IN COLLABORATION WITH

POSTMEDIA-LEGER POLL

Report

Crime and Illegal Substance Use: How are Canadians Feeling

June 2023

METHODOLOGY

Methodology

Web survey using computer-assisted Web interviewing (CAWI) technology.

From June 2-4, 2023.

1525 Canadian residents, 18 years of age or older, randomly recruited from LEO's online panel.

Using data from the 2021 Census, results were weighted according to region, age and gender within Canada, as well as by education and presence of children in the household in order to ensure a representative sample of the population.

For comparison purposes, a probability sample of 1525 respondents would have a margin of error of ± 2.5%, 19 times out of 20.

The research results presented here are in full compliance with the CRIC Public Opinion Research Standards and Disclosure Requirements. For additional information regarding this poll please contact Andrew Enns with Leger at aenns@leger360.com
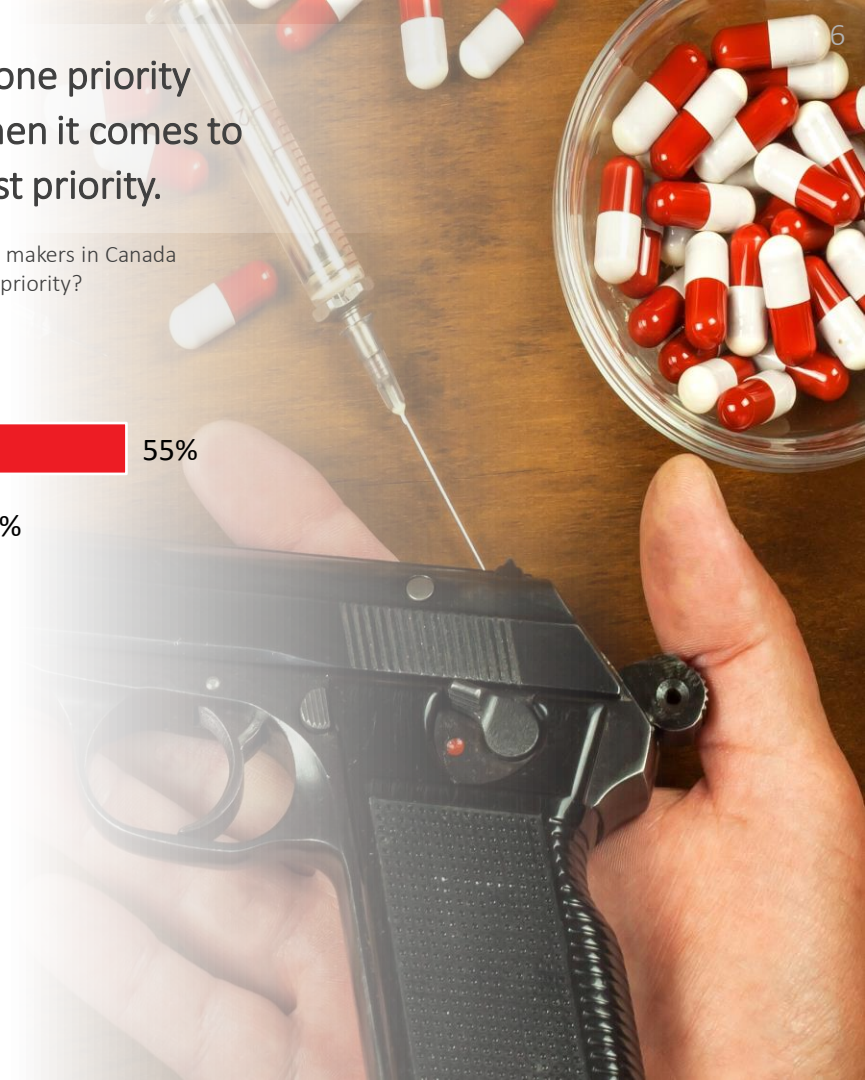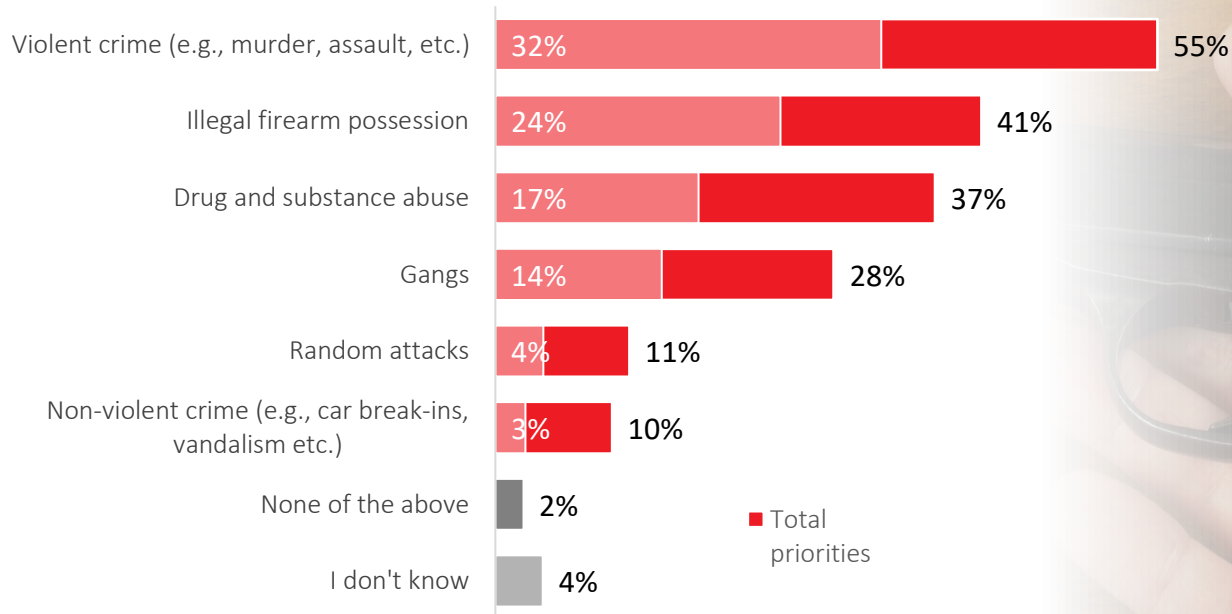
KEY FINDINGS

Violent crime, such as murder and assault, is the number one priority Canadians want government decision-makers to tackle when it comes to crime. Illegal firearm possession follows as the next highest priority.

Q1. Which of the following issues do you believe should be the top priority for government decision makers in Canada to address when it comes to crime? What would be your top priority? And what would be your next priority?
Base: *All respondents (n=1525)*

Top priority for government should be:

Violent crime (e.g., murder, assault, etc.)	32% — **55%**
Illegal firearm possession	24% — **41%**
Drug and substance abuse	17% — **37%**
Gangs	14% — **28%**
Random attacks	4% — **11%**
Non-violent crime (e.g., car break-ins, vandalism etc.)	3% — **10%**
None of the above	**2%**
I don't know	**4%**

■ Total priorities

Quebecers are more likely than the rest of Canada to believe gangs should be a top priority for government, and less likely to be concerned about drugs and substance use. Western Canadians (vs. Eastern) and those who identify as BIPoC (vs. Caucasian/ white) feel drugs/substance use and random attacks should be a focus.

Q1. Which of the following issues do you believe should be the top priority for government decision makers in Canada
to address when it comes to crime? What would be your top priority? And what would be your next priority?
Base: *All respondents (n=1525)*

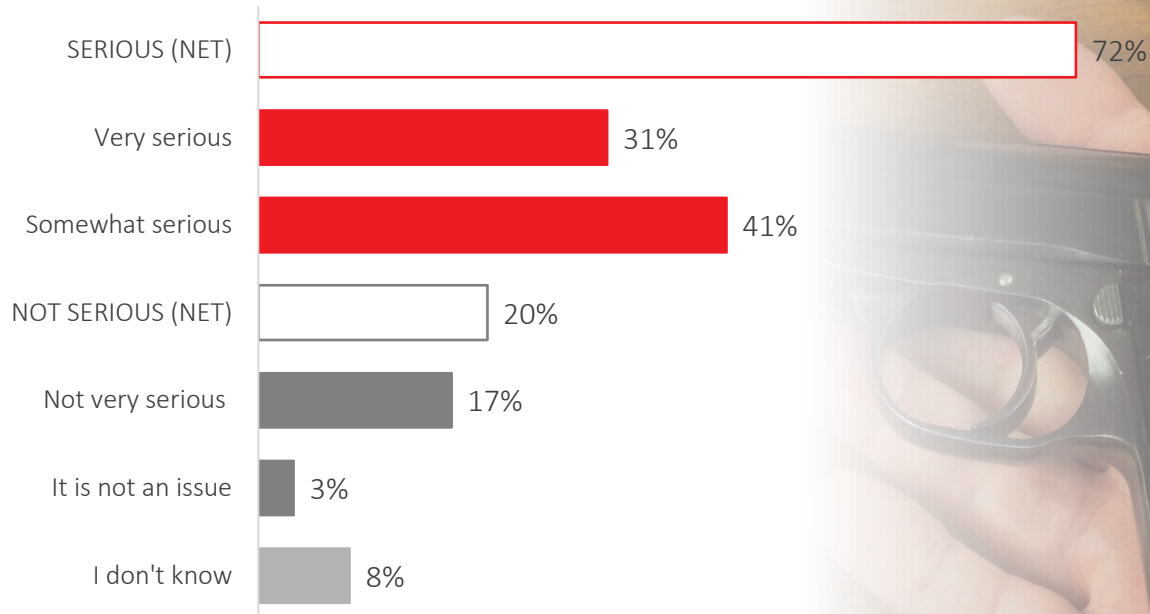|		Gender		Age		Region								Ethnicity	
	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35+	WEST (NET)	BC	Alberta	MB/SK	EAST (NET)	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada	Caucasian (White)	BIPoC
n=	1525	793	732	350	1175	408	152	131	125	1117	606	411	100	1190	313
Violent crime (e.g., murder, assault, etc.)	55%	52%	58%	52%	57%	56%	51%	59%	58%	55%	54%	59%	51%	57%	51%
Illegal firearm possession	41%	38%	43%	36%	42%	27%	28%	28%	26%	47%	47%	50%	34%	42%	38%
Drug and substance abuse	37%	34%	39%	39%	36%	42%	39%	47%	42%	34%	39%	21%	57%	34%	45%
Gangs	28%	35%	22%	23%	30%	32%	34%	29%	30%	27%	20%	40%	18%	31%	20%
Random attacks	11%	11%	11%	15%	10%	15%	18%	14%	11%	10%	11%	7%	9%	10%	15%
Non-violent crime (e.g., car break-ins, vandalism etc.)	10%	12%	8%	11%	9%	10%	8%	12%	7%	10%	11%	7%	13%	10%	9%

A strong majority (72%) of Canadians believe the drug crisis in their community is serious, with 1 in 3 considering it <u>very</u> serious.

Q2. Based on what you know, how serious of an issue do you believe the drug crisis is in your community?
Base: *All respondents (n=1525)*

The drug crisis in my community is:

Category	Value
SERIOUS (NET)	72%
Very serious	31%
Somewhat serious	41%
NOT SERIOUS (NET)	20%
Not very serious	17%
It is not an issue	3%
I don't know	8%

Western Canadians are significantly more likely to believe the drug crisis in their community is serious (and in fact, <u>very</u> serious) compared to those in the East.

Q2. Based on what you know, how serious of an issue do you believe the drug crisis is in your community?
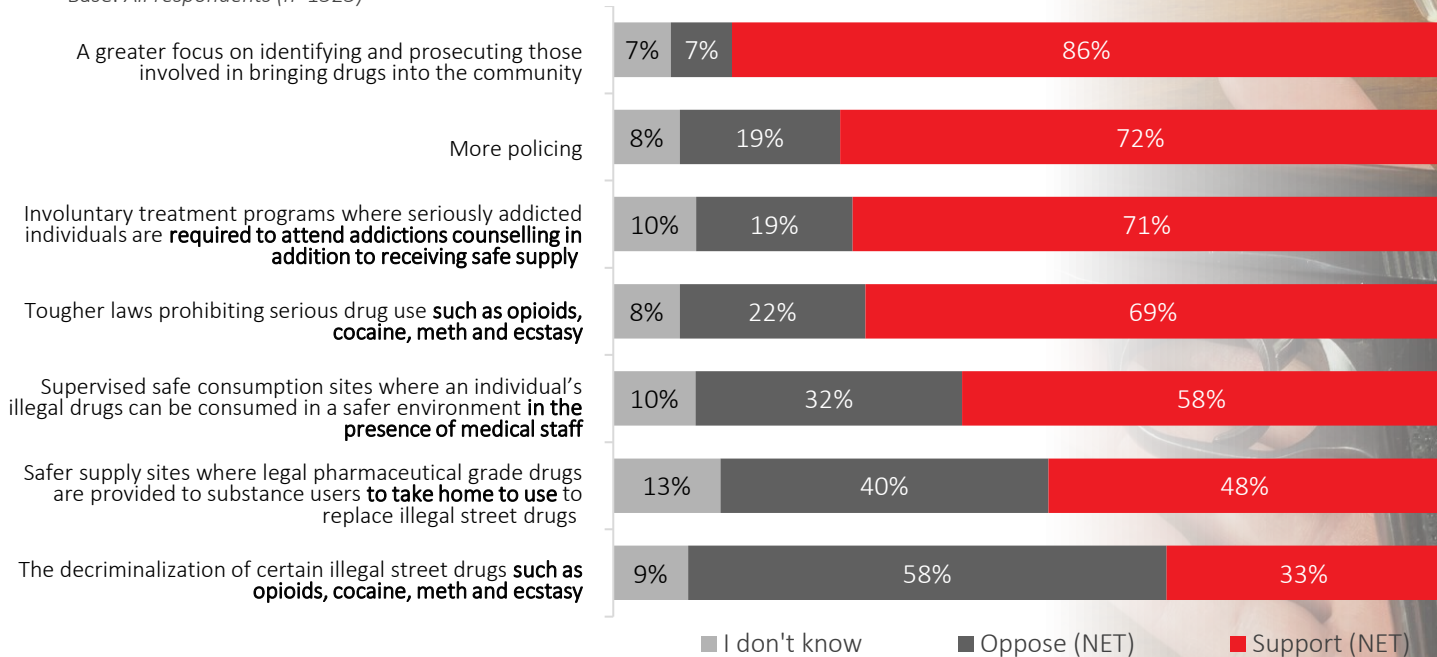Base: *All respondents (n=1525)*

The drug crisis in my community is:

		Gender		Age		Region								Ethnicity	
	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35+	WEST (NET)	BC	Alberta	MB/SK	EAST (NET)	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada	Caucasian (White)	BIPoC
n=	1525	793	732	350	1175	408	152	131	125	1117	606	411	100	1190	313
SERIOUS (NET)	72%	69%	74%	71%	72%	81%	85%	76%	80%	68%	73%	59%	65%	71%	76%
Very serious	31%	27%	34%	29%	31%	41%	44%	36%	41%	26%	30%	18%	30%	30%	35%
Somewhat serious	41%	42%	40%	42%	41%	40%	40%	40%	39%	42%	44%	41%	35%	41%	42%
NOT SERIOUS (NET)	20%	24%	16%	21%	20%	16%	13%	20%	13%	22%	18%	29%	26%	20%	19%
Not very serious	17%	20%	14%	18%	16%	14%	11%	18%	11%	19%	15%	24%	22%	18%	16%
It is not an issue	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	3%	5%	4%	3%	3%
I don't know	8%	7%	9%	7%	8%	4%	2%	4%	6%	10%	9%	12%	9%	9%	5%

In our survey, Canadians are more supportive of aggressive enforcement and treatment actions to address the substance use issue in the country. This includes more aggressive prosecution of these bringing illicit drugs into communities; involuntary treatment policies and tougher laws and policing actions. Decriminalization and safer supply approaches are less supported.

Q3. To what extent do you support or oppose the following measures to address the drug crisis?
Base: *All respondents (n=1525)*

Measure	I don't know	Oppose (NET)	Support (NET)
A greater focus on identifying and prosecuting those involved in bringing drugs into the community	7%	7%	86%
More policing	8%	19%	72%
Involuntary treatment programs where seriously addicted individuals are **required to attend addictions counselling in addition to receiving safe supply**	10%	19%	71%
Tougher laws prohibiting serious drug use **such as opioids, cocaine, meth and ecstasy**	8%	22%	69%
Supervised safe consumption sites where an individual's illegal drugs can be consumed in a safer environment **in the presence of medical staff**	10%	32%	58%
Safer supply sites where legal pharmaceutical grade drugs are provided to substance users **to take home to use** to replace illegal street drugs	13%	40%	48%
The decriminalization of certain illegal street drugs **such as opioids, cocaine, meth and ecstasy**	9%	58%	33%

Generational differences exist when it comes to attitudes towards drug policy. As Canadians get older, they tend towards wanting prosecution, increased policing, and tougher laws when it comes to the drug crisis. Younger Canadians exhibit greater support for more alternative approaches, leaning more towards decriminalization, and safer consumption or supply sites.

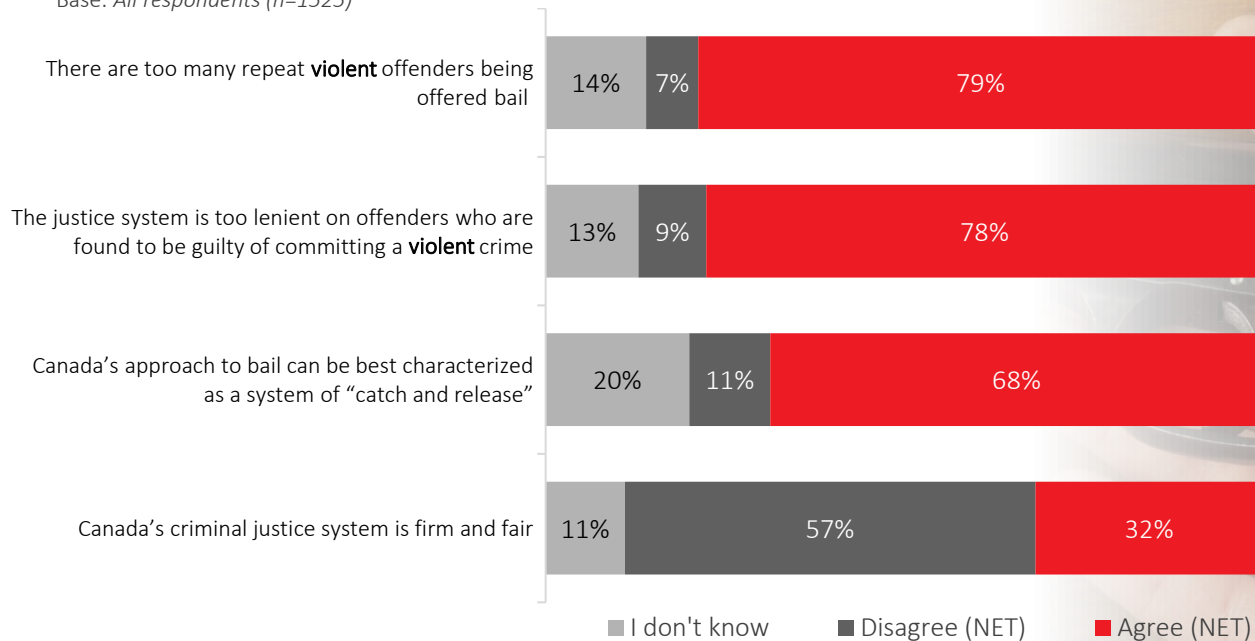Q3. To what extent do you support or oppose the following measures to address the drug crisis?
Base: *All respondents (n=1525)*

		Gender		Age		Region								Ethnicity	
	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35+	WEST (NET)	BC	Alberta	MB/SK	EAST (NET)	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada	Caucasian (White)	BIPoC
n=	1525	793	732	350	1175	408	152	131	125	1117	606	411	100	1190	313
A greater focus on identifying and prosecuting those involved in bringing drugs into the community	86%	86%	86%	76%	89%	87%	88%	86%	84%	86%	85%	87%	85%	87%	82%
More policing	72%	72%	72%	59%	77%	78%	81%	81%	65%	70%	68%	72%	73%	72%	73%
Involuntary treatment programs where seriously addicted individuals are **required to attend addictions counselling in addition to receiving safe supply**	71%	71%	71%	70%	71%	68%	68%	67%	69%	72%	72%	73%	72%	71%	73%
Tougher laws prohibiting serious drug use **such as opioids, cocaine, meth and ecstasy**	69%	67%	71%	58%	73%	65%	66%	69%	55%	71%	70%	72%	75%	69%	71%
Supervised safe consumption sites where an individual's illegal drugs can be consumed in a safer environment **in the presence of medical staff**	58%	55%	61%	64%	56%	53%	56%	47%	59%	60%	57%	67%	56%	57%	64%
Safer supply sites where legal pharmaceutical grade drugs are provided to substance users **to take home to use** to replace illegal street drugs	48%	49%	47%	54%	45%	44%	51%	33%	48%	49%	45%	56%	51%	46%	53%
The decriminalization of certain illegal street drugs **such as opioids, cocaine, meth and ecstasy**	33%	36%	30%	45%	29%	34%	36%	31%	37%	32%	37%	25%	32%	30%	44%

The vast majority of Canadians perceive that there are too many violent offenders being offered bail and that the justice system is too lenient when it comes to those found guilty of committing a violent crime. About a third of respondents agree our criminal justice system is firm and fair, suggesting a lack of confidence in the system's ability to deliver appropriate and proportional justice.

Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: *All respondents (n=1525)*

There are too many repeat **violent** offenders being offered bail — 14% | 7% | 79%

The justice system is too lenient on offenders who are found to be guilty of committing a **violent** crime — 13% | 9% | 78%

Canada's approach to bail can be best characterized as a system of "catch and release" — 20% | 11% | 68%

Canada's criminal justice system is firm and fair — 11% | 57% | 32%

■ I don't know　■ Disagree (NET)　■ Agree (NET)

There are generational and racial differences in opinions toward the characterizations of Canada's criminal justice system:
- Those under the age of 35 and from the BIPoC community are somewhat more likely to see the current system in a more positive light
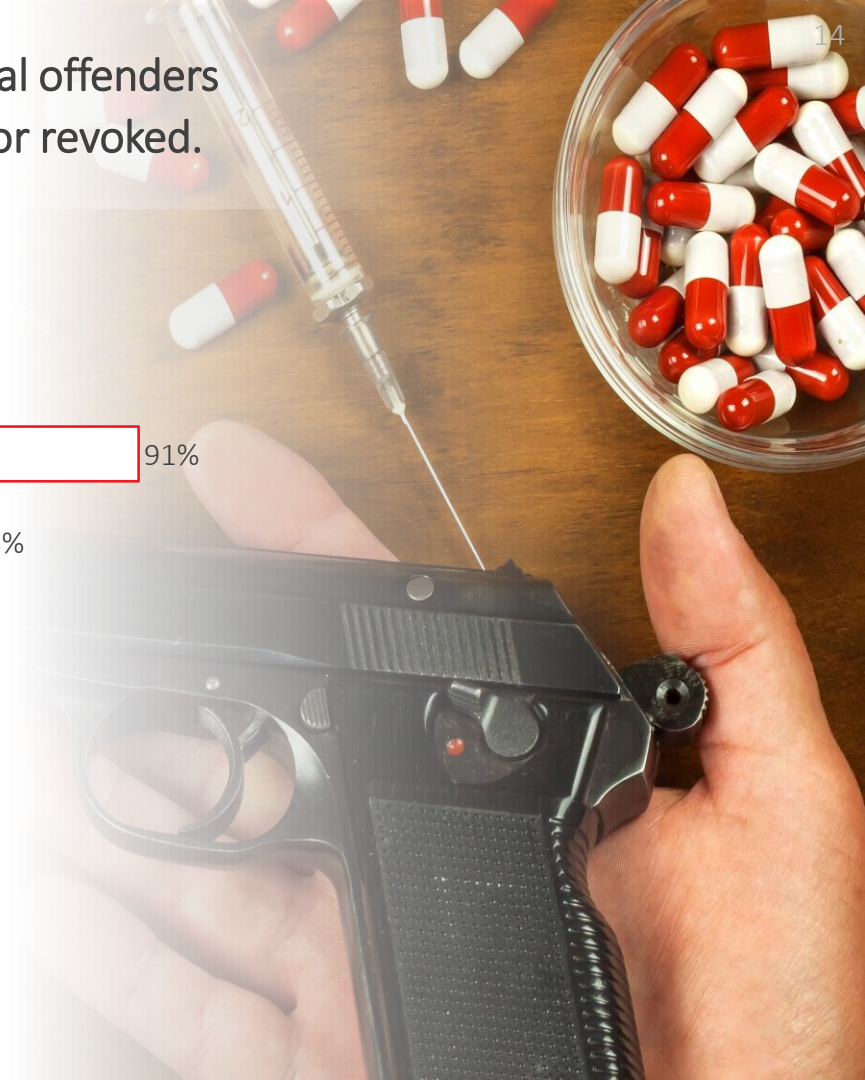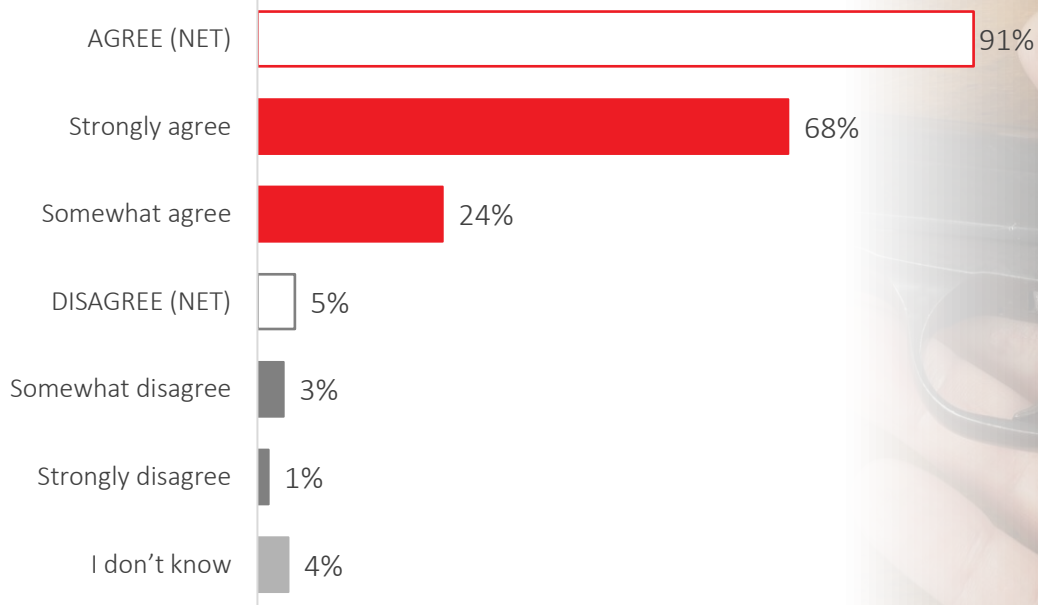
Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: *All respondents (n=1525)*

		Gender		Age		Region								Ethnicity	
	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35+	WEST (NET)	BC	Alberta	MB/SK	EAST (NET)	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada	Caucasian (White)	BIPoC
n=	1525	793	732	350	1175	408	152	131	125	1117	606	411	100	1190	313
There are too many repeat VIOLENT offenders being offered bail	79%	80%	78%	63%	84%	82%	83%	83%	77%	77%	76%	79%	76%	81%	71%
The justice system is too lenient on offenders who are found to be guilty of committing a VIOLENT crime	78%	79%	77%	64%	83%	81%	85%	77%	78%	77%	75%	78%	80%	80%	69%
Canada's approach to bail can be best characterized as a system of "catch and release"	68%	72%	65%	54%	74%	75%	78%	76%	69%	65%	70%	58%	65%	69%	68%
Canada's criminal justice system is firm and fair	32%	37%	27%	39%	29%	32%	33%	34%	26%	31%	35%	27%	29%	27%	48%

Canadians strongly agree that repeat violent criminal offenders should have their access to bail severely restricted or revoked.

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Base: *All respondents (n=1525)*

Repeat VIOLENT criminal offenders should have their access to bail severely restricted or revoked.

AGREE (NET)	91%
Strongly agree	68%
Somewhat agree	24%
DISAGREE (NET)	5%
Somewhat disagree	3%
Strongly disagree	1%
I don't know	4%

While the vast majority agree that repeat violent offenders should have limits on their access to bail, 18-34 year-olds (vs. older) and those who identify as BIPoC (vs. Caucasian/white) are more likely to disagree.

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Base: *All respondents (n=1525)*

Repeat VIOLENT criminal offenders should have their access to bail severely restricted or revoked.
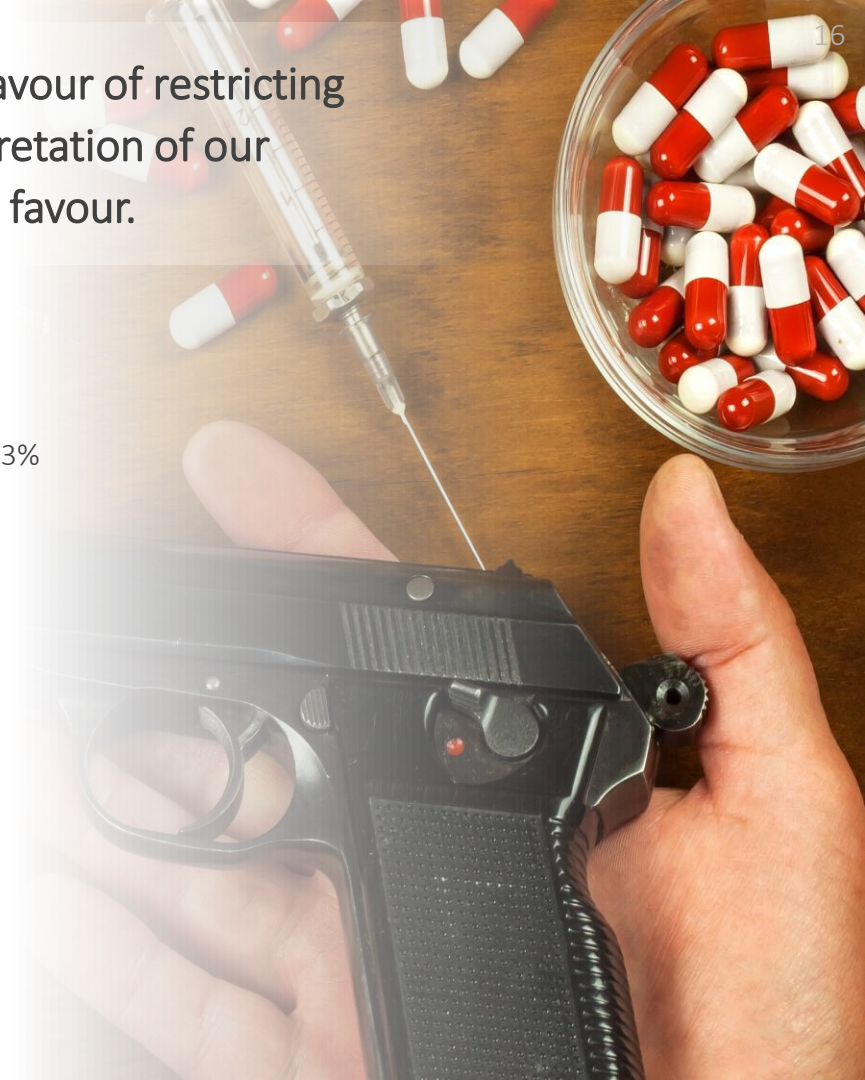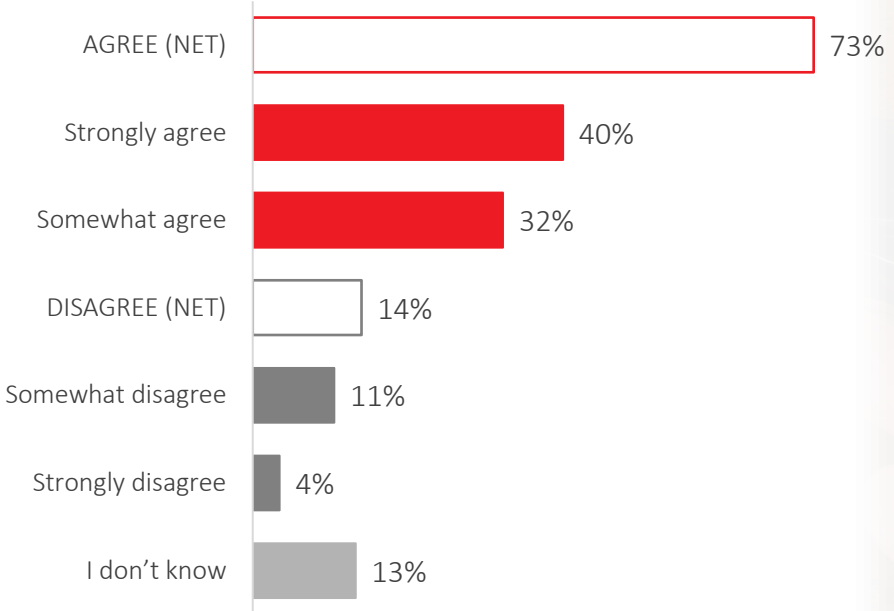
		Gender		Age		Region								Ethnicity	
	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35+	WEST (NET)	BC	Alberta	MB/SK	EAST (NET)	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada	Caucasian (White)	BIPoC
n=	1525	793	732	350	1175	408	152	131	125	1117	606	411	100	1190	313
NET: Agree	91%	91%	91%	85%	94%	93%	92%	95%	92%	91%	89%	93%	95%	93%	85%
Strongly agree	68%	68%	67%	48%	75%	70%	73%	68%	69%	66%	66%	65%	73%	71%	53%
Somewhat agree	24%	23%	24%	36%	19%	22%	18%	27%	23%	24%	22%	28%	22%	22%	31%
NET: Disagree	5%	5%	4%	8%	4%	5%	5%	4%	6%	5%	7%	3%	1%	3%	10%
Somewhat disagree	3%	4%	3%	7%	2%	3%	2%	2%	6%	3%	4%	3%	1%	3%	6%
Strongly disagree	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	<1%	1%	4%
I don't know	4%	4%	4%	8%	3%	3%	4%	2%	2%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	6%

A significant proportion of Canadians, 73%, are in favour of restricting bail even if it could lead to challenges on the interpretation of our Charter of Rights, and in fact, 4 in 10 are <u>strongly</u> in favour.

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Base: *All respondents (n=1525)*

I am in favour of restricting bail even if it could potentially lead to challenges on the interpretation of our Charter of Rights.

AGREE (NET)	73%
Strongly agree	40%
Somewhat agree	32%
DISAGREE (NET)	14%
Somewhat disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	4%
I don't know	13%

Similar to views on repeat violent offenders having limits on their access to bail, 18-34 year-olds and those who identify as BIPoC are <u>less</u> likely to be in favour of restricting bail if it could potentially be challenges under the Charter of Rights.

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Base: *All respondents (n=1525)*

I am in favour of restricting bail even if it could potentially lead to challenges on the interpretation of our Charter of Rights.

		Gender		Age		Region								Ethnicity	
	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35+	WEST (NET)	BC	Alberta	MB/SK	EAST (NET)	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada	Caucasian (White)	BIPoC
n=	1525	793	732	350	1175	408	152	131	125	1117	606	411	100	1190	313
NET: Agree	73%	74%	71%	60%	77%	77%	80%	79%	70%	70%	69%	72%	72%	74%	69%
Strongly agree	40%	44%	37%	23%	46%	42%	46%	37%	40%	39%	38%	40%	45%	43%	31%
Somewhat agree	32%	31%	34%	37%	31%	36%	34%	42%	29%	31%	31%	33%	27%	31%	37%
NET: Disagree	14%	16%	12%	20%	12%	11%	10%	7%	20%	15%	16%	15%	17%	12%	19%
Somewhat disagree	11%	12%	10%	16%	8%	9%	9%	5%	14%	11%	12%	12%	10%	9%	16%
Strongly disagree	4%	4%	3%	4%	3%	2%	1%	2%	7%	4%	4%	3%	7%	4%	3%
I don't know	13%	10%	17%	20%	11%	12%	10%	14%	10%	14%	15%	13%	11%	13%	12%

Detailed Methodology

Sampling Frame

Participants were randomly selected from LEO's online panel.

Leger owns and manages an Internet panel that includes more than 450,000 Canadians coast to coast. An online panel consists of Web users profiled according to different demographic variables. The majority of Leger's panel members (60%) were randomly recruited over the phone in the past ten years, which makes this panel very similar to the current Canadian population on a number of demographic characteristics. Moreover, 35% of panelists were recruited through affiliate programs and 5% through partner campaigns and programs.

To be eligible, respondents were required to be 18 years of age or older.

Detailed Methodology

Weighted and Unweighted Sample

The table below presents the geographic distribution of respondents before weighting and after weighting.

Region	Unweighted	Weighted
British Columbia	152	211
Alberta	131	169
MB/SK	125	98
Ontario	606	591
Quebec	411	353
Atlantic Canada	100	103

GENDER	Unweighted	Weighted
Male	793	742
Female	732	783

AGE	Unweighted	Weighted
Between 18 and 34	350	405
Between 35 and 55	540	491
55 or over	635	628

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- **Leger Analytics (LEA)**
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- **Leger Opinion (LEO)**
  Panel management

- **Leger Communities**
  Online community management

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  Digital strategy and user experience

- **International Research**
  Worldwide Independent Network (WIN)

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