

DRUGS

Majority of Americans Support Legalizing Marijuana

Two-thirds of respondents in the United States believe the "war on drugs" has been a failure.

[SAN FRANCISCO – Dec. 9, 2009] – While people in the United States are worried about the country's drug abuse problem, they are evidently disappointed with the "War on Drugs", a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In a nationally representative sample of 1,004 American adults, 70 per cent of respondents believe we have a drug abuse problem in the United States that affects the entire country.

A considerably smaller proportion of Americans (17%) believe the country's drug abuse problem is confined to specific areas and people.

Just six per cent of respondents believe America does not have a serious drug abuse problem.

The legalization of marijuana, which has been discussed by lawmakers in California and Washington State over the past few weeks, is supported by 53 per cent of respondents.

Less than one-in-ten Americans would consent to the legalization of other drugs, such as ecstasy, powder cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine or "crystal meth", and crack cocaine.

Two-thirds of respondents (68%) believe the "War on Drugs"—the efforts of the U.S. government to reduce the illegal drug trade—has been a failure. Just eight per cent of Americans believe this policy has been a success.

KEY FINDINGS

- **53% support legalizing marijuana**
- **68% believe the "War on Drugs" has been a failure**
- **70% believe that America has a serious drug abuse problem which affects the entire country**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From December 3 to December 4, 2009, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,004 randomly selected American adults who are Springboard USA panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of the United States. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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Earlier this year, R. Gil Kerlikowske, director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, declared that the Obama Administration would discontinue the use of the term "war on drugs" because the term implied that the government was waging a battle against its citizens.

Analysis

It is important to note that Democrats, Republicans and Independents all share the same level of concern about drug abuse, and the failure of the "War on Drugs". However, a proposal to legalize marijuana would hold the support of a majority of Democrats (61%) and Independents (55%), but a smaller proportion of GOP voters (43%).

The survey shows that, while the preoccupation with drug abuse in America is widespread, the level of satisfaction with the "War on Drugs" is minuscule.

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Drugs					
Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?					
	Region				
	Total	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
America has a serious drug abuse problem and it affects the whole country	70%	66%	66%	73%	72%
America's drug abuse problem is confined to specific areas and people	17%	22%	17%	16%	13%
America does not have a serious drug abuse problem	6%	6%	10%	4%	7%
Not sure	7%	6%	7%	8%	8%

Drugs			
Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?			
	Democrat	Republican	Independent
America has a serious drug abuse problem and it affects the whole country	70%	73%	70%
America's drug abuse problem is confined to specific areas and people	16%	18%	20%
America does not have a serious drug abuse problem	7%	5%	5%
Not sure	6%	4%	6%

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Drugs

The term “War on Drugs” has been used to describe the efforts of the U.S. government to reduce the illegal drug trade. From what you have seen, read or heard, would you describe the “War on Drugs” as a success or a failure?

	Region				
	Total	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
A success	8%	5%	6%	11%	8%
A failure	68%	68%	68%	67%	69%
Not sure	24%	27%	26%	22%	22%

Drugs

The term “War on Drugs” has been used to describe the efforts of the U.S. government to reduce the illegal drug trade. From what you have seen, read or heard, would you describe the “War on Drugs” as a success or a failure?

	Democrat	Republican	Independent
A success	11%	8%	6%
A failure	67%	67%	76%
Not sure	22%	25%	18%

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Drugs			
Do you support or oppose the legalization of each of the following drugs?			
	Support	Oppose	Not sure
Marijuana	53%	43%	4%
Ecstasy	8%	88%	4%
Powder cocaine	8%	89%	3%
Heroin	6%	91%	3%
Methamphetamine or “crystal meth”	6%	91%	3%
Crack cocaine	5%	92%	3%

Drugs			
Do you support or oppose the legalization of each of the following drugs? – “Support” listed			
	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Marijuana	61%	43%	55%
Ecstasy	6%	3%	6%
Powder cocaine	9%	6%	8%
Heroin	9%	4%	9%
Methamphetamine or “crystal meth”	6%	5%	7%
Crack cocaine	6%	5%	6%

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical 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 Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995.

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. 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 Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Angus Reid, 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://bit.ly/4zxf1S>

Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight 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.

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://bit.ly/3z0u1l>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

Copies of this poll are available on our website:

<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>

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