

# Conservative Leaders and Marijuana Policy Reform

**“There is no logical basis for the prohibition of marijuana.”**

- Milton Friedman

**“It is time to end needless arrests and incarcerations of adults for small amounts of marijuana. We must implement smart regulations, while providing access for adults to safe, tested products.”**

- President Donald J. Trump

From the late William F. Buckley to President Donald Trump, prominent conservative leaders have recognized that outdated marijuana laws do more harm than good.

Several red states have legalized cannabis for adults, and most allow medical cannabis. Voters in seven states that Pres. Trump won in 2024 legalized cannabis for adults 21 and older in previous elections — Alaska, Arizona, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, and Ohio. In Florida, a majority of voters approved legalization in 2024, but the vote didn't cross the 60% threshold needed to become law.

Meanwhile, 40 states have legalized medical cannabis, including deep red states like Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, and South and North Dakota. In late 2025, Pres. Trump ordered cannabis to be rescheduled to Schedule III, noting, “It will help many ... patients live a far better life.”

Conservatives are increasingly recognizing that cannabis prohibition infringes on our constitutional rights, burdens law enforcement, and makes public health regulations impossible. It also deprives veterans, older Americans, and individuals with medical conditions of the relief cannabis can provide.

## The Federal Government Should Respect States' Rights to Enact Cannabis Policies

### U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX):

“I have long believed that the regulation of hemp and marijuana products should rest with each individual state. Reasonable minds can disagree, and a blanket federal prohibition disempowers the voters in each of the fifty States.”  
“A one-size-fits-all federal standard will undoubtedly create unintended consequences that harm consumers.”



photo credit: Cruz.Senate.gov

### U.S. Senator Mike Lee (R-UT):

“I think it would always have made more sense for a thing like marijuana to have been regulated at a state level because this is a commodity that can be grown, harvested, packaged, sold and consumed entirely intrastate. And I think it probably would have made more sense to give the states the authority at the outset to make that decision on their own.”



photo credit: Lee.Senate.gov

**Americans for Prosperity Foundation:** “Under our system of federalism, the federal government only has limited, enumerated powers and does not have a general police power. By contrast, under the Constitution most government power is supposed to rest with the States, which did not surrender their general power of governing in that document, as the Tenth Amendment makes clear. Under this federalist system, most government decisions are supposed to be made at the state and local levels, reflecting the needs and priorities of their communities and allowing for state- and local-level innovation.”



# Criminalizing Marijuana Erodes Our Freedoms



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## **The late William F. Buckley Jr. (Founder of National Review):**

"Marijuana never kicks down your door in the middle of the night. Marijuana never locks up sick and dying people, does not suppress medical research, does not peek in bedroom windows. Even if one takes every reefer madness allegation of the prohibitionists at face value, marijuana prohibition has done far more harm to far more people than marijuana ever could."

## **U.S. Rep. David Joyce (R-OH):**

"The current federal approach to cannabis policy infringes on the rights of states to implement their own laws, stifling critical medical research, hurting legitimate businesses, and diverting vital law enforcement resources needed elsewhere."

## **Tulsi Gabbard (U.S. Director of National Intelligence):**

"I believe firmly in every person's freedom to make their own choices, and that people should not be thrown in jail and incarcerated or made into criminals for choosing to smoke marijuana whether it be for medicinal and non-medicinal purposes."

# Veterans Deserve Access to Medical Cannabis

**U.S. Rep. Brian Mast (R-FL):** "Our veteran population is facing multiple epidemics, including addiction and suicide, and we owe it to them to make sure they've got every tool possible in the arsenal to deal with the impacts of battle — that includes medical cannabis."



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United States  
Congress

## **Gary Hess, Founder and Executive Director, Veterans Alliance for Holistic Alternatives:**

"Cannabis became a turning point in my healing journey. It gave me the kind of relief I hadn't felt in over a decade. For the first time, I could sleep, eat, think clearly, manage my pain and feel again — without needing a cocktail of medications that were numbing me more than helping. It wasn't a gateway; it was the exit — the path that allowed me to step away from opioids, antidepressants, and years of surviving in a system that only managed symptoms instead of treating the root cause."



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# Marijuana Legalization Is Good Fiscal Policy



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PA Senate

**Former State Sen. Tom Killion (R-PA):** "Legalization would not only increase our tax revenue but also significantly reduce the costs associated with marijuana enforcement. This would free up law enforcement and court resources for more urgent public safety issues. Additionally, the creation of jobs in the cannabis industry would further stimulate Pennsylvania's economy."

# Donald Trump's Cannabis Policy Campaign Pledge



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As I have previously stated, I believe it is time to end needless arrests and incarcerations of adults for small amounts of marijuana for personal use. We must also implement smart regulations, while providing access for adults, to safe, tested product. As a Floridian, I will be voting YES on Amendment 3 this November. As President, we will continue to focus on research to unlock the medical uses of marijuana to a Schedule 3 drug, and work with Congress to pass common sense laws, including safe banking for state authorized companies, and supporting states rights to pass marijuana laws, like in Florida, that work so well for their citizens.

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