



PRESS RELEASE | Canada

Methodology:

Results are based on an online study conducted from April 7 to April 9, 2023, among 1,000 adults in Canada. 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.

All things considered, do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

Canada's criminal courts do a good job in determining whether or not an accused person is guilty.

Agree – 56%
Disagree – 30%
Not sure – 13%

The justice system in Canada treats every person fairly.

Agree – 45%
Disagree – 43%
Not sure – 12%

Canada's prison system does a good job in helping prisoners become law-abiding.

Agree – 37%
Disagree – 46%
Not sure – 17%

Canadians Split on Whether the Justice System is Fair for Everyone

A majority (56%) believe criminal courts do a good job in determining whether or not an accused person is guilty.

Vancouver, BC [April 19, 2023] – A significant proportion of Canadians question the impartiality of the country's justice system, a new Research Co. poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 45% of Canadians agree that the justice system in Canada treats every person fairly, while 43% disagree and 12% are undecided.

Canadians aged 18-to-34 are more likely to think that the justice system is fair for everyone (51%) than their counterparts aged 35-to-54 (46%) and aged 55 and over (38%).

A majority of Canadians (56%) believe Canada's criminal courts do a good job in determining whether or not an accused person is guilty.

More than a third of Canadians (37%) believe Canada's prison system does a good job in helping prisoners become law-abiding.

Respondents to this survey were asked about the use of alternative penalties—such as fines, probation or community service—rather than prison for specific offences.

More than two-in-five Canadians support relying on alternative penalties for cases of credit card fraud (46%) and online harassment or cyberbullying (45%). Fewer believe fines, probation or community service are warranted when dealing with people convicted of drunk driving (38%) and arson (25%).

Residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (53%) and Quebec (48%) are the most supportive of the alternative penalty approach for online harassment. The proportions drop to 44% in both Alberta and Ontario and to 39% in both British Columbia and Atlantic Canada.

"There is a gender divide when Canadians assess alternative penalties instead of prison for drunk drivers," says Mario Canseco, President of Research Co. "Men are more likely to endorse fines, probation or community service (42%) than women (33%)."

The survey also queried Canadians about the Youth Criminal Justice Act, which governs the application of criminal and correctional law to people who have committed an offence between the ages of 12 and 18.



At least two thirds of Canadians agree with three elements of the Youth Criminal Justice Act: allowing non-violent, first-time offenders who are unlikely to re-offend to avoid trial in youth justice court by taking part in programs of extrajudicial sanctions (69%), having the possibility of finding parents in contempt of court if they do not attend hearings or participate in the legal process (also 69%) and disclosing the identity of the youths who have been charged only under special circumstances (67%).

Fewer than half of Canadians (48%) are in favour of the provision establishing that no person can be convicted of an offence while he or she is under the age of 12 years.

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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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