



PRESS RELEASE | Canada

Methodology:

Results are based on an online survey conducted from March 8 to March 10, 2024, among 1,002 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, 19 times out of 20.

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 – 57% (+3)
Oppose – 35% (-1)
Not sure – 9% (-1)

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 – 55% (+2)
The death penalty – 35% (-2)
Not sure – 5% (-5)

Purported Return of the Death Penalty Splits Views in Canada

Support for capital punishment is up, but most Canadians pick life imprisonment without parole for murder convictions.

Vancouver, BC [April 3, 2024] – The proportion of Canadians who would welcome the return of capital punishment has increased over the past year, although a majority would prefer to punish convicted murderers with life imprisonment, a new Research Co. poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 57% of Canadians support reinstating the death penalty for murder in Canada, up three points since a similar Research Co. poll [conducted in March 2023](#).

More than a third of Canadians (35%, -1) disagree with bringing back capital punishment, while 9% (-1) are undecided.

At least three-in-five residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (62%, +2), Atlantic Canada (60%, +5) and Alberta (also 60%, -2) support the return of the death penalty with this question, along with majorities of British Columbians (58%, =), Ontarians (57%, -1) and Quebecers (52%, +9).

Canadians aged 55 and over are more likely to endorse the return of capital punishment (61%, +2) than their counterparts aged 35-to-54 (56%, +2) and aged 18-to-34 (53%, +3).

“Practically seven-in-ten Conservative Party voters in the last federal election (69%, -2) would bring the death penalty back to Canada,” says Mario Canseco, President of Research Co. “The proportions are lower among Canadians who voted for the Liberal Party (56%, +8) or the New Democratic Party (NDP) (49%, =) in 2021.”

Half of Canadians who support reinstating capital punishment think it will serve as a deterrent for potential murderers (50%) and say the punishment fits the crime because a convicted murderer has taken a life (also 50%).

Other reasons cited by supporters of the death penalty include saving taxpayers money and the costs associated with having murderers in prison (48%), providing closure to the families of murder victims (47%) and a belief that murderers cannot be rehabilitated (28%).

Just over two thirds of Canadians who are opposed to the return of capital punishment (67%) are worried about a person being wrongly convicted and then executed.



Fewer opponents of the death penalty also think it is wrong to take a convicted murderer's own life (45%), call for murderers to do their time in prison, as indicated by a judge (40%), question whether capital punishment will work as a deterrent (38%) and believe that murderers can be rehabilitated (20%).

A separate question, which asks Canadians to choose between the death penalty and life imprisonment without the possibility of parole as sentencing approaches for convicted murderers, yields different results.

More than half of Canadians (55%, +2) say they would prefer life imprisonment without the possibility of parole for convicted murderers, while just over a third (35%, -2) select capital punishment.

With this question, almost half of Conservative voters in 2021 (48%) are supportive of an approach that would sentence convicted murderers to death. Fewer Liberal and New Democratic voters agree with this course of action (34% and 23% respectively)

More than half of Canadians (53%, -5) believe the death penalty is "sometimes" appropriate. Just over one-in-four (26%, +1) think capital punishment is "never" appropriate, while fewer than one-in-ten (7%, -2) consider it as "always" appropriate.

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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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