

Americans agree that our current marijuana laws aren't working. It's time for a system of strict regulation.

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MARIJUANA POLICY PROJECT FOUNDATION
P.O. Box 77492, CAPITOL HILL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013

What are the four biggest reasons that people are concerned about regulating marijuana?

- 1. "Marijuana use is wrong."** Whatever one's moral beliefs about marijuana consumption, marijuana laws have caused far more harm than marijuana use itself: marijuana prohibition drained precious criminal justice resources from our communities, made it difficult to keep marijuana from our children, and destroyed the lives and families of otherwise law-abiding citizens.
- 2. "Marijuana regulation would send the wrong message to teenagers."** Regulation would reduce teen access to marijuana by taking it off the streets and regulating it, and sending adults to prison if they sell marijuana to young people. According to the White House, more than half of U.S. teens try marijuana before graduating from high school. In the Netherlands, where marijuana is sold in indoor establishments to adults who are carded for age, teen marijuana use is only 28%.
- 3. "Marijuana regulation might increase DUI-related deaths on the roadways."** Driving while intoxicated would still be illegal. And people who want to use marijuana are already using it; there are few adults who would start using marijuana if it were regulated.
- 4. "Marijuana is a 'gateway' or 'stepping stone' to hard drugs."** It's the criminalization of marijuana that's the gateway to hard drugs. When adults enter a liquor store to buy alcohol, they don't find cocaine sitting on the shelf next to bottles of vodka; similarly, if marijuana were regulated, adults who buy marijuana would not be exposed to hard drugs (as they currently are, via drug dealers).

**It's time for a NEW APPROACH:
marijuana *regulation* and *control*.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:



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Our marijuana laws aren't working.

Our failed marijuana laws cost taxpayers \$7.7 billion a year,¹ keep police from focusing on real crimes, and fail to keep marijuana away from minors.

Regulation is the answer.

It's time for a new approach—strict regulation and control—to reduce the criminal market and lower teen use.

Marijuana use is far higher in the United States than in the Netherlands, where marijuana is sold in regulated establishments instead of on the criminal market. In the U.S., 41% of people over 12 have tried marijuana—versus 17% in the Netherlands.²

Drug dealers don't card for age. If marijuana were taxed and regulated, licensed establishments would have an incentive to card for age, because selling to minors would cause the establishments to lose their licenses to sell to adults.

In 2003, there were a record 755,186 marijuana arrests in the U.S.—greater than the number of arrests for all violent crimes combined.

Taxing and regulating marijuana would:

- ✓ **Make our communities safer.** Removing marijuana from the criminal market would free up police time so police officers can focus on violent crimes, property crimes, and people who drive under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or any other substance. Tax dollars would be used to incarcerate real criminals who threaten public safety.
- ✓ **Reduce teen marijuana use.** Unlike drug dealers, licensed vendors would ensure that teens could not purchase marijuana ... just as states that have implemented strict controls on underage tobacco purchases have seen sales of tobacco to minors fall dramatically.³
- ✓ **Save taxpayer dollars and generate revenue.** Each year, the government spends \$7.7 billion to arrest and lock up nonviolent marijuana users. Taxing marijuana would generate millions in tax revenues instead of profits for drug dealers.
- ✓ **Provide a legal source of marijuana for seriously ill patients** who currently must resort to buying marijuana from drug dealers.

What Regulation Would Not Do:

- ✗ It would not allow marijuana possession or access for those under the age of 21.
- ✗ It would not allow driving under the influence of marijuana, which would remain a crime and would be treated like other DUI offenses.

More arrests are made for marijuana than for all violent crimes combined.

Marijuana arrests are at an all-time high of 755,186 a year—which is one arrest every 42 seconds. That's more arrests for marijuana than for all violent crimes combined.

And 88% of these arrests are for simple possession, not sale or manufacture.⁴

What are the health effects of marijuana?

Unlike with alcohol and tobacco, no one has ever died from using marijuana. And while marijuana isn't risk-free, its risks are lower than those of many legal drugs.

	Alcohol	Tobacco	Marijuana
Can cause stroke?	Yes	Yes	No
Overdose can cause death?	Yes	No	No
Number of deaths annually	100,000	440,000	0

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and *Marijuana and Medicine: Assessing the Science Base*, Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences, 1999.

1. Miron, Jeffrey A., *The Budgetary Implications of Marijuana Prohibition*, December 2004.

2. Trimbos Institute, Report to the EMCDDA by the Reitox National Focal Point, The Netherlands Drug Situation, 2002.

3. Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Study 2003.

4. FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 2003.