

BRITISH COLUMBIA POLITICAL ISSUES

Two-Thirds in BC Would Legalize Marijuana to Reduce Violence

BC Liberal voters are most likely to feel that the Vancouver 2010 Olympics are important to them.

[VANCOUVER – May 1, 2009] – British Columbians believe legalizing marijuana will reduce the criminal violence associated with the drug trade, a new Angus Reid Strategies / CTV poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative provincial sample of 822 British Columbia adults, nearly two-thirds of respondents (65%) would choose to legalize marijuana in order to reduce violence, while only 35 per cent believe increased penalties for marijuana trafficking is the answer. Green Party and NDP supporters are most likely to support the legalization of marijuana (77% and 74% respectively).

However, people are almost evenly split on the enforcement of existing drug laws. A majority (51%) believes that not enforcing these laws for the possession of “soft drugs” lets criminals go free which may lead to violence, while 49 per cent feel that enforcement makes criminals out of law-abiding citizens.

Respondents aged 18 to 34 are more likely to believe that enforcement makes criminals out of law-abiding citizens (59), along with NDP (59%) and Green Party voters (60%).

KEY FINDINGS

- **65% would legalize marijuana to reduce violence; 35% would increasing penalties for trafficking**
- **51% say that lack of enforcement of “soft drug” laws lets criminals go free; 49% believe that enforcement makes criminals from law-abiding citizens**
- **32% believe that holding the 2010 Winter Olympics is important to them personally.**
- **34% believe that drivers should pay tolls to fund new roads and bridges**

Full topline results are at the end of this release

*From April 24 to April 26, 2009 Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of **822 adult residents of British Columbia** who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.4%, 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 British Columbia. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

CONTACT:

Hamish Marshall, Research Director, Public Affairs, 604-647-1987 or 604-928-0075,
hamish.marshall@angus-reid.com

Vancouver 2010

Only about a third of British Columbians (32%) feel that holding the 2010 Winter Olympics in BC is important to them personally. These people are more likely to be BC Liberal voters (48%) or live in Vancouver & Suburbs (39%). The findings show that the sitting premier's efforts to associate himself with the Olympics have not expanded his political base. The voters who believe the Olympics are important are already supporting the BC Liberals.

Tolls

Tolls are unpopular with British Columbians. Only a third (34%) feel that drivers should pay tolls to fund new roads and bridges, while 66 per cent believe that drivers already pay for new roads and bridges through their income taxes and gas taxes.

Both Green Party voters (46%) and BC Liberal supporters (39%) are more likely to believe that drivers should pay tolls for new roads and bridges. Support for tolls also increases with education levels with only 24 per cent of those with a high school education supporting them, and two-in-five university graduates (40%) in favour of tolls. Some regional differences are of particular interest. In Vancouver & Suburbs, 39 per cent of respondents voice support for tolls, but the proportion falls to 24 per cent in Surrey & the Valley. It is precisely in Surrey & the Valley where commuters will be paying the bulk of the tolls on the new Port Mann and Golden Ears bridges.

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Issues

The illegal marijuana industry is linked to much of the gang violence on BC's streets. Some people say that violence would be reduced if marijuana was legalized, while other people say the violence would be reduced if penalties for marijuana trafficking were significantly increased. Which of the following statements is closest to your own view?

Legalize marijuana	65%
Increase penalties for marijuana trafficking	35%

Issues

Many of Canada's drug laws are not enforced when it comes to possession of so-called "soft drugs." Some people say that enforcing these laws would make criminals out of law-abiding citizens who may not be harming anyone; while other people say that not enforcing these laws lets criminals go free which may lead to violence. Which of the following statements is closest to your own view?

Lack of enforcement lets criminals go free	51%
Enforcement makes criminals out of law-abiding citizens	49%

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2010 Winter Olympics

How important is it to you personally that the 2010 Winter Olympics will be held in British Columbia?

Very important	13%
Moderately important	19%
Not very important	24%
Not at all important	45%

Issues

There is a debate about how new roads and bridges in BC should be funded. Some people say that drivers should pay tolls to fund new roads and bridges. Other people say that drivers already pay for new roads and bridges through their income taxes and gas taxes. Which of the following statements is closest to your own view?

Drivers already pay for new roads and bridges with their taxes	66%
Drivers should pay tolls for new roads and bridges	34%

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Angus Reid Strategies is a 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.

Angus Reid Strategies, along with its sister company, Vision Critical, is now the largest Canadian-owned market research enterprise. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

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, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election.

http://angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/2008.10.15_Election.pdf

Since 2006, Angus Reid Strategies has covered six provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

*http://angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/2008.03.28_Anniversary_1.pdf
http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/2008.12.09_QuebecElection.pdf*

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.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**

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