



Delaware: Regulation Works!

It's Time for a New Approach to Cannabis

Taxing and regulating cannabis will create thousands of new jobs and bring in millions in taxes. Colorado brought in more than \$390 million in adult-use cannabis tax revenue in 2021. The cannabis industry will also create thousands of good jobs for Delawareans. As of January 2022, Colorado had 38,000 cannabis jobs.

Prohibition breeds violence. As with alcohol prohibition in the 1920s, since drug-related disputes can't be solved lawfully, violence is inevitable. As a result, cannabis users and sellers are vulnerable to assaults due to prohibition. In a regulated system, cannabis will be produced and sold by legitimate, taxpaying businesses instead of drug cartels and criminals.

Regulation would improve the fairness and efficiency of the criminal justice system. While Delaware's decriminalization law was an important reform, it is no substitute for regulating cannabis for adults' use. A \$100 fine can be an extreme hardship to low-income residents. Legalizing cannabis for adults will save hundreds of Delawareans from being searched, arrested, and cited for cannabis.

Prohibition makes control impossible. Prohibition deprives workers and the environment of the legal protections they are entitled to. It also guarantees cannabis won't undergo quality control testing, resulting in possible contamination by hazardous pesticides, bacteria, or the lacing of cannabis with other drugs. Regulated retailers will sell only products that have been lab-tested and labeled for potency.

Regulation can free up resources so police can focus on more serious crimes and help improve police/ community relationships. In 2019, the FBI reported 663,367 cannabis 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. Additionally, a Department of Justice study found that trusting relationships with the local community was one of the most important factors in whether police were effective in solving violent crimes.

Replacing prohibition with regulation creates barriers to teens accessing cannabis. A 2012 survey by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University found 40% of high schoolers reported knowing a student who sells cannabis at school — while under 1% knew a peer who sells alcohol. Regulated cannabis businesses check IDs and aren't allowed to sell to or employ minors.

There is overwhelming support for adult-use cannabis legalization. A 2022 poll conducted by the University of Delaware found that 60 percent of Delawareans support cannabis legalization. Furthermore, an October 2022 Gallup poll found 68 percent of Americans support making marijuana use legal for adults.

Prohibition is bad for the environment. Illicit cannabis 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.

Cannabis is safer than alcohol. The Institute of Medicine has found cannabis to be far less addictive than alcohol or tobacco. Unlike alcohol, cannabis has never caused a fatal overdose and is not associated with violent crime and domestic violence. Adults should be able to make the safer choice.