

# Majority (53%) of Canadians Support New Government Policy Not to Automatically Seek Clemency for Canadians on Death Row Abroad

*Country Split on Support for Reinstating  
Capital Punishment in Canada*

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# **Majority (53%) of Canadians Support New Government Policy Not to Automatically Seek Clemency for Canadians on Death Row Abroad**

## ***Country Split on Support for Reinstating Capital Punishment in Canada***

**Toronto, ON** – With the federal government having recently announced that it will no longer automatically seek clemency for Canadians on death row in democratic countries abroad, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively on behalf of CanWest news service and Global Television finds that a majority (53%) of Canadians support (strongly 25%/moderately 28%) this policy.

However, nearly one half (45%) of Canadians oppose (strongly 27%/moderately 18%) this new government policy, effectively believing that even though a Canadian convicted of a crime might have had a fair trial in a democratic country abroad, it is appropriate for the government to automatically seek a commuted sentence for that citizen.

- Those most likely to support the new government policy are residents of British Columbia (61%), Alberta (58%), Atlantic Canada (53%), Ontario (52%) and Quebec (51%). Just four in ten (40%) residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba support this new government policy.

- Older Canadians, aged 55 and up, are more likely (60%) than middle-aged (56%), 35 to 54, or younger Canadians (42%), aged 18 to 34, to support the new policy.

This point raises the issue of capital punishment and its reinstatement at home here in Canada. Although abolished over three decades ago, fully one half (50%) of Canadians would support (strongly 27%/moderately 23%) the return of the death penalty. While the proportion of Canadians who would oppose this policy (49%) is slightly less, the intensity with which they oppose it is greater. In fact, 36% of Canadians would 'strongly oppose' the reinstatement of capital punishment, while 13% would 'moderately oppose' its return.

Tracking the data back to 2001, the proportion of Canadians who would support the return of the death penalty has dropped by two points (from 52% in 2001 to 50% in 2008), while the proportion of individuals who would oppose its return has increased by three points (from 46% in 2001 to 49% in 2008).

- Residents of Alberta (60%) are most likely to support the return of the death penalty, while a majority of British Columbians (57%) and Ontarians (51%) would also support the return of capital punishment. A minority of those living in Quebec (45%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (40%) and Atlantic Canada (38%) would support this.
- Men (54%) would be more likely than women (46%) to support the return of the death penalty in Canada.
- Middle-aged Canadians (55%) would be more likely than older (50%) or younger Canadians (43%) to support the reinstatement of capital punishment in Canada.



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*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of CanWest News Service and Global Television from January 22 to January 24, 2008. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1001 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population of Canada been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure that the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.*

*For more information on this news release, please contact:*

**John Wright**  
**Senior Vice President**  
**Ipsos Reid**  
**Public Affairs**  
**(416) 324-2002**

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