

DRUGS

Majority of Americans Ready to Legalize Marijuana

As was the case last year, most respondents believe the “War on Drugs” has been a failure.

[NEW YORK – Aug. 9, 2011] – Many Americans continue to believe that marijuana should be legalized, but are not supportive of making other drugs readily available, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,003 American adults, 55 per cent of respondents support the legalization of marijuana, while 40 per cent oppose it.

The groups that are the most supportive of making cannabis legal in the U.S. are Democrats (63%), Independents (61%), Men (57%) and respondents aged 35-to-54 (57%).

However, only 10 per cent of Americans support legalizing ecstasy. Smaller proportions of respondents would consent to the legalization of powder cocaine (9%), heroin (8%), methamphetamine or “crystal meth” (7%), and crack cocaine (7%).

Across the country, 64 per cent of respondents believe America has a serious drug abuse problem that affects the entire United States, while one-in-five (20%) perceive a drug abuse problem that is confined to specific areas and people. One-in-twenty Americans (5%) think America does not have a serious drug abuse problem.

KEY FINDINGS

- **55% support the legalization of marijuana**
- **67% think the “War on Drugs” has been a failure**
- **64% think America has a serious drug abuse problem that affects the whole country**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From August 4 to August 5, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,005 American adults who are Springboard America 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 a sample representative of the entire adult population of the United States. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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Only nine per cent of respondents believe the “War on Drugs”—the efforts of the U.S. government to reduce the illegal drug trade—has been a success, while two thirds (67%) deem it a failure.

Analysis

The survey shows a country that is concerned about the effects of drugs, and at the same time deeply disappointed with the efforts of the U.S. government to deal with the drug trade.

However, as has been outlined in Angus Reid Public Opinion surveys conducted in [2009](#) and [2010](#), a majority of Americans are calling for the legalization of marijuana. Cannabis is definitely not seen as a substance that is as harmful as other illegal drugs, as evidenced in the minuscule level of support for the legalization of cocaine or heroin.

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About Angus Reid Public Opinion

[Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) is a public affairs practice headed by Dr. Angus Reid: an industry visionary who has spent more than four decades asking questions to figure out what people feel, how they think and who they will vote for. A team of talented and experienced practitioners with a unique and profound understanding of global issues conduct high quality research throughout the world on a daily basis for corporations, governments, academic researchers, and non-profit organizations.

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Drugs

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
America has a serious drug abuse problem and it affects the whole country	64%	67%	68%	59%
America's drug abuse problem is confined to specific areas and people	20%	20%	20%	23%
America does not have a serious drug abuse problem	5%	6%	4%	7%
Not sure	10%	8%	8%	11%

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?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
A success	9%	11%	9%	8%
A failure	67%	65%	69%	70%
Not sure	24%	24%	22%	22%

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Drugs

Do you support or oppose the legalization of each of the following drugs? – *Marijuana*

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Support	55%	63%	41%	61%
Oppose	40%	33%	56%	34%
Not sure	5%	4%	3%	5%

Drugs

Do you support or oppose the legalization of each of the following drugs? – *Marijuana*

	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Support	55%	57%	53%	53%	57%	54%
Oppose	40%	39%	42%	41%	37%	43%
Not sure	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	3%

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Drugs

Do you support or oppose the legalization of each of the following drugs? – “Strongly Support” and “Moderately Support” listed.

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Marijuana	55%	63%	41%	61%
Ecstasy	10%	13%	7%	9%
Powder cocaine	9%	12%	6%	9%
Heroin	8%	11%	5%	7%
Methamphetamine or “crystal meth”	7%	9%	4%	6%
Crack cocaine	7%	10%	4%	7%

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