



2017 New Hampshire Polling

Results from polling released in May 2017 show that marijuana legalization is more popular in New Hampshire than any of the state's best-known elected officials. The most recent Granite State Polls, published by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center, found that 68% of Granite Staters support legalization, while 52% hold a favorable opinion of the state's most popular politician, Gov. Chris Sununu. [\[1\]](#)

According to the Granite State Poll published May 9, 2017, 68% of state residents support legalization (49% strongly), and 27% are opposed (19% strongly).

The crosstabs revealed that more than two-thirds of Democrats and a majority of Independents and Republicans support legalization:

79% of Democrats in favor (53% strongly), 17% opposed (10% strongly).

74% of Independents in favor (55% strongly), 20% opposed (15% strongly).

52% of Republicans in favor (40% strongly), 43% opposed (33% strongly).

88% of 18-34 year olds in favor (67% strongly), 12% opposed (3% strongly).

73% of 35-49 year olds in favor (54% strongly), 19% opposed (13% strongly).

67% of 50 to 64 year olds in favor (47% strongly), 27% opposed (21% strongly).

36% of 65 and over in favor (20% strongly), 56% opposed (45% strongly).

Preference for marijuana laws in New Hampshire

When asked which marijuana policy they would prefer for New Hampshire, 55% of Granite Staters said marijuana should be legalized and taxed. Nineteen percent said they would prefer to decriminalize, and 21% said they would prefer to keep laws as they are now.

- 61% of Democrats prefer legalization, 21% prefer decriminalization, and 14% prefer to keep laws as they are now.
- 58% of Independents prefer legalization, 18% prefer decriminalization, and 18% prefer to keep laws as they are now.
- 45% of Republicans prefer legalization, 19% prefer decriminalization, and 31% prefer to keep laws as they are now.

How polling on marijuana policy reforms compares with elected officials

More Granite Staters support marijuana policy reforms than hold favorable opinions of the state's best-known elected officials.

- Marijuana legalization: 68% in favor, 27% opposed
 - Chris Sununu: 52% favorable, 19% unfavorable
 - Jeanne Shaheen: 51% favorable, 28% unfavorable[2]
 - Maggie Hassan: 46% favorable, 33% unfavorable
 - New Hampshire Legislature: 51% approval, 30% disapproval
 - Carol Shea-Porter: 39% favorable, 27% unfavorable
 - President Donald Trump: 34% favorable, 56% unfavorable
 - Ann Kuster: 27% favorable, 31% unfavorable
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Despite overwhelming popular support, study commission is stacked with opponents

You might think that with 68% support from the general public, the Legislature would at least create a fair study commission to consider the issue. The House did indeed vote to do so, passing HB 215, which would have created a balanced study commission. However, the Senate amended the bill to remove all supporters of legalization — such as the ACLU-NH and Marijuana Policy Project, leaving only opponents — such as New Futures and the Chiefs of Police. In addition, seven members were appointed by the House speaker (4), the Senate president (2), and the governor (1).

Of the six legislators who have been appointed, none has ever voted in favor of legalization. However, the list does include Sen. Bill Gannon (R-Sandown), who has vigorously opposed medical cannabis and decriminalization bills in recent years.

Earlier in the year, Gannon made a strong statement against marijuana legalization on the Senate floor. “I draw a line in the sand here today and say never to legalizing marijuana,” he said. The fact that Gannon voted in favor of this study commission, as did Carson, while legalization supporters such as Sen. Jeff Woodburn voted against it, strongly suggests that the commission will be stacked against legalization.

Despite the compelling evidence that marijuana policy reforms are working out well in states that have gone first, it may be impossible for the members of this commission to come around in support of reasonable regulation. Regardless, there is no question that marijuana legalization is certain to emerge as a major issue in the 2018 election. As the polls plainly show, office-seekers who continue to oppose ending marijuana prohibition do so at their own political peril.

[1]

https://cola.unh.edu/sites/cola.unh.edu/files/research_publications/gsp2017_spring_govapp050917.pdf

[2] Poll numbers for elected officials compiled from multiple Granite State Polls released by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center in May 2017.

<https://cola.unh.edu/press-releases/survey-center>