



# 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.
- Most Americans support making marijuana legal, and support is steadily rising: A 2014 Pew Research Center poll found that 54% of Americans support making marijuana use legal, with 42% opposed. Support for this reform has doubled since 1998. In addition, polls in at least 17 states, and in D.C., have shown majority support for allowing adults to use marijuana. Most found support for replacing marijuana prohibition with a legal, regulated market.

## 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, Maryland, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, 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	July 2014 Quinnipiac University Poll	88%	Support “allowing adults in Florida to legally use marijuana for medical purposes if their doctor prescribes it”
Idaho	October 2010 Northwest OpinionScape	61%	Support “state laws that allow marijuana use for medical purposes with a doctor’s prescription”
Iowa	March 2014 Quinnipiac University Poll	81%	Support “allowing adults in Iowa to legally use marijuana for medical purposes if their doctor prescribes it”
Kentucky	February 2014 Bluegrass Poll	52%	Favor “allowing the use of medical marijuana in Kentucky”
Louisiana	April 2014 Louisiana State University Poll	79%	Support “legalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana for medical use”

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

STATE	DATE/POLLING FIRM	% IN FAVOR	QUESTION WORDING
Minnesota	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"
North Carolina	February 2013 Elon University Poll	76%	Support "allowing North Carolina doctors to prescribe medical marijuana for reasons such as cancer"
Ohio	February 2014 Quinnipiac University Poll	87%	Support "allowing adults in Ohio to legally use marijuana for medical purposes if their doctor prescribes it"
Oklahoma	September 2013 SoonerPoll	71%	Support Oklahoma joining other states that allow "seriously ill patients to possess marijuana for medical purposes with a physician's recommendation"
Pennsylvania	March 2014 Quinnipiac University Poll	85%	Support allowing adults "to legally use marijuana for medical purposes if their doctor prescribes it"
Tennessee	January 2014 MTSU Poll	75%	Support "allowing adults to use doctor-prescribed marijuana for medical purposes"
Texas	September 2013 Public Policy Polling	58%	Support allowing "seriously and terminally ill patients to use medical ... if their doctors recommend it"
Utah	August 2013 Libertas Institute	61%	Support "allowing individuals to possess and consume marijuana if their doctors recommend it"
Virginia	March 2014 Quinnipiac University Poll	84%	Support allowing adults "to legally use marijuana for medical purposes if their doctor prescribes it"
West Virginia	January 2014 Public Policy Polling	56%	Support allowing "seriously and terminally ill patients to use medical marijuana if their doctors recommend it"
Wisconsin	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"
Wyoming	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, 19 states' laws or constitutions include provisions to prevent the jailing of people who possess small amounts of marijuana: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, 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 February 2014, Pew Research Center found that 76% of Americans believe people caught in possession of marijuana shouldn't be jailed as a result.

## State-specific decriminalization public opinion polling results

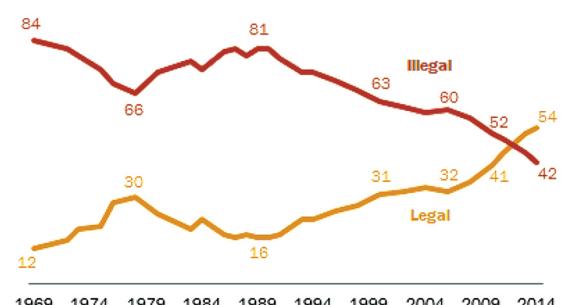
State	Date/Polling Firm	% in Favor	Question Wording
Delaware	March 2014 Public Policy Polling	68%	Support making it a civil offense "to possess an ounce or less of marijuana for personal use, punishable by a fine of up to \$100, but without jail time"
Hawaii	December 2012 QMark Research	58%	Support "making possession and personal use of marijuana by adults a violation, similar to a parking ticket"
Louisiana	August 2013 Public Policy Polling	56%	Support changing the law to impose "a \$100 fine without jail time for those who possess an ounce or less of marijuana"
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"
Oklahoma	September 2013 SoonerPoll	57%	Support decriminalizing adults' possession of up to an ounce of marijuana so "they would receive a fine rather than be criminally prosecuted and face possible incarceration"
Texas	September 2013 Public Policy Polling	61%	Support making it a civil offense "to possess an ounce or less of marijuana for personal use, punishable by a fine of up to \$100, but without jail time"

## Ending Marijuana Prohibition

- National polls, including by Pew Research Center, Gallup, CNN, and NBC, 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. Support continued to rise in 2014, to 54%.
- Polls in at least 17 additional states — Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, Texas, and Vermont — and the District of Columbia show majority support for replacing marijuana prohibition with a regulated market or legalizing the possession 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.

### Growing Support for Marijuana Legalization

% saying marijuana should be ...



Survey conducted Feb. 12-26, 2014. 1973-2008 data from General Social Survey; 1969 and 1972 data from Gallup

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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	December 2013 The Field Poll	55%	Support legalizing marijuana either "so it can be purchased by anyone" or "with age and other controls, like those for alcohol"
Connecticut	May 2014 Quinnipiac University Poll	52%	Support "allowing adults ... to legally possess small amounts of marijuana for personal use"
Delaware	March 2014 Public Policy Polling	51%	Support making "marijuana legal for adults 21 and over, and regulating and taxing marijuana similarly to alcohol"
District of Columbia	January 2014 <i>Washington Post</i>	63%	Favor "legalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use"
Florida	July 2014 Quinnipiac University Poll	55%	Support "allowing adults in Florida to legally possess small amounts of marijuana for personal use"
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?"
Louisiana	August 2013 Public Policy Polling	53%	Support changing the law "to allow marijuana to be regulated and taxed similarly to alcohol, for legal use by adults age 21 and older"
Maryland	September 2013 Public Policy Polling	53%	Support making "marijuana legal for adults 21 and over, and regulating and taxing marijuana similarly to alcohol"
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	October 2013 WMUR Granite State Poll	60%	Support the state's bill to legalize small amounts of marijuana, to allow retail sales of marijuana, and to tax sales
New York	February 2014 Quinnipiac University Poll	57%	Support "allowing adults in New York State to legally possess small amounts of marijuana for personal use"
Ohio	February 2014 Quinnipiac University Poll	51%	Support allowing adults "to legally possess small amounts of marijuana for personal use"
Rhode Island	January 2014 Public Policy Polling	53%	Support regulating and taxing "marijuana similarly to alcohol, so stores would be licensed to sell marijuana to adults 21 and older"
Texas	September 2013 Public Policy Polling	58%	Support "changing Texas law to regulate and tax marijuana similarly to alcohol, where stores would be licensed to sell marijuana to adults 21 and older"
Vermont	May 2014 Castleton Poll	57%	Support "changing Vermont law to regulate and tax marijuana similarly to alcohol, so retailers would be licensed to sell marijuana to adults 21 and older"