



Top 10 Reasons to End Marijuana Prohibition

Top 10 Reasons to Replace Marijuana Prohibition with a System of Regulation and Taxation

1. Prohibition hasn't worked — marijuana use is mainstream and widespread. Relatively few Americans had heard of marijuana when the federal government first effectively prohibited it in 1937. Today, government data shows more than 118 million Americans admit to having tried it (24 million in the last month), and every year, the Monitoring the Future survey finds that four out of five high school seniors say marijuana is easy to obtain.

2. Prohibition wastes public resources, while marijuana taxation brings in much-needed revenue. A sample estimate by the Congressional Research Service projected that replacing marijuana prohibition with taxation and regulation would yield \$6.8 billion in excise taxes alone. In Washington State, taxes on cannabis sales brought in \$440 million in FY 2019.

3. Arresting marijuana offenders prevents police from focusing on real crime. In 2019 alone, the FBI reported 663,367 marijuana arrests and citations — more arrests than for all violent crimes combined. Meanwhile, FBI data showed that police only cleared 33 percent of rapes, 31 percent of robberies, and 14 percent of burglaries by making an arrest. Data published in *Police Quarterly* showed a higher percentage of some crimes were solved after legalization in both Colorado and Washington.

4. Prohibition sends an incredible number of Americans through the criminal justice system, ruining countless lives. According to the FBI, there have been more than 15 million marijuana arrests in the U.S. since 1995. While marijuana consumers who were not convicted have gone on to be president or Supreme Court justice, a criminal conviction can stand in the way of securing a job, getting housing, or receiving a professional license, student loan, food assistance, driver's license, or firearms permit.

5. Marijuana laws are disproportionately enforced. According to the ACLU, African Americans are more than 3.5 times as likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than whites nationwide, despite similar rates of use.

6. Replacing marijuana prohibition with regulation does not increase rates of teen marijuana use. According to the most comprehensive government surveys in each state, no state that legalized marijuana for adults has seen an overall increase in teens' rates of marijuana use outside of the confidence interval. Most of the data indicates slight decreases within the confidence intervals.

7. Marijuana prohibition breeds violence. As was the case during alcohol prohibition, driving this lucrative market underground results in violence. Both buyers and sellers are vulnerable to assault

when disputes cannot be solved lawfully, in courts.

8. Regulation allows for control. Unlike licensed businesses in states that regulate cannabis, illicit marijuana sellers operate virtually anywhere and have no incentive not to sell to minors. Prohibition guarantees that marijuana will not be tested for purity and potency, creating the risk of contamination by dangerous pesticides, molds, bacteria, or even lacing.

9. Prohibition is bad for the environment. Illicit marijuana growers sometimes use banned pesticides, divert waterways, and leave hazardous waste in state and national parks. Regulated cannabis businesses are monitored to ensure compliance with zoning and environmental laws.

10. Marijuana is safer than alcohol. Researchers have consistently concluded that marijuana is less toxic than alcohol, it has less potential for addiction, and it is less likely to contribute to serious medical problems. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports more than 30,000 alcohol-induced deaths per year, including more than 2,000 from acute overdose. It reports zero marijuana-induced deaths each year and there has never been a verified marijuana overdose death in history.
