

Marijuana Policy in Vermont: A Modern, Comprehensive Approach

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The Committee's Charge

Develop “a modern approach to marijuana policy that reflects the values, culture, and scale of Vermont.”

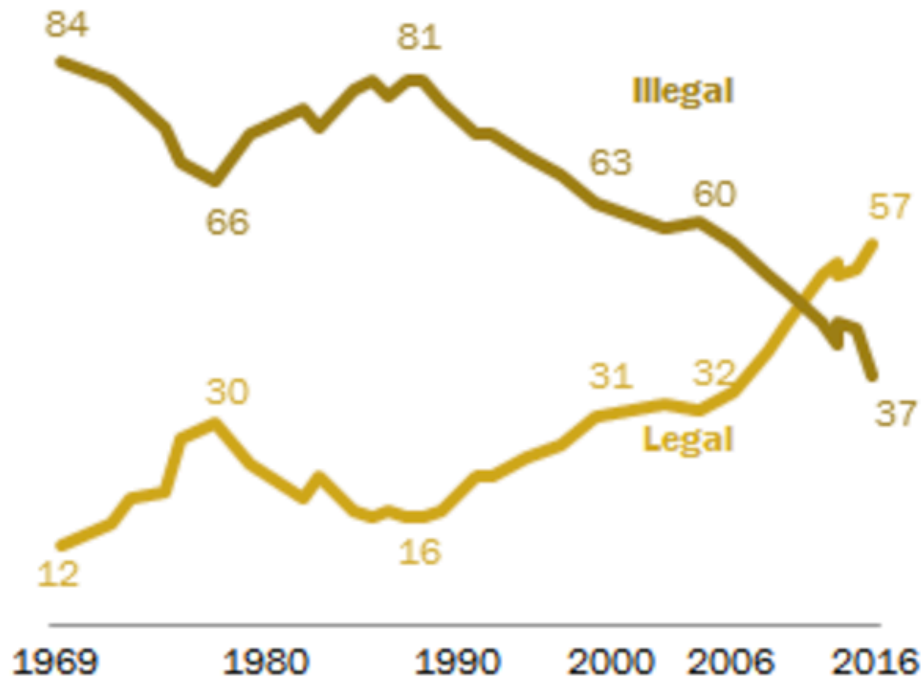
- (1) Acknowledge the massive shift in public opinion.
- (2) Help other legislators and the public separate fact from fiction and move on from myths, propaganda.
- (3) Recommend policies that strike a balance between personal freedom and state regulation, and that are responsive to public concerns.
- (4) Focus on minimizing harms associated with both marijuana and marijuana prohibition; help foster development of a culture of responsible adult use.



Pew: Support for Making Marijuana Legal

Opinion on legalizing marijuana, 1969-2016

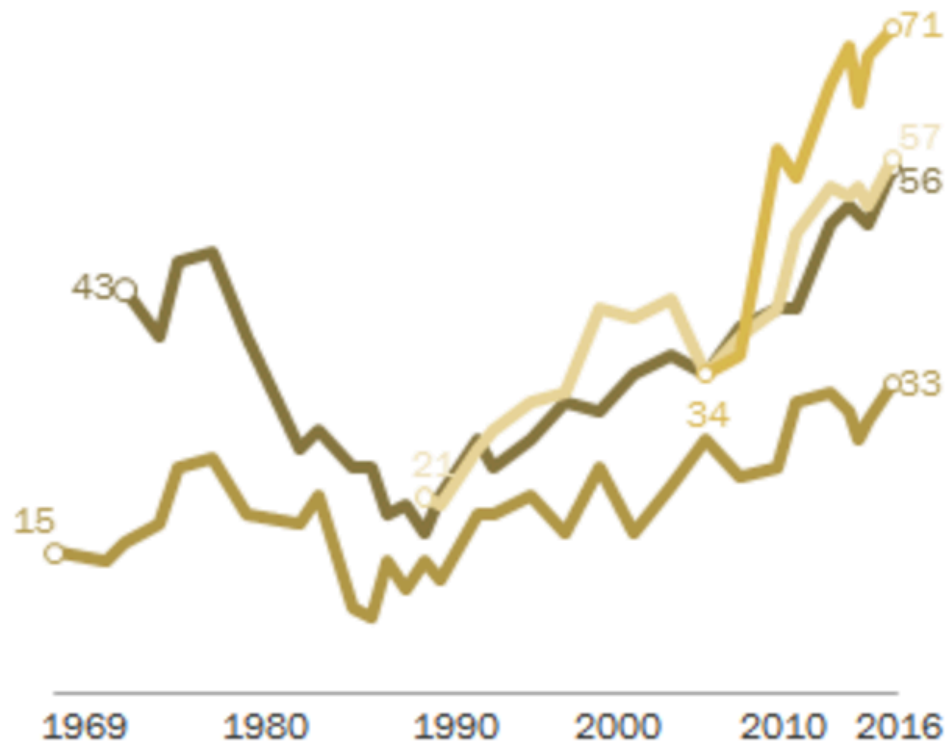
Do you think the use of marijuana should be made legal, or not? (%)



Generational Support

% who say marijuana should be made legal

Silent Boomer Gen X Millennial



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey conducted Aug. 23–Sept. 2, 2016.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



Numbers from Public Policy Polling in CO

Colorado Survey Results

Q1 Overall, do you feel passage of Amendment 64 has been good for the state of Colorado, bad for the state of Colorado, or had no real impact?

<i>Passage of Amendment 64 has been good for CO</i>	47%
<i>Passage of Amendment 64 has been bad for CO</i>	39%
<i>Passage of Amendment 64 has had no real impact</i>	9%
<i>Not sure</i>	6%

Q2 Do you think Amendment 64 has had a positive impact on the economy in Colorado, a negative impact, or no real impact?

<i>Amendment 64 has had a positive impact on the economy</i>	61%
<i>Amendment 64 has had a negative impact on the economy</i>	19%
<i>Amendment 64 has had no real impact</i>	14%
<i>Not sure</i>	6%

Q5 If there were a measure on the ballot this year to repeal Amendment 64, would you support it, oppose it, or are you not sure?

<i>Support</i>	36%
<i>Oppose</i>	51%
<i>Not sure</i>	13%

Q6 Now that marijuana is legal for adults in Colorado, do you know of any friends, family members, or colleagues who consume less alcohol because they are consuming marijuana instead?

<i>Know of adults who consume less alcohol now that marijuana is legal</i>	24%
<i>Do not know any adults who consume less alcohol now that marijuana is legal</i>	50%
<i>Not sure</i>	26%

Q7 If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

<i>Woman</i>	53%
<i>Man</i>	47%



September PPP Poll Age Breakdown

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Amendment 64 Good/Bad for CO					
Passage of Amendment 64 has been good for CO	47%	74%	50%	43%	27%
Passage of Amendment 64 has been bad for CO	39%	18%	30%	45%	59%
Passage of Amendment 64 has had no real impact	9%	4%	11%	9%	10%
Not sure	6%	4%	9%	3%	4%



Separating Facts from Fiction

- **“We have been terribly and systematically misled for nearly 70 years in the United States, and I apologize for my own role in that.” — Dr. Sanjay Gupta**

(“Why I changed my mind on weed,” Aug. 8, 2013
www.cnn.com/2013/08/08/health/gupta-changed-mind-marijuana/)



Remember This Warning?

- ***“There are well-known endocrine effects of marijuana. Specifically it interferes with the expression of testosterone, leading to gynecomastia (breast enlargement) and possibly testicular atrophy in males, heavy users being the most susceptible to these effects.”***



It Wasn't from the 1980's

It appeared in an op-ed published by a Vermont pediatrician in *The Times Argus* on January 20, 2016!

[http://www.timesargus.com/article/20160120/
OPINION04/160129999](http://www.timesargus.com/article/20160120/OPINION04/160129999)



Federal Policy Continues to Undermine Research and Informed Discussion

- The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) Reauthorization Act of 1998 requires ONDCP to “ensure that no Federal funds... shall be expended for any study or contract relating to the legalization of a substance (for a medical use or any other use) listed in schedule I [of the Controlled Substances Act] and **take such actions as necessary to oppose any attempt to legalize** the use of” any Schedule I substance (emphasis added).

www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/reauthorization-act



Reality: Marijuana Is Safer Than Alcohol

From the Rand Corporation's Report to the Vermont Legislature:

“The total social cost associated with alcohol abuse is very much larger than all costs and outcomes related directly to marijuana use” (43).

“Emergency-department (ED) discharge data suggest that marijuana-related visits remain a very small proportion... The rates are dwarfed by alcohol... and opiates” (14).



Reality: Regulation Is a Better Approach Than Prohibition

- Prohibition results in massive profits for an illicit market, creating incentives for criminal activity. Decriminalization does not address this problem.
- Regulation creates jobs, take millions of dollars away from criminal enterprises, and produces revenue for the state.
- Regulation enhances public health by ensuring that products are tested, labeled, and only sold to adult consumers, and by reducing adults' exposure to illicit drug markets.



Reality: Prohibition Has Been a Failure

The Rand Corporation estimates:

- Approximately 80,000 Vermonters use marijuana each month.
- Vermonters likely consume between 33,000 and 55,000 pounds of marijuana each year.
- Vermonters likely spend about \$175 million per year on marijuana.



What We Hear from Vermonters

- **Allowing limited home cultivation is very important. Many Vermonters see this as a basic personal freedom, much like home brewing.**
- **The economic benefits of legalization should be broadly distributed, not concentrated in the hands of a few large companies.**
- **Doctors shouldn't have to be the “gatekeepers” for access to cannabis for adult use. Many Vermonters prefer to obtain cannabis from the illicit market rather than register with the state.**



Final Thoughts

- Consider abandoning the word “recreational” altogether. Adults use cannabis for a broad range of reasons, and many patients, such as combat veterans suffering from PTSD, may benefit from having safe, state-legal access to cannabis. It would be insulting to send such persons to a “recreational marijuana store.”
- Shift focus to new policy goal: reducing harms associated with marijuana and harms associated with prohibition.

To learn more, visit
RegulateVermont.org
and **MPP.org**

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