

... It's time for a new approach.

- **Sixty-eight percent of Americans believe marijuana should be legalized**, according to an October 2021 Gallup Poll.
- Regulation makes it more difficult for teens to buy marijuana – **drug dealers don't check ID**.
- **Regulation enhances consumer safety**. Regulated cannabis can be labeled for potency, tested for contaminants, and safely packaged.

Marijuana is safer than alcohol:

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

Adults should be allowed to make the safer choice.

## About MPP

MPP led most of the successful efforts to legalize cannabis for adults' use — in Colorado, Alaska, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, Michigan, Vermont, Illinois, Montana, and Connecticut, along with a numerous medical cannabis and decriminalization campaigns.

Our mission is to end cannabis prohibition and create policy solutions that improve lives while empowering personal choice, combating injustice, and promoting equity.



*MPP's Chris Lindsey (center) with Illinois legislative champions at the bill signing for the Illinois adult-use cannabis law, June 2019.*

## Work with us!

MPP works in all 50 states and at the federal level. We are happy to be a resource for policymakers on marijuana policy reform issues. Contact us at [state@mpp.org](mailto:state@mpp.org).

Advocates, please get involved at [mpp.org](https://www.mpp.org).



The case for

# Taxing and Regulating Cannabis like Alcohol

"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. Jay Inslee and AG Bob Ferguson of Washington

"There is no logical basis for the prohibition of marijuana."

- The late Milton Friedman, Nobel Prize-winning economist

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

# Marijuana prohibition has failed. . .

- **Fifty-two percent** of American adults admit they have tried marijuana, according to a 2017 Marist Poll.
- **545,601 people** were arrested or cited for marijuana offenses in 2019. That's one person every 58 seconds — and **92%** of those were **just for possession**.
- A criminal record comes with **devastating collateral consequences** that make it harder to get a job, housing, or an education.
- **Prohibition is unequally enforced.** Black individuals are 3.6 times as likely to be arrested for cannabis possession as white individuals, despite similar usage rates.
- **Prohibition wastes law enforcement resources** on cannabis consumers, while most rapes, burglaries, and homicides remain unsolved, and thousands of rape kits are untested.
- Under prohibition, **workers are vulnerable to exploitation, violence, and arrest.** Legalization creates good jobs and tax revenue that can be used to repair hard-hit communities.
- Consumers don't know what they are purchasing on the illegal market. Regulation allows states to require that products be labeled for potency and tested for contaminants.

## How are things going in states that have ended prohibition?

### Jobs and Economy

- Colorado has issued more than 40,000 licenses for work directly in its cannabis industry, not counting jobs in ancillary businesses.
- Colorado and Washington — the first two states to make marijuana legal for adults — both rank among the best economies in the nation.

### Revenue

- In 2020, California raised more than \$1 billion in cannabis tax revenue.
- Colorado generated more than \$360 million in cannabis tax revenue in 2020.
- In the first year of marijuana sales, Nevada generated over \$69 million in marijuana taxes, exceeding projections by 40%.

### Youth

- Opponents' fears that teen marijuana use and drop out rates would increase have proven unfounded. Colorado youth marijuana use rates have decreased slightly since legalization, and they have been stable in Washington.
- On-time graduation rates have increased post-legalization in both Washington (from 77.2% to 79.3%) and Colorado (from 77.3% to 79%).

"After the election, if I could've had a magic wand, and I could've waved it and reversed the outcome of the election [regulating marijuana for adults], I would've done it. Now if I had that same magic wand, I'm not sure I'd wave it" — Former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper



Denver Relief Dispensary, CO (credit: Whaxy)

## Debunking Common Myths About Marijuana



### Myth #1: Marijuana is a "Gateway Drug"

**False.** The vast majority of people who use marijuana never try other drugs. In addition, marijuana "does not appear to be a gateway drug to the extent that it is the cause or even that it is the most significant predictor of serious drug abuse; care must be taken not to attribute cause to association."

- Institute of Medicine

### Myth #2: Legalizing marijuana for adults will increase youth use.

**False.** The most comprehensive studies in Colorado and Washington show that high school students' teen use rates were flat or decreased slightly since marijuana became legal for adults.

- Healthy Kids Colorado Survey and Youth Risk Behavior Survey

- Washington State Healthy Youth Survey

### Myth #3: Marijuana is highly addictive.

**False.** "Although few marijuana users develop dependence, some do. But they appear to be less likely to do so than users of other drugs (including alcohol and nicotine), and marijuana dependence appears to be less severe than dependence on other drugs."

- Institute of Medicine