

# **Pit-bull Ban**

**A COMPAS Report  
for the National Post**



**COMPAS Inc.  
Public Opinion and Customer Research  
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## **1.0 Introduction and Methodology**

According to residents in the Greater Toronto area, Government should focus more on the dog owners than on the pet in dealing with the safety concerns over pit-bulls and other dangerous dogs. Respondents overwhelmingly favour holding pet owners as responsible for the crimes of their pets as if they had done these crimes themselves. Both of the Ontario Government's proposed pit-bull strategies, banning pit-bulls and other dangerous dogs and increasing punishments for pet-owners whose pets have broken, receive moderate support.

One of the most interesting findings from the study is that attitudes toward pit-bull regulations do not appear to vary across party lines. NDP, Liberal and Conservative voters are nearly identical in their opinions on the subject.

These are the key findings from a survey of 500 residents of the Greater Toronto area (GTA) conducted between October 22, 2004 and November 1, 2004. The margin of error for a study of the size is considered accurate to within 4.5 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

## **2.0 More than the Dogs, Its the Owners**

COMPAS asked respondents to rate three possible actions Government could take to address concerns over pit-bulls and other dangerous dogs. Holding pet owners as responsible for the crimes of their pets as if they had done these crimes themselves received the greatest support, earning a mean score of 6.1 out of 7, as shown in table 1. In fact, three quarters of respondents scored this option 5 or better and those who favour holding owners as responsible outnumber those who do not by a factor of more than 10:1. Fewer than 7% of GTA residents oppose this action and only 3% are very strongly opposed (assigning a score of 1).

Support for the Government banning pit-bulls and other dangerous dogs is moderate, earning a mean score of 5.1 out of 7 and 55% of respondents



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assigning a score of 5 or better. Notably, respondents were appeared more polarized on this potential course of action, with 14% assigning a 1 and 23% assigning scores of 3 or less.

Increasing punishment to owners for the crimes of pets to a limit of a \$10,000 fine and six months in jail also received a mean score of 5.1; however, fewer respondents assigned the top two scores of 6 and 7.

*Table 1: There's been some talk in the media about dangerous dogs, such as pit-bulls, attacking and in some cases badly harming people. Using a 7 point scale where 7 means definitely agree and 1, the opposite, to what extent should...*

	MEAN	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
The Government hold pet owners as responsible for the crimes of their pets as if they had done these crimes themselves	6.1	59	15	11	4	2	2	3	4
The Government ban pit-bulls and other dangerous dogs	5.1	43	11	11	7	4	5	14	5
Punishment for the crimes of pets have a limit of a \$10,000 fine and six months in jail	5.1	36	9	16	10	6	5	10	9

Notably, attitudes toward pit-bull regulations do not appear to vary across party lines. For example, mean agreement that pet owners should be held responsible is 6.3 among Conservative voters vs. 6.1 among Liberal voters and 5.9 among NDP voters. Similarly, mean agreement that pet crimes should have a limit of \$10,000 is 5.4 among Conservative voters vs. 5.3 among Liberal voters and 5.2 among NDP voters

