

# The Benefits to New Jersey of Taxing and Regulating Marijuana

And the potential impact on the opioid crisis



# The Origins of Prohibition – “Reefer Madness”

- 1920 – 1933 - Alcohol Prohibition (several states opt out of enforcement)
- 1937 - Marihuana Tax Act
- “There are 100,000 total marijuana smokers in the U.S., and most are Negroes, Hispanics, Filipinos, and entertainers. Their satanic music, jazz and swing, result from marijuana use. This marijuana causes white women to seek sexual relations with Negroes, entertainers, and any others.”
  - – Quote from Henry Anslinger, the architect of marijuana prohibition
- Anslinger also claimed marijuana “leads to pacifism and communist brainwashing.”

(Sample--Warning card to be placed in R. R. Trains, Buses, Street Cars, etc.)

# Beware! Young and Old—People in All Walks of Life!

Marihuana Cigarette

This  may be handed you




by the friendly stranger. It contains the Killer Drug "Marihuana"-- a powerful narcotic in which lurks **Murder! Insanity! Death!**



Courtesy Bureau of Narcotics, U.S. Dept. of Justice

## WARNING!

Dope peddlers are shrewd! They may put some of this drug in the  or in the Cock-tail or in the tobacco cigarette.

WRITE FOR DETAILED INFORMATION, ENCLOSED 12 CENTS IN POSTAGE — MAILING COST

Address: **THE INTER-STATE NARCOTIC ASSOCIATION**

*(Incorporated not for profit)*

**53 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Illinois, U. S. A.**

HEAD OFFICE: 1700 N. LAUREL ST. CHICAGO, ILL.



# The Modern “War on Drugs”

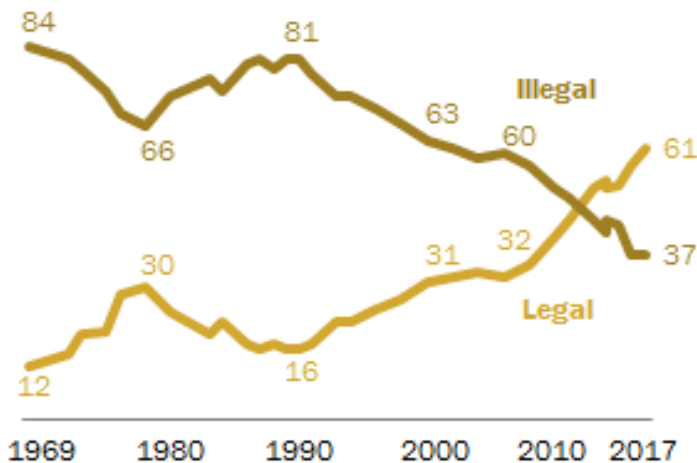
"The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I'm saying? We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or blacks, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin. And then **criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities**. We could arrest their leaders. raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. **Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.**"

– former Nixon domestic policy chief John Ehrlichman

# Public Opinion and Policy are Shifting Rapidly

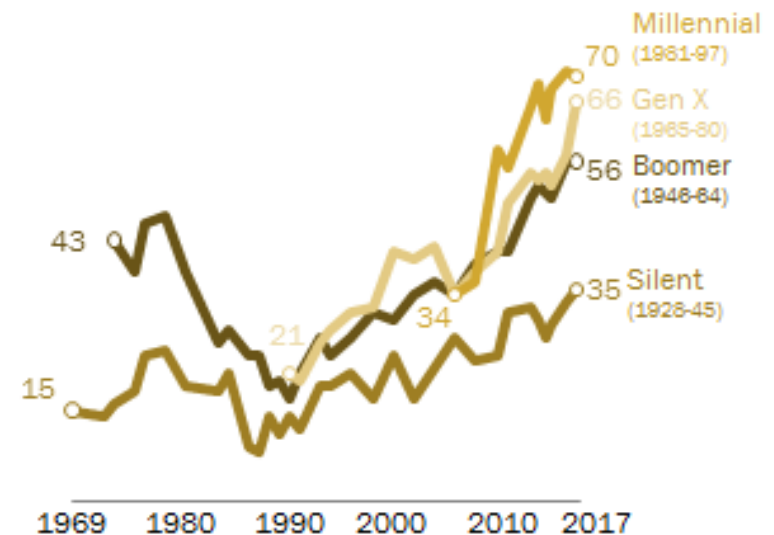
## U.S. public opinion on legalizing marijuana, 1969-2017

Do you think the use of marijuana should be made legal, or not? (%)



% who say marijuana should be made legal

% who say marijuana should be made legal



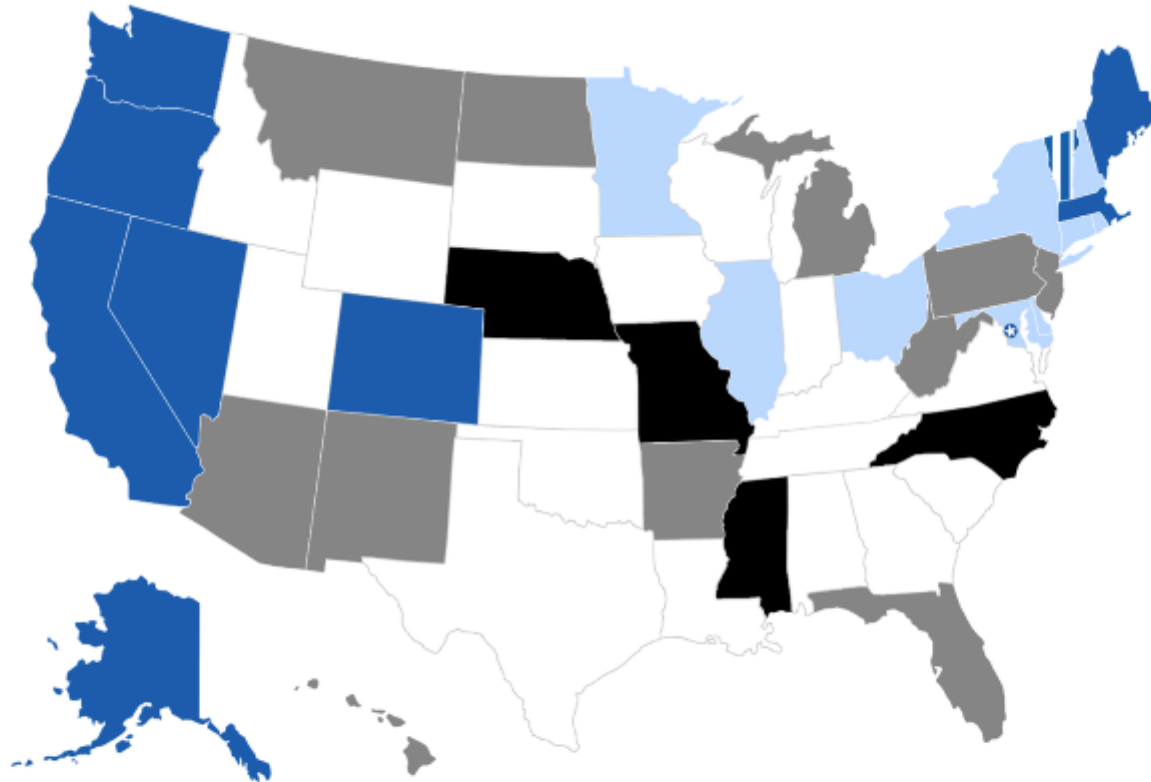
Note: Don't know responses not shown. 1973-2008 data from General Social Survey; 1969 and 1972 data from Gallup. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 25-30, 2017.

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# Public Opinion and Policy are Shifting Rapidly

- Twenty-nine states (+ D.C., Guam, and Puerto Rico) have effective medical programs.
- Nine states (+ D.C.) have legalized marijuana for adults.
- MPP is leading a ballot initiative to tax and regulate marijuana in Michigan in 2018 and expects to add five new medical states by 2019.
- Uruguay legalized marijuana; Canada is poised to do so this year; and around 30 countries have decriminalized in some way.

# Current Marijuana Policy Map



Marijuana is legal for adults and is taxed and regulated similarly to alcohol; state also has a medical marijuana law

States that both have a medical marijuana law and have removed jail time for possessing small amount of marijuana

VT and DC legalized possession and cultivation for adults; both also have medical marijuana laws.

States that have removed jail time for possessing small amounts of marijuana

States with medical marijuana laws

# What About Federal Law?

- Under federal law, marijuana is illegal for any purpose, including medical.
  - It is a “Schedule I” drug, which means the federal government still falsely claims it has “no currently accepted medical use” and a “high potential for abuse.”
- But, the federal government can’t force the states to criminalize anything or to enforce federal law.
  - The vast majority of criminal prosecutions happen at the state level, and the Department of Justice does not have the resources to prosecute individual consumers.
- The Rohrabacher-Blumenauer Amendment to a Congressional Appropriations bill protects medical marijuana businesses.
  - MPP and our allies are working to expand this to cover adult-use businesses as well.
  - AG Sessions’ negative comments have actually increased support in Congress for protecting state-legal marijuana businesses.



# Why Regulate?

- Prohibition has failed.
  - Forty-four percent of adults admit they have tried it, despite an arrest every 48 seconds.
- Regulation makes it more difficult for teens to get marijuana – drug dealers don't check ID.
  - Federal survey found the percentage of 8<sup>th</sup> graders saying marijuana was “easy” to get was its lowest ever in 2016.
- Regulation dramatically reduces marijuana arrests and the life-changing collateral consequences that come with a criminal record.
- Regulation allows the state to benefit from tax revenue – NJ could earn \$300 million per year.
- Regulation allows consumers to know what they are purchasing.
  - Wouldn't you want to know if you were drinking regular liquor, 151, or bathtub gin?
- Regulation allows police to focus on solving violent and property crime.

# How Are Things Really Going in Washington and Colorado?

“Our state’s efforts to regulate the sale of marijuana are succeeding. A few years ago, the illegal trafficking of marijuana lined the pockets of criminals everywhere. Now, in our state, illegal trafficking activity is being displaced by a closely regulated marijuana industry that pays hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes. This frees up significant law enforcement resources to protect our communities in other, more pressing ways.”

– Gov. Inslee and AG Ferguson, Washington

“[Implementing legalization was] one of the things I’m most proud of.” He cited the lack of an increase in teen use or a dramatic increase in overall use and that polls show residents are increasingly in favor of continued legalization.

– Gov. Hickenlooper, Colorado, former legalization opponent

# Life After Legalization in Colorado

- Jobs: 30,000 active licenses; unemployment dropped considerably
- Economy: Colorado's economy ranked best in nation in 2017; Gov. Hickenlooper notes that many young people and entrepreneurs have been drawn there.
- Tourism: Record-breaking numbers of tourists and revenues since legalization; gains double to triple the national average.
- Revenue: \$247 million in revenue in 2017 alone.
- Crime: Marijuana arrests fell by half; 70% of illicit market has been eliminated.
- Traffic fatalities per million miles driven are below the national average.

# Marijuana and Opioids:

## Medical Marijuana and the Reduction of Opioid Usage and Overdose

- A study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found a 48% reduction in patients' opioid use after three months of medical marijuana treatment.
- This isn't just self-reporting — Medicare patients in states with medical cannabis dispensaries filled 14% fewer daily doses of opiates than patients in other states between 2010 and 2015.
  - In states that only allowed home cultivation but not dispensaries, patients filled 7% fewer doses.
- Opioid overdose deaths were reduced by 25% in states with effective medical marijuana laws.

# Marijuana and Opioids:

## Permitting Adult Use Results in Further Reductions

- Medicaid prescriptions for opioids went down 6% when a state allowed medical marijuana — and a further 6% when adult use was allowed.
- In Colorado, legalization was associated with a reduction in opioid overdose deaths in 2015.
  - In 2016, opioid overdose deaths increased an additional .8 per 100,000 people in Colorado — far less than the national average, which was an increase of 3.9 deaths per 100,000 people.

# What about the “Gateway Theory”?

- The “gateway theory” has repeatedly been debunked.
  - It suggests that marijuana somehow causes its users to have problems with more addictive substances.
  - Just because the consumption of marijuana (and tobacco, and alcohol, and candy) frequently *precedes* the use of other substances doesn’t mean marijuana use *causes* the use of other substances.
- In fact, the vast majority of cannabis consumers never “go on” to use other substances.
  - Forty-four percent of Americans have tried marijuana; about 9% are regular (once per month) consumers.
  - In contrast, only 14.5% of Americans have ever tried cocaine, and less than 1% have used it in the last month. Marijuana legalization in Colorado did not affect the state’s trend of decreasing numbers of people using cocaine over time.

# What about the “Gateway Theory”?

- A 1999 study by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, "Marijuana and Medicine: Assessing the Science Base," noted, “There is no evidence that marijuana serves as a stepping stone on the basis of its particular physiological effect. ... Instead, the legal status of marijuana makes it a gateway drug.”
- In other words, participation in an illegal market raises the risks of exposure to more dangerous substances.
- “[T]he overwhelming majority of people who use marijuana do not go on to use harder drugs. Of those who do, extensive research has concluded that the causal factors reside not in the drug itself, but in the complex of genetic, social and psychological factors that lead them to seek relief in mind-altering substances in the first place. Prohibition cannot address those problems, but it does serve as a gateway into the criminal justice system, which will make them immeasurably worse.”

– William Martin, Director, Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University, Texas

# Marijuana is SAFER

(than alcohol)

- Marijuana is not associated with violent behavior.
  - Domestic violence – abusers eight times more likely to abuse on days when they consumed alcohol; U.S. government says alcohol contributes to 25% - 30% of violent crime.
- There are no deaths from marijuana overdose in recorded medical history.
  - 2,200 people die of alcohol poisoning per year.

Marijuana		Alcohol
<b>Does use contribute to...</b>		
<b>NO</b>	overdose deaths?	<b>YES</b>
<b>NO</b>	chronic diseases?	<b>YES</b>
<b>NO</b>	violent crimes?	<b>YES</b>
<b>NO</b>	reckless behavior?	<b>YES</b>



# Marijuana is SAFER

(than alcohol)

- Long-term cannabis use is *not* correlated with physical health problems (except periodontal health) in longitudinal study.
  - Alcohol causes 88,000 premature deaths each year in U.S (CDC, 2014) and causes more premature deaths around the world than HIV, AIDS, violence and tuberculosis combined (OECD 2015).
- Marijuana users are less likely than alcohol users to become dependent and dependence is *much* less severe.



# Safer for adults does not mean OK for kids

- Nobody is advocating that young people with developing brains use marijuana (or alcohol).
- Teen use of tobacco — a substance legal for adults — has plummeted 79% from its 1997 peak, due to a combination of strict regulations on sales and public education. The same can be done for cannabis.
- Thankfully, **teen use has not increased** as a result of marijuana legalization and regulation for adults.
  - In fact, the most in-depth surveys show a very slight *decrease* in teen use in Colorado and Washington from 2010 (before legalization) to today.

# Who is MPP? Our Mission

At the state and federal levels, we work to:



Enact laws that legalize, regulate, and tax marijuana for adults aged 21 and older



Enact laws that allow patients to legally and safely access medical marijuana



Eliminate all barriers to medical marijuana research



# Who is MPP? Our Structure

The Marijuana Policy Project (MPP) is comprised of two nonprofit organizations:



The Marijuana Policy Project  
501(c)(4) -- Political advocacy

The Marijuana Policy Project Foundation  
501(c)(3) -- Public education

MPP also manages a federal PAC and state-level ballot initiative committees.

# Questions?

*Learn More & Get Involved*

[www.mpp.org](http://www.mpp.org)

*Facebook*

[facebook.com/MarijuanaPolicyProject](https://facebook.com/MarijuanaPolicyProject)

*Call & Email:*

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