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## **CTV/National Angus Reid Group Poll**

### **-- CANADIANS' VIEWS ON DECRIMINALIZING MARIJUANA SMOKING --**

**-- Should Smoking Marijuana Be a Criminal Offense? --**

**-- Use of Marijuana for Health Purposes Only --**

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This CTV/National Angus Reid Poll was conducted by telephone between October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 1997 among a random and representative cross-section of 1,515 Canadian adults.

These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1991 and 1996 Census data.

With a national sample of 1,515, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

## **CANADIANS' VIEWS ON DECRIMINALIZING MARIJUANA SMOKING**

- Slim majority (51%) of Canadians believe that smoking marijuana should NOT be a criminal offense –up from 39% ten years ago –**
- If used for health-related purposes only, large majority (83%) agree that it should NOT be a criminal offense to smoke marijuana --**

A slim majority (51%) of Canadians now agree that smoking marijuana should not be a criminal offense, up twelve percentage points since September, 1987 (39%). Under one-half (45%), however, feel that it should be a criminal offense to smoke marijuana, decreased from a majority holding this view ten years ago (54%).

Among the minority (45%) of Canadians who feel that smoking marijuana should be a criminal offense, over seven in ten (71% of the 45%) agree that it should be legal to use it for health purposes only -- representing a total of over eight in ten (83%) Canadians who believe that it should not be a criminal offense to smoke marijuana if used for health purposes only.

These findings emerged from a CTV/National Angus Reid Poll conducted among a representative cross-section of 1,515 Canadian adults between October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

### **SHOULD SMOKING MARIJUANA BE A CRIMINAL OFFENSE?**

A slim majority (51%) of Canadians feel that it should not be a criminal offense to smoke marijuana, compared to under one-half (45%) who believe that it should. Four percent (4%) are undecided. (Table 1)

Decriminalizing marijuana smoking has become more acceptable over the past ten years, wherein a minority (39%) of Canadians believed that smoking marijuana should not be a criminal offense, compared to a majority today (51%).

- ◆ British Columbians (63%), males (59%) and younger Canadians aged 18 to 34 (56%) are predominantly more likely to believe that smoking marijuana should not be a criminal offense.
- ◆ Conversely, residents of Atlantic Canada (55%), Alberta (53%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (53%), as well as older Canadians aged 55 and above (51%) are disproportionately more likely to feel that smoking marijuana should be a criminal offense.

### **SMOKING MARIJUANA FOR HEALTH PURPOSES ONLY**

Among the minority (45%) of Canadians who feel that smoking marijuana should be a criminal offense, over seven in ten (71% of the 45%) agree that it should be legal to use it for health purposes only. Overall, therefore, a total of over eight in ten (83%) Canadians believe that it should not be a criminal offense to smoke marijuana if used for health purposes only.

In comparison, under three in ten (27% of 45%) Canadians who feel that it should be a criminal offense to smoke marijuana maintain this point of view even if it was only used for health purposes which translates into just over one in ten (12%) Canadians, overall. (Table 2)

- ◆ The subset of Canadians more likely to change their minds and agree that smoking marijuana should be legal for health purposes only tend to be residents of Ontario (77%) and the most affluent (78% among those with annual household incomes of more than \$60,000).

- ◆ On the other hand, the subset of Canadians more likely to maintain their view that smoking marijuana should be a criminal offense even if used for health purposes only include Albertans (38%) and Quebeckers (34%), the least educated (36% among those without a highschool education) and the least affluent (35% among those with annual household incomes of less than \$30,000).

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