14%	39%	749	3.6
45-64	45%	12%	43%	963	3.2
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Methodology:

EKOS' weekly tracking polls are conducted using Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) technology, which allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator.

In an effort to reduce the coverage bias of landline only RDD, we created a dual land-line/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with both a landline and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and landline only households. This dual frame yields a near perfect unweighted distribution on age group and gender, something almost never seen with traditional landline RDD sample or interviewer-administered surveys.

The field dates for this survey are March 10 – March 16, 2010.¹ In total, a random sample of 2,302 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-2.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.

¹ Please note that these dates are not inclusive of the weekends, as we do not survey on Saturday or Sunday.