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**From:** Drug Policy Alliance  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 19, 2022  
**Subject:** Drug Policy Wins in the Midterms, and Biden Pardons Marijuana Convictions

We are  
the Drug  
Policy  
Alliance.

## November Newsletter

### Drug Policy Reform Wins Big in the Midterms

Voters in several states passed ballot initiatives to reform drug laws during last week's midterms.

[In Maryland, more than 65% of voters chose to legalize marijuana.](#) Adults will be able to purchase and possess up to 1.5 ounces of marijuana. They can also grow two plants. The law will automatically expunge certain marijuana convictions.

[In Missouri – a traditionally red state – more than 53% of voters chose to legalize marijuana.](#) Adults will be able to purchase and possess up to three ounces of marijuana. They can also grow six plants. Like in Maryland, the law will automatically expunge certain marijuana convictions. Some tax revenue will be used for drug treatment and to fund public defenders.

These new laws will go a long way to reduce the criminalization of people for drugs. In 2020, there were more than 25,000 marijuana arrests in Maryland and Missouri.

We also saw progress at the local level. In Texas, voters in San Marcos, Denton, Killen, Harker Heights, and Elgin chose to decriminalize marijuana possession. Drug Policy Action partnered with Ground Game Texas on these campaigns.

In Colorado, more than 53% of voters chose to allow the use, cultivation, and sharing of several psychedelics. While the bill does not permit sales, it does permit a therapeutic psychedelics program.

In Oregon, voters elected Tina Kotek for governor. Kotek is committed to continuing the implementation of Measure 110. Measure 110 made Oregon the first state to decriminalize drugs and invest in a health approach. DPA led the passage of Measure 110 in 2020. This election showed that voters still believe that drug policies should be based in health, equity, and human rights instead of punishment.

## **Biden Pardons Federal Marijuana Possession Charges, But Immigrants Left Out**

On October 6, President Biden pardoned every U.S. citizen and legal permanent resident convicted of federal marijuana possession. He also urged governors to do the same. This is small but significant step forward. It will help thousands of people.

“We are thrilled to see President Biden holding true to his commitment to pardon every person with simple marijuana possession charges at the federal level, including people in D.C. And we are further encouraged by his efforts to get governors to take similar actions at the state level. This is incredibly long overdue,” said [Kassandra Frederique](#), DPA’s executive director.

“There is no reason to saddle someone with a criminal record – preventing them from jobs, housing, education, and more – for something that is already legal in many states,” Kassandra continued.

But, Biden's announcement does not help most immigrants. Over 130 civil rights organizations – including DPA – [sent a letter](#) to President Biden urging him to pardon *everyone* convicted of federal marijuana possession, regardless of their immigration status.

[Learn more.](#)

## DPA Clips, Podcasts, and Stories

### [FEATURED POST: THE DRUG WAR IS...](#)

The Drug  
War is \_\_\_\_\_.

We'll Start: **Bullsh\*t**

We are  
the Drug  
Policy  
Alliance.

The Drug War is \_\_\_\_\_.

How would you fill it in? Join the conversation. [Add your answer on](#)

[our Instagram post.](#)

***Follow DPA on Instagram.***

## **DPA's Reform Conference is Back in 2023!**

The International Drug Policy Reform Conference is back! [Save the date and join us October 18-21, 2023, in Phoenix, Arizona.](#)

The Reform Conference is the world's premier drug policy gathering. Reformers come together to strategize how to build a new world where health, equity, and human rights are front and center in drug policy.

Attendees will spend three days with other people committed to ending the drug war. Sessions will be delivered by leading global experts. More than 1,200 attendees from more than 50 countries attended the last Reform Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, in 2019.

In 2021, we made the right but painful decision to pause this biennial conference. This was to protect people due to the pandemic. We are excited to bring it back next year in Phoenix. We are taking every precaution to make this event as safe as possible.

It's been far too long since we've come together for this conference. We intend on making this the best one yet! [Please save the date to join us in October 2023.](#) We'll be in touch soon with more information.

## **DPA Urges Attorney General to Allow Marijuana Sales in Washington, D.C.**

DPA is leading a coalition urging Attorney General Merrick Garland to allow marijuana sales in Washington, D.C.

In most [states that have legalized marijuana](#), adults can purchase it from licensed retailers. Voters in Washington, D.C., passed a ballot initiative to legalize marijuana in 2014. But currently only possession, cultivation, and gifting is allowed.

Sales are blocked by the Harris rider. This rider is part of Congress's annual spending bills.

DPA led a sign-on letter to the Attorney General, signed by 74 other groups, that said the capital is the “only jurisdiction in the country that cannot regulate marijuana sales or fruitfully tap into the public health and safety benefits of proper regulation.”

“The injustice imposed on D.C. by the rider has created an untenable situation with the unregulated cannabis marketplace,” the letter states. “Allowing D.C. to regulate cannabis would alleviate public health and safety concerns due to the unregulated marijuana market in D.C., promote economic development in D.C., as well as demonstrate this administration’s support for D.C.’s right to home rule.”

The federal Harris rider may be removed legislatively as part of the 2023 spending bill.

**[Learn more about efforts to legalize marijuana retail in Washington, D.C.](#)**

## DPA and Allies Welcome Federal Drug Scheduling Act

On October 13, U.S. Senator Cory Booker announced the Temporary Emergency Scheduling and Testing of Fentanyl Analogues (TEST) Act. This bill would require the government to test the harmfulness of fentanyl-related substances (FRS) that are currently classified as Schedule I. It would then require the Attorney General to delist any FRS that are not considered harmful.

“Temporary scheduling alone is a failed experiment that hasn’t curbed the devastation the opioid crisis has brought on countless families in the United States,” said Senator Booker. “Temporary scheduling has also preemptively criminalized potentially life-saving antidotes to fentanyl overdoses and impeded the medical, research, and scientific community’s ability to develop the solutions we need to effectively tackle this crisis.”

DPA welcomed the announcement.

“Senator Booker’s TEST Act is a necessary step for our country to address the overdose epidemic with science and compassion instead of fear and stigma,” said [Maritza Perez](#), director of DPA’s Office of Federal Affairs. “Without testing, the federal government can unilaterally impose restrictions on any substance it wants, regardless of whether or not it is actually harmful, leading to unjust criminal convictions and impeding research into potentially life-saving treatments.”

[Learn more about the TEST Act.](#)

## Drug Policy in the News

**LA Times:** More Teenagers Dying From Fentanyl

**Inverse:** Is It Finally Time To Stop Drug Testing Workers?

**El País:** Kassandra Frederique: “La Guerra Contra Las Drogas Es Una Mentira”

**Foreign Policy:** Why Colombia Should Fully Legalize Cocaine

**NPR:** Republicans Recast Drug Debate As Issue Of Crime And Borders

**High Times:** Numerous California Cities Approve Cannabis Retail Measures

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