



# Support for Marijuana Policy Reform

- National polls have shown that the public is far ahead of most elected officials in support for marijuana policy reform.
- An overwhelming majority of voters in national polls support allowing medical marijuana — with the polls consistently finding 60% to 80% support. Statewide polls also show strong support, from Alabama to Wyoming.
- National and statewide polling have also found majority support for punishing marijuana possession with a civil fine instead of jail time.
- A majority of Americans now support making marijuana use legal, and support is steadily rising: A March 2013 Pew Research Center poll found that 52% of Americans support making marijuana use legal, with 44% opposed. Support for this reform has doubled since 1996. In addition, polls in at least 11 states, and in D.C., have shown majority support for replacing marijuana prohibition with a system of legally regulated and taxed sales.

## Medical marijuana

- A May 2013 nationwide Fox News poll found that 85% of Americans think that adults should “be allowed to use marijuana for medical purposes if a physician prescribes it.” Similarly, a November 2012 CBS News poll found that 83% of Americans believe doctors should “be allowed to prescribe marijuana for medical use.”
- Support spans age groups as well. In a November 2004 AARP poll, 72% of Americans aged 45 and older said that “adults should be allowed to legally use marijuana for medical purposes.”
- Since 1996, a majority of voters in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington state have voted in favor of ballot initiatives to remove criminal penalties for seriously ill people who grow or possess medical marijuana.
- State legislatures in Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Rhode Island, and Vermont have listened to their constituents and passed medical marijuana laws.
- Polls show that public approval of medical marijuana laws has increased or remained the same since the laws went into effect.

## State-specific medical marijuana public opinion polling results

STATE	DATE/POLLING FIRM	% IN FAVOR	QUESTION WORDING
Alabama	July 2004 <i>Mobile Register - University of South Alabama</i>	75%	Support legalizing marijuana for medical use under a doctor’s supervision
Florida	February 2013 Hamilton	70%	Support amending the Florida Constitution to permit the cultivation, purchase, possession, and use of marijuana for medical purposes when recommended by a doctor to aid in the treatment of a specific disease or condition
Idaho	October 2010 Northwest OpinionScape	61%	Support “state laws that allow marijuana use for medical purposes with a doctor’s prescription”
Iowa	February 2010 Selzer & Co., for the <i>Des Moines Register</i>	64%	Favor “allowing medical marijuana in Iowa”
Kentucky	October 2012 Kentucky Health Issues Poll	78%	Favor “the Commonwealth of Kentucky allowing residents to buy and use marijuana for medical purposes if their doctors recommend it”

**State-specific medical marijuana public opinion polling results...continued**

STATE	DATE/POLLING FIRM	% IN FAVOR	QUESTION WORDING
<b>Maryland</b>	February 2011 Public Policy Polling	72%	Support Maryland's medical marijuana proposal
<b>Minnesota</b>	March 2013 Public Policy Polling	65%	Support "changing the law in Minnesota to allow people with serious and terminal illnesses to use medical marijuana if their doctors recommend it"
<b>New York</b>	May 2013 Siena Research Institute	82%	Support "allowing seriously and terminally ill people to legally use marijuana for medical purposes if recommended by their doctor"
<b>North Carolina</b>	February 2013 Elon University Poll	76%	Support "allowing North Carolina doctors to prescribe medical marijuana for reasons such as cancer"
<b>Ohio</b>	May 2009 Ohio Poll, Institute for Policy Research, University of Cincinnati	73%	Favor allowing Ohio doctors to prescribe marijuana for medical purposes to treat their patients
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	February 2013 Franklin and Marshall College Poll	82%	Favor "allowing adults to legally use marijuana for medical purposes if a doctor recommends it"
<b>Texas</b>	May 2010 University of Texas / Texas Tribune	69%	Support medical marijuana
<b>Virginia</b>	June 2001 Quality of Life in Virginia Survey	75%	Agree that doctors should be "allowed to prescribe marijuana for medical use when it reduces pain from cancer treatment or other illnesses"
<b>West Virginia</b>	January 2013 Public Policy Polling	53%	Support "changing the law in West Virginia to allow seriously and terminally ill patients to use medical marijuana if their doctors recommend it"
<b>Wisconsin</b>	July 2005 Chamberlin Research Consultants	76%	Support a bill that would "allow people with cancer, multiple sclerosis, or other serious illnesses to use marijuana for medical purposes, as long as their physician approves"
<b>Wyoming</b>	February 2002 Lucas Organization	65%	Support an initiative that "would remove the threat of arrest and all other penalties for seriously ill patients who use and grow their own medical marijuana with the approval of their physicians"

## Penalizing Marijuana Possession With a Fine, Not Jail Time

- An October 2010 *Newsweek* poll found that 55% of Americans would support a measure in their state that downgrades possession of an ounce of marijuana from a misdemeanor to an infraction punishable by a \$100 fine and no arrest record.
- Currently, 17 states no longer jail adults for possessing small amounts of marijuana: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington. Most of those states instead impose a civil fine. However, in two — Washington and Colorado — marijuana is legal for adults 21 and older.
- In November 2008, 65% of Massachusetts voters replaced the possibility of a criminal conviction and jail time with a \$100 civil fine. This has been the only statewide initiative on “decriminalizing” possession of modest amounts of marijuana.

## State-specific decriminalization public opinion polling results

State	Date/Polling Firm	% in Favor	Question Wording
Arkansas	November 2008 Zogby International	53%	Support “a law that would eliminate the penalties for adult marijuana possession of one ounce or less”
District of Columbia	April 2013 Public Policy Polling	75%	Support “a change in the law to make possession of up to an ounce of marijuana a civil violation, similar to a traffic ticket, punishable by a fine of up to \$100, with no possibility of jail time”
Hawaii	December 2012 QMark Research	58%	Support “making possession and personal use of marijuana by adults a violation, similar to a parking ticket”
Maryland	February 2011 Public Policy Polling	57%	Support “a change in the law to provide for a \$100 civil fine without jail time for those who possess an ounce or less of marijuana for personal use”
New Hampshire	January 2013 Public Policy Polling	62%	Support “a change in the law to provide for a fine of up to \$100 without jail time or the threat of arrest for those who possess an ounce or less of marijuana for personal use”
New Jersey	June 2013 Lake Research Partners	67%	Support “a proposal to make possession of two ounces or less of marijuana a civil offense, carrying a fine but no jail time”

## Ending Marijuana Prohibition

- National polls, including by Pew Research, show that most Americans now support ending marijuana prohibition. For the first time in over 40 years of polling, Pew found that a majority of Americans (52%) believed that the “use of marijuana should be made legal” in March 2013. This is more than triple the level of support Pew found in 1991.
- Polls in the District of Columbia and at least 11 states — Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Washington — have shown majority support for replacing marijuana prohibition with a taxed and regulated market or legalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use.
- In November 2012, more than 55% of voters in two states, Washington and Colorado, approved measures to make it legal for adults 21 and older to use marijuana and to regulate it like alcohol.
- In 2013, bills to opt out of marijuana prohibition were considered in Alabama, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, and Vermont. On the federal level, Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO) and a bipartisan group of co-sponsors introduced the Ending Federal Marijuana Prohibition Act of 2013, a bill to regulate marijuana in a manner similar to alcohol at the federal level.

continued

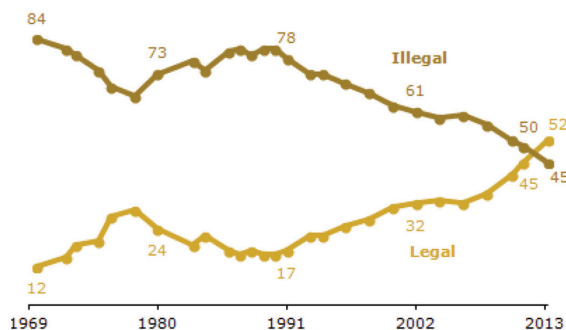
## State-specific tax and regulate public opinion polling results

State	Date/Polling Firm	% in Favor	Question Wording
Alaska	March 2013 Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research	60%	"Do you think marijuana should be taxed, regulated and legalized for adults?"
Arizona	January 2013 Public Policy Polling	59%	"If an initiative appeared on a future ballot in Arizona, proposing that marijuana be regulated in a manner similar to alcohol and sold to adults 21 years of age or older in state-licensed stores, would you vote 'yes' in favor of this initiative or 'no' against this initiative?"
California	February 2013 The Field Poll, Field Research Corporation	54%	Do you "support legalizing the sale of marijuana, with age and other controls like those applicable to alcohol?"
District of Columbia	April 2013 Public Policy Polling	63%	Would you "support an initiative to make the possession of marijuana legal for adults aged 21 and older, allow the legal sale of marijuana by state-licensed stores to adults aged 21 and older, and tax the sale of marijuana by state-licensed stores?"
Hawaii	January 2013 Qmark Research	57%	Do you "support the idea of legalizing, regulating and taxing the sale and personal use of marijuana by adults?"
Massachusetts	February 2013 Public Policy Polling	58%	Would you "support an initiative to make the possession of marijuana legal for adults aged 21 and older, allow the legal sale of marijuana by state-licensed stores to adults aged 21 and older, and tax the sale of marijuana by state-licensed stores?"
Nevada	February 2013 Public Policy Polling	54%	Would you "support an initiative to make the possession of marijuana legal for adults aged 21 and older, allow the legal sale of marijuana by state-licensed stores to adults aged 21 and older, and tax the sale of marijuana by state-licensed stores?"
New Hampshire	April 2013 WMUR Granite State Poll, The University of New Hampshire Survey Center	57%	"If small amounts of marijuana were legalized for personal use in New Hampshire, would you approve or disapprove of marijuana being sold at state liquor stores and taxed at levels similar to alcohol or tobacco?"
New York	December 2012 Quinnipiac University	51%	"Do you think that the use of marijuana should be made legal in New York State, or not?"
Rhode Island	January 2012 Public Policy Polling	52%	"Would you support or oppose changing Rhode Island law to tax and regulate marijuana similarly to alcohol, where stores would be licensed to sell marijuana to adults 21 or older?"

## Pew Research Center National Polling Results

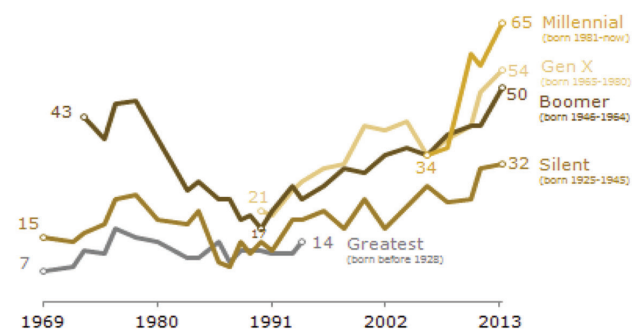
### Views of Legalizing Marijuana: 1969-2013

% saying marijuana should be...



PEW RESEARCH CENTER March 13-17, 2013.  
1973-2008 data from General Social Survey; 1969 and 1972 data from Gallup.

### Boomers' Support for Legalization Rebounds to 1970s Levels



PEW RESEARCH CENTER March 13-17, 2013. 1973-2008 data from General Social Survey; 1969 and 1972 data from Gallup. Generational lines shown when significant sample is available.