



PRESS RELEASE | Canada

**Methodology:**

Results are based on an online study conducted from March 10 to March 12, 2023, among 1,000 Canadian adults. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region. The margin of error, which measures sample variability, is +/- 3.1 percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty.

**As you may know, Canada eliminated the death penalty for murder in July 1976. All things considered, would you support or oppose reinstating the death penalty for murder in Canada?**

Support – 54% (+3)  
Oppose – 36% (-1)  
Not sure – 10% (-2)

**All things considered, which of these two approaches would you prefer as a punishment for convicted murderers in Canada?**

Life imprisonment without the possibility of parole – 53% (+1)  
The death penalty – 37% (+1)  
Not sure – 10% (-2)

**Support for the Return of Capital Punishment Rises in Canada**

*Two thirds of opponents are worried about a person being wrongly convicted, and then executed.*

Vancouver, BC [March 17, 2023] – A majority of Canadians are in favour of reinstating the death penalty for murder, a new Research Co. poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 54% of Canadians support relying on capital punishment on murder convictions, up three points since a similar Research Co. poll [conducted in February 2022](#).

Support for the death penalty in Canada is highest in Alberta (62%), followed by Saskatchewan and Manitoba (60%), Ontario (58%), British Columbia (also 58%) and Atlantic Canada (55%). In Quebec, the proportion falls to 43%.

“Almost three-in-five Canadians aged 55 and over (59%, +4) would welcome the return of the death penalty,” says Mario Canseco, President of Research Co. “The numbers are slightly lower among those aged 35-to-54 (54%, +3) and those aged 18-to-34 (50%, +3).”

More than seven-in-ten Canadians who voted for the Conservative Party in the last federal election (71%, +8) support reinstating capital punishment for murder in Canada. The proportions are lower among those who cast ballots for the New Democratic Party (NDP) (49%, -3) and the Liberal Party (48%, -1) in 2021.

A majority of Canadians (53%, +1) would prefer to sentence convicted murderers in Canada to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, while more than a third (37%, +1) favour the death penalty.

One-in-four Canadians (25%, -2) think the death penalty is “never” appropriate, while about one-in-ten (9%, -2) deem it “always” appropriate. A majority of Canadians (58%, +4) believe the death penalty is “sometimes” appropriate.

Canadians who are opposed to reinstating the death penalty for murder are worried primarily about the possibility of a person being wrongly convicted and executed (66%).

Other reasons cited by opponents of capital punishment are feeling that it is wrong to take a convicted murderer’s own life (42%), calling for murderers to do their time in prison, as indicated by a judge (41%), doubting that the death penalty



will work as a deterrent (39%) and thinking that murderers can be rehabilitated (20%).

Most supporters of the death penalty believe it will serve as a deterrent for potential murderers (57%), fits the crime because a convicted murderer has taken a life (55%) and will save taxpayers money and the costs associated with keeping a person behind bars (51%).

Fewer than half of supporters of capital punishment think it would provide closure to the families of murder victims (46%) and believe murderers cannot be rehabilitated (30%).

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**About Research Co.**

Simply put, we are curious about what people think and the decisions they will make. Some call it public opinion, others call it polling or public affairs.

We never compromise facts for profit. Our agenda is the truth. We have a global network of partners in the qualitative, data collection and data visualization specialities.

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