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DECRIMINALIZING MARIJUANA IS A SOUND IDEA --  
ONLY A THIRD (36%) OF AMERICANS AGREE  
FOUR IN TEN (39%) AMERICANS WANT CANADA'S  
PROPOSAL TO STOP NOW, BUT A QUARTER (23%)  
DON'T CARE**



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## **HALF OF CANADIANS (51%) THINK DECRIMINALIZING MARIJUANA IS A SOUND IDEA -- ONLY A THIRD (36%) OF AMERICANS AGREE**

### **FOUR IN TEN (39%) AMERICANS WANT CANADA'S PROPOSAL TO STOP NOW, BUT A QUARTER (23%) DON'T CARE**

**Toronto, ON** – According to a new Ipsos-Reid/CTV survey of Canadians and Americans, support for the decriminalization of marijuana is substantially higher in Canada than it is in the United States.

The survey, fielded from November 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004 was conducted among 1000 residents of both the United States and Canada.

As part of the survey, respondents were read an introductory statement that stated that the “Canadian Government is considering legislation that would not legalize marijuana but would make possession of small quantities not a criminal offence so a person would not have a criminal record but may have to pay a fine instead”.

After being read this statement respondents were asked whether they thought “this is a sound idea as many people will no longer have to suffer a criminal record for a relatively minor offence and the Canadian government should go ahead with its proposals”, if they thought “this is a bad idea as marijuana is a gateway drug that can only lead to harder drugs and threatens the war on drugs wherever it’s being fought so the Canadian government should stop these changes right now”, or if they “really don’t care about this change”.

There exists a divide of opinion between Canadians and their American cousins when it comes to this issue as:



- Half of Canadians (51%) agree this potential legislation would be a “sound idea”, compared to 36% of Americans;
- One-third of Canadians (33%) agree this potential legislation would be a “bad idea”, compared to 39% of Americans;
- 15% of Canadians say they “don’t really care about this change”, compared to 23% of Americans.

In both Canada and the U.S. a very small proportion (1%) say they “don’t know” whether this legislation is a “sound idea” or a “bad idea”.

Within Canada there is demographic variance in opinion when it comes to this issue:

- Residents of Atlantic Canada (61%) are the most likely of Canadians to believe that this potential legislation is a “sound idea”, followed by British Columbia (57%), Ontario (54%), Alberta (47%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (47%), and Quebec (44%).
- Residents of Quebec (38%) and Alberta (38%) are the most likely to believe this potential legislation is a “bad idea”, followed by residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (37%), Ontario (31%), British (27%), and Atlantic Canada (23%).
- Older Canadians aged 55 and over are more likely than Canadians aged 18-34 to think this potential legislation is a “bad idea” (37% vs. 30%).
- Those with an annual household income of \$60,000 or more are significantly more likely than those with an annual household income of less than \$60,000 to believe this proposed legislation is a “sound idea” (58% vs. 48%).



**Ipsos Reid**

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/ CTV poll conducted from November 19<sup>th</sup> to November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2004. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1000 adult Canadians and 1000 adult Americans were interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the results for both countries are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had these entire populations been polled. These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age composition reflects that of the actual population of both countries.*

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