



Regulation Works: It's Time for a New Approach to Cannabis

Adults shouldn't be criminalized for using a substance that is objectively less harmful than alcohol and that is a medicine for many.

- Marijuana is far less toxic, less addictive, and less harmful to the body than alcohol. While the CDC attributes 178,000 deaths per year to excessive alcohol use, cannabis has not been shown to increase mortality. It is irrational to criminalize adults for using the safer substance.
- Most adult-use consumers use cannabis as an over-the-counter medicine, often for pain or insomnia. While medical cannabis programs are important, they leave behind many — including those who can't afford a medical cannabis specialist's fee and those who don't want to be on a government list. In the Land of Liberty, adults shouldn't be punished for using cannabis, whether it is medicinal or for relaxation.

Cannabis prohibition is just as ineffective, wasteful, and harmful as alcohol prohibition.

- Just like alcohol prohibition a century ago, cannabis prohibition does not eliminate use. It simply steers the profits underground and puts everyone at greater risk.
- As long as cannabis is illegal in some states, its production and sales will be tied to violence, organized crime, and environmental destruction. Illicit cannabis producers have been responsible for diverted waterways, hazardous waste in wilderness areas, sexual exploitation, wage theft, forced labor, and violence.
- Prohibiting cannabis steers consumers into the underground market, where they can be exposed to other more dangerous drugs. Illegal cannabis manufacturers are not subject to quality standards, and they do not test or label their products.
- Arresting and prosecuting cannabis offenders diverts police time away from crimes with victims and undermines trust. Nationally, over 47% of homicides, 90% of motor vehicle thefts and 75% of robberies go unsolved, while law enforcement pursue over a quarter of million arrests for cannabis each year.

Regulating cannabis like alcohol creates barriers to teens' access to cannabis.

- When cannabis is unregulated and illicit, youth have easy access. They are often the ones selling it. A 2012 pre-legalization national survey by Columbia University found that 40% of high schoolers knew a student who sells marijuana at school, compared to only 1% who knew a peer who sold alcohol.
- In legal states, compliance checks show ID card requirements are working.

- CDC data shows the number of youth using cannabis has *dropped* in most legal, adult-use states since legalization.
 - The percent of youth reporting cannabis is “very easy” or “fairly easy” to obtain dropped significantly since legalization began. In 2011, 68.4% of American 10th graders reported “fairly easy” or “very easy” access to cannabis. Only 47.5% did in 2023.
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Regulating and taxing cannabis bolsters state economies.

- States have raised nearly \$20 billion from adult-use cannabis taxes since 2014. In 2023 alone, adult-use cannabis generated over \$4 billion in state excise and sales tax.
- In Michigan, there are over 2,100 cannabis businesses and 35,000 jobs. Since sales began in December 2019, the state has collected over \$1 billion in cannabis taxes.