DRUGS

Americans Decry War on Drugs, Blame Mexico for Allowing Cartels to Grow

As was the case last year, a majority of respondents voice support for legalizing marijuana, but not other illegal drugs.

[NEW YORK – Jul. 21, 2010] – A large proportion of Americans acknowledge that the country has a serious drug abuse problem, but two thirds believe that the so-called "War on Drugs" has been ineffective, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,003 adults, 64 per cent of respondents believe America has a serious drug abuse problem that affects the whole country. One-in-five (20%) believe America's drug abuse problem is confined to specific areas and people, while seven per cent believe America does not have a serious drug abuse problem.

Two thirds of respondents (65%) believe the "War on Drugs"—the efforts of the U.S. government to reduce the illegal drug trade—has been a failure, while only eight per cent deem it a success.

Legalization of Drugs

More than half of respondents (52%) support the legalization of marijuana. While clear majorities of Democrats (57%) and Independents (59%) agree with this course of action, only about two-in-five Republicans (38%) concur.

KEY FINDINGS

- **64% think America has a serious drug abuse problem that affects the whole country**
- **65% think the "War on Drugs" has been a failure; 52% support the legalization of marijuana**
- **49% think Mexico should be blamed for allowing the drug cartels to grow and flourish; 34% think the U.S. should be blamed for having a population that demands illegal drugs**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From July 14 to July 15, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,003 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.

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Support for the legalization of other illegal substances is considerably lower. Only 10 per cent of respondents agree with legalizing ecstasy, eight per cent would consent to legalizing heroin, powder cocaine and methamphetamine or “crystal meth”, and just seven per cent would allow crack cocaine to be legal.

Mexico

A majority of Americans hold favorable views on Mexican food (78%) and the Mexican people (59%), while about a third provide a positive assessment of Mexican beer (34%) and immigrants from Mexico who live in the United States (32%). However, only seven per cent of respondents have a favorable opinion of the Mexican government.

It is important to note that respondents who have travelled to Mexico in their lifetime are more likely to have a favorable opinion of each one of the five entities tested than those who have never been to the Latin American country.

In all, half of Americans (49%) believe Mexico deserves most of the blame for being a major supplier of illegal drugs to the U.S. because it has allowed the drug cartels to grow and flourish. Democrats (45%) are less likely than Republicans (59%) to feel this way.

However, one third of Americans (34%) think the U.S. deserves most of the blame for this situation, for having a population that demands illegal drugs.

While respondents in the Northeast are almost evenly split on this issue, a majority of those in the South and the West blame Mexico for the current state of affairs.

Our previous poll on drugs in the United States, conducted in December 2009, is available here.

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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%	68%	70%	58%
America's drug abuse problem is confined to specific areas and people	20%	18%	20%	24%
America does not have a serious drug abuse problem	7%	5%	6%	10%
Not sure	9%	9%	5%	8%

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	8%	11%	9%	5%
A failure	65%	63%	64%	70%
Not sure	27%	26%	27%	24%

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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	**52%**	**57%**	**38%**	**59%**
Ecstasy	**10%**	**9%**	**8%**	**9%**
Heroin	**8%**	**7%**	**9%**	**6%**
Powder cocaine	**8%**	**8%**	**9%**	**8%**
Methamphetamine or "crystal meth"	**8%**	**8%**	**8%**	**6%**
Crack cocaine	**7%**	**7%**	**7%**	**5%**

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Mexico

Would you say you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of each of the following? – *"Mostly favourable" listed*

		Travelled to Mexico		Political Affiliation		
	Total	Yes	No	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Mexican food	78%	89%	72%	77%	81%	77%
The Mexican people	59%	73%	51%	61%	56%	64%
Mexican beer	34%	50%	24%	37%	28%	56%
Immigrants from Mexico who live in the United States	32%	50%	29%	40%	23%	32%
The Mexican government	7%	10%	6%	9%	6%	6%

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Drugs

As you may know, Mexico is a major supplier of illegal drugs to the United States. Thinking about this, who do you think deserves most of the blame for this situation?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Mexico, for allowing the drug cartels to grow and flourish	49%	45%	59%	49%
The U.S., for having a population that demands illegal drugs	34%	37%	29%	35%
Not sure	17%	17%	12%	17%

Drugs

As you may know, Mexico is a major supplier of illegal drugs to the United States. Thinking about this, who do you think deserves most of the blame for this situation?

	Total	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Mexico, for allowing the drug cartels to grow and flourish	49%	38%	46%	52%	54%
The U.S., for having a population that demands illegal drugs	34%	39%	36%	33%	31%
Not sure	17%	23%	18%	15%	15%

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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 Strategies 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/4zxfIS

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/3z0uII

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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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