

New Jersey's Views on Marijuana

Legalization, Taxation, Regulation

Prepared for the Drug Policy Alliance

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**We are
the Drug
Policy
Alliance.**

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the findings of a statewide, representative survey of New Jersey adults conducted by Dr. David Redlawsk's Survey Research course at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey in service to the Drug Policy Alliance. The New Jersey chapter of the Drug Policy Alliance, a national non-profit organization that seeks to end the war on drugs and promote drug policy reform, sought to examine public opinion on marijuana legalization, taxation, and regulation in the state. We find that a majority of 60 percent of New Jerseyans either strongly or somewhat support marijuana legalization, taxation, and regulation for adults 21 and over. Further, we find that there is no difference in support when thinking about legalization in general compared to considering a bill in the New Jersey State Legislature that would legalize marijuana. We also find no effect on support by comparing marijuana to alcohol. Regardless of New Jerseyans' views on marijuana legalization, they would most like to see the resulting tax revenue be put towards education, as well as drug treatment and prevention programs. After testing five messages, we find that economic arguments of tax revenue and excessive law enforcement costs are the most likely to make New Jerseyans more supportive of marijuana, with frames of racial justice, conviction consequences, and drug policy reforms of other states having little effect. Ultimately, we recommend that the Drug Policy Alliance generally promote the use of funds for education, while targeting those who oppose legalization with the prospect of drug treatment and prevention programs and arguing to those who are older that money could be used for transportation. We recommend that the DPA largely stick to economic messages, except in the case of African Americans, where the racial justice message may prove to be useful.

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Objectives

The Drug Policy Alliance (DPA) is a national non-profit organization “promoting drug policies that are grounded in science, compassion, health and human rights.” The DPA has state offices in California, Colorado, New Jersey, New Mexico, and New York, and an office of national affairs in Washington, D.C., employing a total of about 65 paid staff across all offices.

While the Drug Policy Alliance advocates for reforms on many issues relating to the war on drugs including syringe access and overdose prevention, for this project we were tasked with examining opinion on marijuana legalization. Much survey work previously conducted by the DPA and others has focused primarily on medical marijuana and marijuana decriminalization, but relatively little has studied public opinion regarding comprehensive marijuana reform that would legalize, tax, and regulate recreational marijuana in New Jersey.

This project, carried out as part of the Survey Research course at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey under Professor David Redlawsk, was designed to gauge the current state of opinion on marijuana legalization, taxation, and regulation in New Jersey, and to find out whether support varies depending on whether marijuana is compared to alcohol or not, if support for legalization as an abstract concept is the same as support for a bill in the State Legislature, and personally important legalization is to New Jerseyans. We also aimed to help the Drug Policy Alliance in developing strategies to increase support for policy reform. The DPA has already identified the “low-hanging fruit” and wants to know who it is that still opposes legalization, and which messages and language will change their minds. Finally, the Drug Policy Alliance also wanted to know where New Jerseyans would like to see tax revenue go should marijuana become legal, taxed, and regulated.

Methodology

The survey items in this report were fielded as part of a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll conducted by telephone using live callers March 27 to April 3, 2015 with a scientifically selected random sample of 860 New Jersey adults, 18 or older, on both cell phones and landline phones. Spanish interviews were available when requested. The sample was weighted to account for selection probability and weighted to match several demographic variables reflecting the population parameters of the state of New Jersey: gender, race, age, and Hispanic ethnicity.

In this poll, the simple sampling error for the 860 adults is +/-3.2 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The adult sample weighting design effect is 1.27, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 3.8 percentage points for the adult sample.

Further methodological details can be found in Appendix III.

Demographics

The following chart displays the weighted demographic characteristics of the sample, which contained N=860 respondents. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Gender		Race		Age	
Male	49 %	White	58 %	18 to 29	18 %
Female	51 %	Black	13 %	30-44	27 %
		Hispanic	17 %	45-64	36 %
		Asian/Other/Multi	12 %	65+	19 %
Party ID with Leaners		Ideology		Education	
Democrat	46 %	Liberal	22 %	HS or Less	25 %
Independent	28 %	Moderate	60 %	Some College	26 %
Republican	26 %	Conservative	18 %	College Grad	28 %
				Grad Work	22 %
Income		Marital Status		Region	
<\$50K	30 %	Not Married	46 %	Urban	16 %
\$50K-<\$100K	34 %	Married	54 %	Suburb	34 %
\$100K-<\$150K	18 %			Exurb	15 %
\$150K+	18 %			Philly/South Shore	19 %
					17 %
Religion					
Catholic	39 %				
Protestant	13 %				
Jewish	6 %				
Other/Agnostic/Atheist	41 %				

Support for Marijuana Legalization

Much public opinion polling in New Jersey has centered on opinion on marijuana decriminalization and medical marijuana, rather than New Jerseyans' views on legal, recreational marijuana. A Rutgers-Eagleton Poll conducted in April 2014 found nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of New Jerseyans agree with reducing or eliminating penalties for the use or possession of marijuana, but less than half (48 percent) agreed that marijuana should be “completely legalized.”

The wording of the 2014 Rutgers-Eagleton Poll question lacks several key elements of the Drug Policy Alliance's marijuana policy reform goals: that legal marijuana be taxed and regulated, and that it only be made available to adults 21 and over. For this reason, we chose instead to ask about support for “...legalizing, taxing, and regulating marijuana for adults 21 and over?” (see QM1A through QM2B in Appendix A). However, this approach is accompanied by significant drawbacks. Including multiple elements of a policy in a question of overall support precludes the respondent from disagreeing with one or more of the elements; for example, a respondent cannot say they support legalization but oppose taxation. Despite this, we judged this risk to be admissible; we felt it was important to include all elements of the proposed marijuana reform policy but time constraints within the survey limited our ability to ask about each element separately while still including other items of interest to the DPA.

In gauging support for marijuana legalization, we used two measures: support for legalization, taxation, and regulation of marijuana for adults 21 and over when “thinking about the issue in general,” and support for “a bill in the New Jersey State Legislature that would legalize, tax, and regulate marijuana for adults 21 and over,” referring to Senate Bill 1896/Assembly Bill 3094. Previous work conducted by the Drug Policy Alliance has indicated

that respondents may be less likely to support a specific bill than they are to support legalization in the abstract since the prospect of legislation may make the issue more concrete and bring it “closer to home.” The two questions were rotated to minimize question order effects. Ultimately, we found that there was no statistically significant difference between support for the issue in general vs. support for the bill.

Additionally, we conducted a framing experiment wherein for a half of the respondents, marijuana legalization (both in general and for the specific bill) was likened to the way that alcohol is currently sold and regulated in New Jersey, a policy that faces little opposition. For those respondents who received the alcohol frame (assigned randomly), the two support questions were introduced with the statement “Alcohol is legal, taxed, and regulated. Some have proposed doing the same with marijuana” and the words “like alcohol” were added to the support questions (see QM1B and QM2B in Appendix I). We found that, contrary to expectations, comparing marijuana legalization to alcohol did *not* serve to increase support.

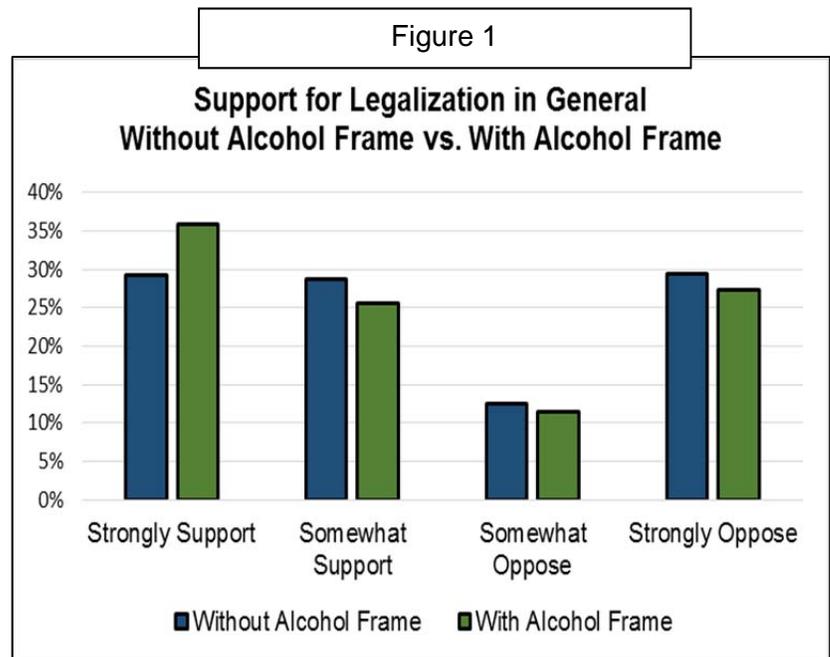
Table 1 describes the setup of the questions about marijuana legalization, taxation, and regulation; the respondent was randomly assigned to either have the version of the questions with the alcohol frame or the versions without, and the general support and specific bill questions were presented in a random order.

Table 1 <i>Setup of questions about marijuana legalization, taxation, and regulation.</i>		
	With alcohol frame	Without alcohol frame
Order of the questions randomized	Issue in general Bill in the New Jersey State Legislature	Issue in general Bill in the New Jersey State Legislature

Alcohol Framing Experiment

Each respondent was asked one of two versions of each question (general support and support for the bill), one with no additional language and one likening marijuana legalization, regulation, and taxation to how alcohol is currently legal, regulated, and taxed in New Jersey. Since the way alcohol is sold and regulated in New Jersey is met with little opposition, we would expect that comparing marijuana legalization to alcohol would increase support. To be able to conclude that the alcohol comparison *causes* a change in support for legalization, it is necessary to conduct an experiment. We intended for half of the respondents to be randomly assigned to have the alcohol frame; random assignment minimizes the differences between each group and statistically “washes out” any sources of error so that the only cause for change must be the independent variable (in this case, the alcohol frame). However, the programmed randomization malfunctioned and less than half of the sample received the alcohol frame. Fortunately, the effectiveness of the alcohol frame can still be evaluated using a regression analysis, which will be presented later.

Across all versions of the question, majorities support marijuana legalization (Figure 1). In the version of the “issue in general” support question *without* the alcohol frame, of those who provided a response, 29 percent strongly support marijuana



legalization, taxation, and regulation, another 29 percent somewhat support it, 13 percent somewhat oppose it, and yet another 29 percent strongly oppose it. In the version *with* the alcohol frame, 36 percent strongly support legalization, taxation, and regulation, just over a quarter (26 percent) somewhat support it, 11 percent somewhat oppose it, and another 27 percent strongly oppose it.

In the “Bill in the State Legislature” version of the support question *without* the alcohol frame, of those who provided a response, 3 in 10 strongly support the bill, 27 percent somewhat support it, 12 percent strongly oppose it, and another 3 in 10 (31 percent) strongly oppose it. In the version *with* the alcohol frame, one-third strongly support the bill, 28 percent somewhat support it, 11 percent somewhat oppose it, and 28 percent strongly oppose it.

Regression Analysis

Due to the survey system’s apparent randomization failure in assigning the versions of the questions to respondents, we use multivariate regression identify whether or not the version of the question has any significant effects on responses to the legalization question. This is necessary to control for other factors that might influence responses. For example, younger people are more likely to support legalization; if the group of respondents asked one version of the question has more younger people than the group asked the other version, it would look like the first version had more support, when in fact it might not be the version of the question, but instead the average age of respondents in the group that is driving the differences.

Our initial examination of the data (Figure 1) seems to suggest that those who received the alcohol frame are slightly more likely to strongly support legalization, taxation, and regulation than those who did not. But to determine if that difference is statistically significant, and in the

absence of easily comparable randomized groups, we ran an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression using the level of support for the issue in general as the dependent variable and the version of the question received (no alcohol frame or alcohol frame), race (white/nonwhite), gender, age, religion, income, party identification, and education as independent variables. The dependent variable, what we are trying to predict, is support for marijuana legalization, and is coded so that *lower values* indicate greater support.¹

The coefficients and standard errors are provided in Table 2. The coefficient for the version of the question received is not significant, meaning that the version of the question does not predict how respondents answer, all else equal. Similar results were found when running a regression for support for the specific bill, with a p-value of .557 for the question version. Thus, we conclude that the level of support for marijuana legalization is *not* affected by whether or not it is compared to alcohol.

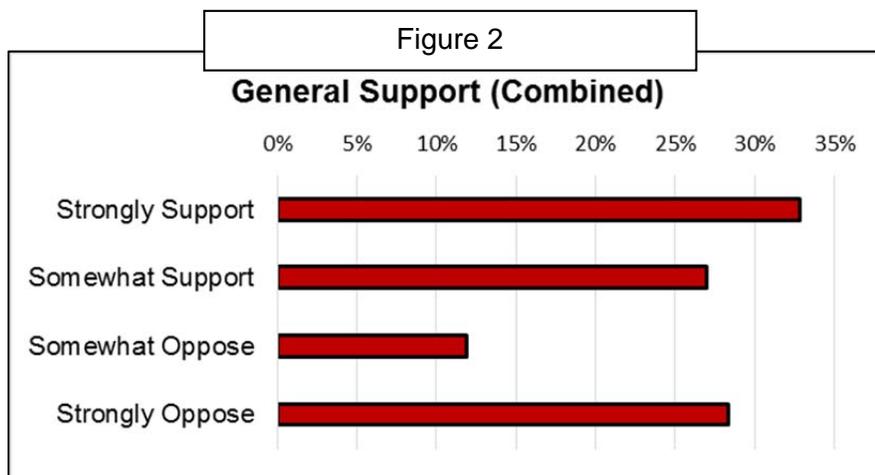
	B	SE(B)
Question version	.002	.092
Gender	.070	.092
Race - White	-.395***	.107
Age	.011***	.003
Education		
HS or Less	-.207	.151
Some College	-.218	.138
College Grad	-.057	.133
Household Income		
<\$50K	.367*	.152
\$50-<\$100K	.172	.139
\$100-<\$150K	.082	.154
Democrat	-.320**	.115
Republican	.423***	.130
Religion		
Catholic	.237*	.104
Protestant	.298	.155
Jewish	.139	.216
Constant	1.765***	.265
Statistical significance: *** = .001, ** = .01, * = .05.		
$r^2 = .113$		

¹ The question details are in the appendix. Support was coded as 1=Strongly support, 2=Somewhat support, 3=Somewhat Oppose, and 4=Strongly Oppose. Don't knows and refusals are removed for analyses.

These findings run counter to the expectations that comparing marijuana legalization to alcohol would increase levels of support. However, since the alcohol frame produces no statistically significant differences, this allows us to combine the responses to each version (frame or no frame) of the general support and specific bill questions, respectively. Effectively, we now have two questions (general support and the bill in the New Jersey State Legislature), each with 860 responses rather than approximately 430, which gives us greater power to make conclusions about differences in opinion by race, gender, and other demographic variables.

General Support for Legalization, Taxation, and Regulation

Overall, there is majority support among New Jerseyans for legalizing, taxing, and regulating marijuana when thinking about the issue in general (Figure 2). In the combined responses of the alcohol and non-alcohol versions of the question (QM1A and QM1B in Appendix I), fully 60 percent of those who answered the question support legalizing marijuana, with one-third (33 percent) strongly supporting it and 27 percent somewhat supporting it. Another 40 percent oppose legalizing, taxing, and regulating marijuana, with just over 1 in 10 (12 percent) somewhat opposing it and nearly 3 in 10 (28 percent) strongly opposing it.



Subgroup Analyses

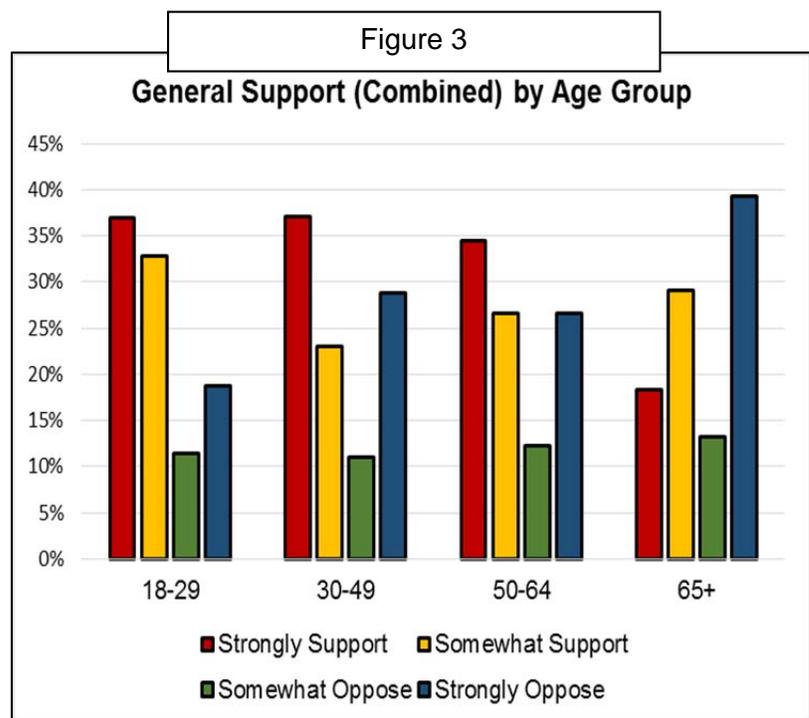
For this and other subgroup analyses, we report details only where there are statistically significant differences across subgroups. It is important to recognize that in general subgroup point estimates (percentages) are less precise than those for the full sample. The statistical analyses used take this fact into account.

Age

Support for marijuana legalization, taxation, and regulation varies widely by age group, with younger respondents being much more likely to support legalization than older respondents (Figure 3). These differences are highly statistically significant. Overall, 70 percent of those aged 18 to 29 either strongly or somewhat support legalization, compared to less than half (47 percent) of those aged 65 and older. The oldest respondents are also the most likely to say they strongly oppose marijuana legalization, at nearly 4 in 10 (39 percent) of those 65 and older. Falling somewhere in between are 30- to 49-year-olds and 50- to 64-year-olds, of whom 60 percent and 62 percent, respectively, somewhat or strongly support legalization.

Party Identification

Party identification is another key determinant of



support for legalization, and is also highly significant. As would be expected, Democrats are the most supportive of marijuana legalization, with over 4 in 10 (41 percent) strongly supporting it and over a quarter (27 percent) somewhat supporting it. Independents are also largely supportive of legalization, with 3 in 10 each strongly supporting it (31 percent) and somewhat supporting it (29 percent). This may be because many of those who identify as Independents, and do not lean towards either the Democrats or Republicans, are libertarians. In contrast, a majority of 55 percent of Republicans oppose marijuana legalization; over 4 in 10 (43 percent) strongly oppose it and another 12 percent somewhat oppose it. Similar, yet even further polarized results are found by ideology, with liberals being the most supportive of legalization, conservatives the least, and moderates somewhere in between.

Other groups

Table 3 reports the mean response to the general support question for each demographic group. Recall that a *higher* mean value indicates *lower* support, and a *lower* mean indicates *higher* support. Put another way, higher averages indicate more opposition, and lower averages indicate less opposition. In Table 3, a minus sign (-) represents that the mean is below the average of the response categories (2.5), and a plus sign (+) indicates it is higher.

Other statistically significant differences include respondent parental status, education, religion, and income. Parents with children of any age are more likely to lean towards opposition than those without children, who lean towards support. Catholics and Protestants oppose legalization, while Jewish respondents and those of other religions (including atheists and agnostics) support it. As income increases, support also increases. Support varies with education, with those who have completed some colleges expressing the highest support.

Table 3
Mean response for general support of marijuana legalization question (combined).

Significant Differences		Insignificant Differences	
	Mean response		Mean response
Party identification		Gender	
Democrat	2.12 (-)	Male	2.30 (-)
Independent	2.34 (-)	Female	2.41 (-)
Republican	2.78 (+)	Race	
Ideology		White	2.34 (-)
Liberal	1.99 (-)	Black	2.34 (-)
Moderate	2.27 (-)	Hispanic	2.40 (-)
Conservative	3.01 (+)	Other	2.43 (-)
Parenthood		Race (2-category)	
No, not a parent	2.11 (-)	White	2.34 (-)
Yes, parent	2.50 (=)	Nonwhite	2.38 (-)
Education		Region	
HS or less	2.47 (-)	Urban	2.32 (-)
Some college	2.26 (-)	Suburb	2.36 (-)
College grad	2.34 (-)	Exurb	2.28 (-)
Graduate work	2.41 (-)	Philadelphia/South Shore	2.42 (-)
Age group		Registered voter	
18-29	2.12 (-)	Yes	2.32 (-)
30-49	2.31 (-)	No	2.53 (+)
50-64	2.31 (-)	Religion	
65+	2.73 (+)	Catholic	2.56 (+)
Religion		Protestant	2.58 (+)
Catholic	2.56 (+)	Jewish	2.18 (-)
Protestant	2.58 (+)	Other	2.11 (-)
Jewish	2.18 (-)	Income	
Other	2.11 (-)	<50K	2.42 (-)
Income		50K-<100K	2.27 (-)
<50K	2.42 (-)	100K-<150K	2.28 (-)
50K-<100K	2.27 (-)	150K+	2.24 (-)
100K-<150K	2.28 (-)		
150K+	2.24 (-)		

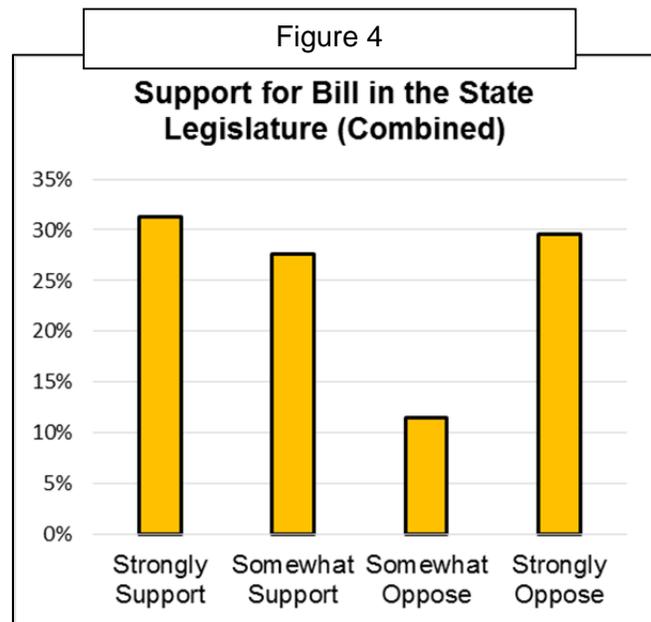
Note. In coding, 1 = "Strongly support," 2 = "Somewhat support," 3 = "Somewhat oppose," 4 = "Strongly oppose." Higher means indicate higher *opposition*; lower means indicate lower *opposition*. A minus sign represents that the mean is below the average of the response categories (2.5), and a plus sign indicates that it is higher.

Somewhat surprisingly given the war on drugs' differential impact by race, there are no statistically significant differences in support among White, Black, Hispanic, and other respondents using our combined race and ethnicity variable. Even when looking at white respondents compared to nonwhite respondents, the difference is still statistically insignificant.

There are also no statistically significant differences by gender, region, or registered voter status.

Support for a Bill in the New Jersey State Legislature

Again, combining the versions of the question without the alcohol frame, and with the alcohol frame (QM2A and QM2B in Appendix I), there is majority support for a bill in the New Jersey State Legislature that would legalize, tax, and regulate marijuana for adults 21 and over (Figure 4). Overall, of those who provided a response, 59 percent support the bill, with 31 percent saying that they strongly



support it and another 28 percent saying that they somewhat support it. Just over 4 in 10 (42 percent) oppose the bill, with 12 percent somewhat opposing it and 3 in 10 strongly opposing it.

Subgroup Analyses

Differences among subgroups for the specific bill are similar to differences among subgroups for support for marijuana legalization in general. However, while there were significant differences by income and education for support in general, income and education did not make a difference in terms of support for the bill. Table 4 summarizes the mean responses for subgroups, with higher means indicating less support (see description of Table 3). Patterns of support and opposition remain the same as for the question of marijuana legalization in general.

Table 4
Mean response for support for bill in the State Legislature question (combined).

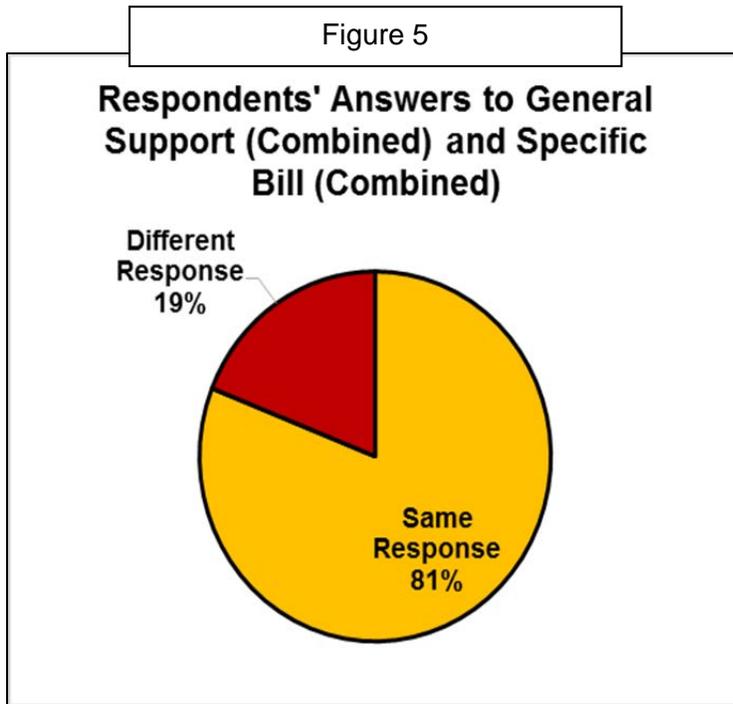
Significant Differences		Insignificant Differences	
	Mean response		Mean response
Party identification		Gender	
Democrat	2.14 (-)	Male	2.29 (-)
Independent	2.37 (-)	Female	2.49 (-)
Republican	2.85 (+)	Race	
Ideology		White	2.39 (-)
Liberal	2.05 (-)	Black	2.39 (-)
Moderate	2.30 (-)	Hispanic	2.31 (-)
Conservative	3.01 (+)	Other	2.45 (-)
Parenthood		Race (2-category)	
No, not a parent	2.13 (-)	White	2.39 (-)
Yes, parent	2.55 (+)	Nonwhite	2.38 (-)
Age group		Region	
18-29	2.08 (-)	Urban	2.27 (-)
30-49	2.37 (-)	Suburb	2.44 (-)
50-64	2.37 (-)	Exurb	2.37 (-)
65+	2.78 (+)	Philadelphia/South Shore	2.45 (-)
Religion		Registered voter	
Catholic	2.58 (+)	Yes	2.37 (-)
Protestant	2.65 (+)	No	2.52 (+)
Jewish	2.19 (-)	Income	
Other	2.14 (-)	<50K	2.43 (-)
		50K-<100K	2.34 (-)
		100K-<150K	2.38 (-)
		150K+	2.28 (-)
		Education	
		HS or less	2.42 (-)
		Some college	2.36 (-)
		College grad	2.39 (-)
		Graduate work	2.42 (-)

Note. In coding, 1 = "Strongly support," 2 = "Somewhat support," 3 = "Somewhat oppose," 4 = "Strongly oppose." *Higher* means indicate higher *opposition*; *lower* means indicate lower *opposition*. A minus sign represents that the mean is below the average of the response categories (2.5), and a plus sign indicates that it is higher.

Comparing the Issue in General to the Bill in the Legislature

Looking at the distribution of opinion for support of marijuana legalization in general (Figure 2) and the responses to support for the bill in the State Legislature (Figure 4), the two are

nearly identical, suggesting little difference in response whether asked about the issue in general or the specific bill. Overall, 60 percent either strongly or somewhat support marijuana legalization, taxation, and regulation when thinking about the issue in general, and 59 percent



either strongly or somewhat support the specific bill. A paired-sample difference of means test confirms that there is no difference between the mean responses of each question. This defies the expectations set by the Drug Policy Alliance's previous work, which indicated that respondents may express lower support for a bill—a concrete policy

possibility—than for the concept in more abstract terms.

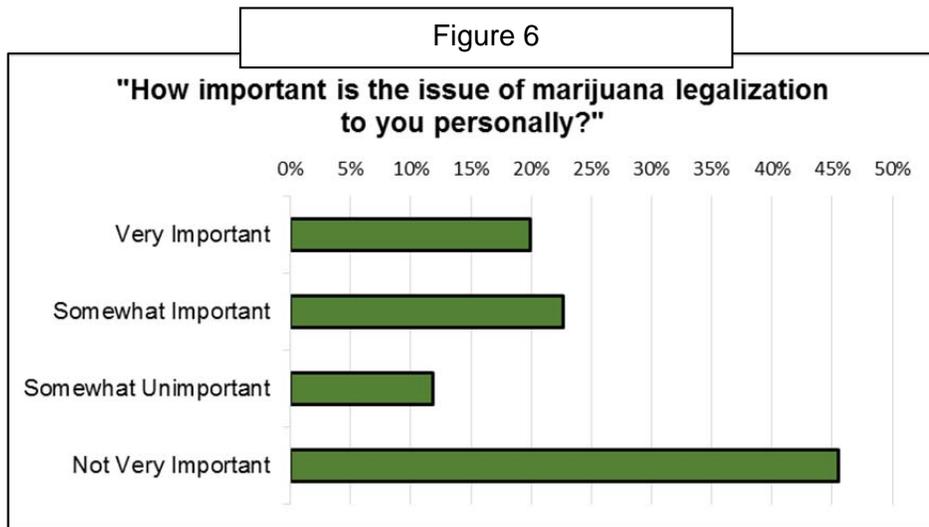
Respondents saw little difference between the two questions. Over 4 in 5 respondents (81 percent) chose the same response—viz. strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose—both when thinking about the issue in general and for the bill in the New Jersey State Legislature (Figure 5).

Personal Importance of Marijuana Legalization

After analyzing our first two versions of two questions, we find that the majority of New Jerseyans support marijuana legalization, taxation, and regulation, regardless of whether or not it is compared to alcohol or if they are faced with the proposition of a bill in the legislature.

However, knowing passive attitudes is not enough information for an organization like the Drug Policy Alliance, which seeks to mobilize in order to create policy change. How many people actually care about the issue? Are the people who feel strongly about marijuana legalization the ones who support it or are they the ones who oppose it? The answer to those questions have important implications for organizing strategy.

When asked how important the issue of marijuana legalization is to them personally, the plurality (46 percent) of New Jerseyans say it is not very important. Another 12 percent say it is somewhat unimportant, about a quarter (23 percent) say it is somewhat important, followed by 1 in 5 (20 percent) who say it is very important to them. On the whole, marijuana legalization is not particularly important to most New Jerseyans (Figure 6).

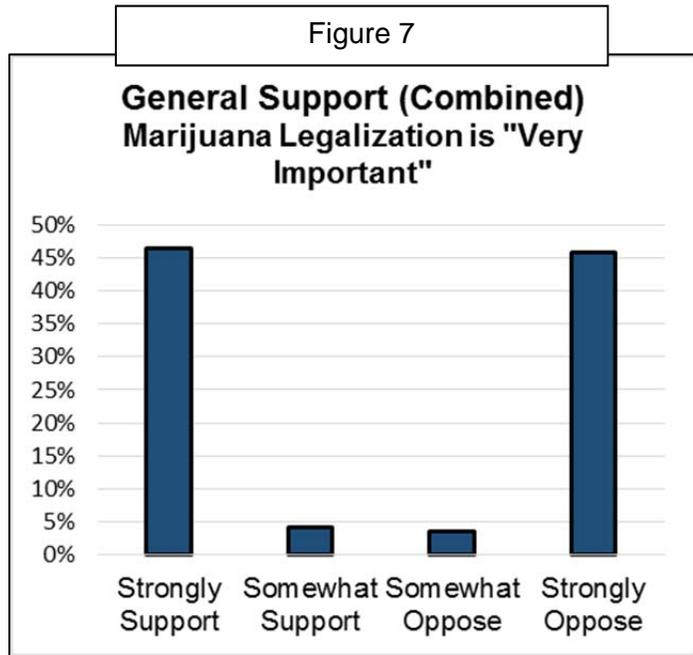


Relationship between Importance and Support for Legalization

Despite the overall unimportance of marijuana legalization to New Jerseyans, interesting patterns emerge in the interactions between importance of the issue and support (or lack thereof) of legalization. Both the strongest support and strongest opposition to legalization, taxation, and regulation come from those who have the most intense feelings about the issue. Of those who

find legalization “very important” to them personally, 46 percent strongly support marijuana legalization, taxation, and regulation, while another 46 percent strongly oppose it (Figure 7). Just 8 percent fall into the middle categories of somewhat supporting or somewhat opposing legalization.

The pattern of bimodal support and opposition does not hold for other groups, and differences in support by level of importance are statistically significant. In contrast to those who find legalization very important, those who think marijuana legalization is somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or not at all important all have majorities



supporting legalization. Of those who personally find legalization to be somewhat important, almost 7 in 10 (69 percent) either somewhat or strongly support legalization, compared to two thirds (66 percent) of those who find it somewhat unimportant, and another 57 percent of those who think it’s not very important. Full results are displayed in Table 5.

Support for Legalization (General)	Importance of Legalization			
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Not Very Important
Strongly Support	46%	48%	32%	19%
Somewhat Support	4%	21%	34%	39%
Somewhat Oppose	3%	9%	22%	15%
Strongly Oppose	46%	22%	12%	28%

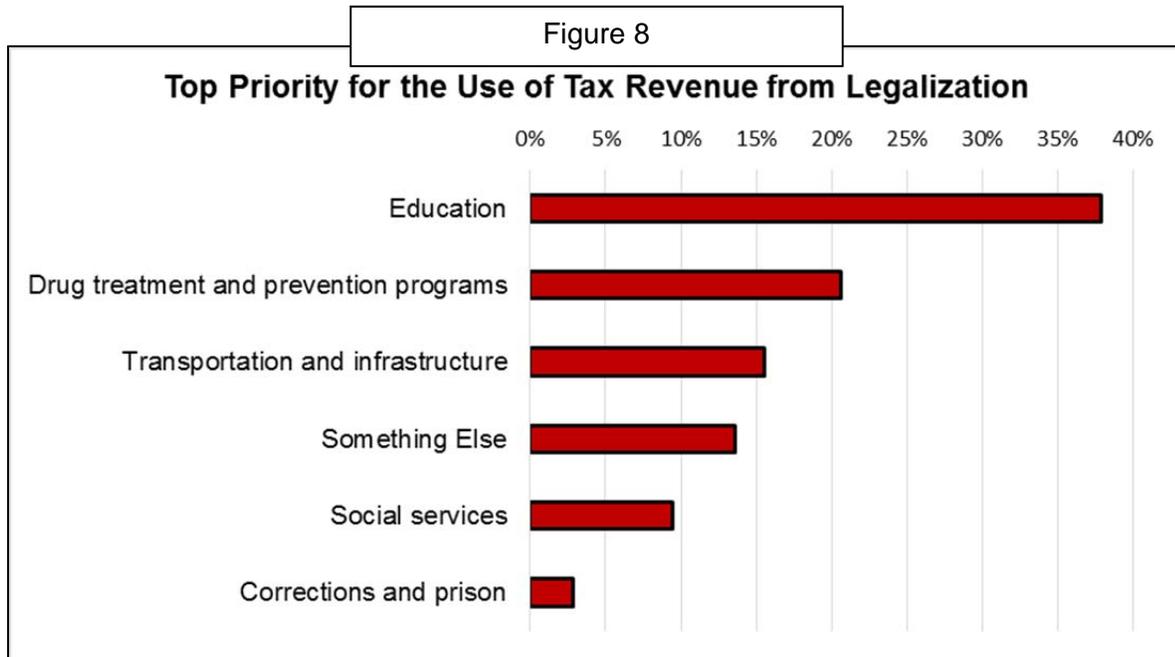
Use of Tax Revenue from Marijuana Sales

As a non-profit, advocacy-oriented organization, the Drug Policy Alliance needs to show the benefits that change will bring. Much of the legwork in promoting drug policy reform is with those that remain unconvinced that legalizing, taxing, and regulating marijuana is for the benefit of society at large. Of course, when it comes to taxation, the question remains of where that money should go towards. In order to find out how the Drug Policy Alliance could make the idea of legalizing and taxing marijuana more appealing to those who either somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the idea, we looked at where

Respondents were asked, “Regardless of your views on marijuana legalization, of the following, which would be your TOP priority for the use of tax revenue generated by the sale of marijuana,” and were given the choice of education, transportation and infrastructure, social services, corrections and prison, drug treatment and prevention programs, or “something else” (QM4 in Appendix I). The order of the first five options were randomized in order to minimize response order effects. Four of the choices provided were derived from a list from the nonpartisan Center on Budget and Policy Priorities². “Drug treatment and prevention programs” was added because that is ideally where the Drug Policy Alliance would ideally like to see tax revenue generated from the sale of marijuana be used. Overall, a plurality of nearly 4 in 10 (38 percent) New Jerseyans said that their top priority for tax revenue generated by legalizing marijuana was education; a distant second was drug treatment and prevention programs at 21 percent (Figure 8). Another 16 percent chose transportation and infrastructure, 14 percent chose “something else,” about 1 in 10 (9 percent) chose social services, and just 3 percent ranked corrections and prison

² <http://www.cbpp.org/research/policy-basics-where-do-our-state-tax-dollars-go>

as their top priority. Those who said “something else” were asked to specify what they believed revenue should be used for instead; many reported that they would like to see tax revenue go towards lowering other taxes (see Appendix II).



That drug treatment and prevention programs was the second most popular option is somewhat surprising given other options that have been publicized as being in funding crisis, such as transportation. Looking at the makeup of who emphasizes putting money towards drug treatment and prevention programs provides powerful insight (Figure 9). Over 1 in 3 (34 percent) of those who somewhat oppose marijuana legalization, taxation, and regulation chose drug treatment and prevention programs as their top priority, along with nearly a quarter (24 percent) of those who strongly oppose legalization. In contrast, just 12 percent of those who strongly support legalization chose drug treatment, as well as 22 percent of those who somewhat support it. Promoting drug treatment and prevention programs as a use for tax revenue could prove to be a useful strategy in swaying opinion of those who oppose legalization.

Subgroup Analyses

Race

Ultimately, there are statistically significant differences in terms of priority for tax revenue by every demographic variable studied except for whether or not the respondent was a parent (Table 6). In particular, racial differences are very strong. Thirty

percent of white respondents reported that they would like to see education receive the tax revenue. This is in contrast to minority groups who reported much higher levels of desire for money to go towards education; Black respondents at 51 percent and Hispanics at 47 percent.

Whites were three times as likely to prefer giving the tax revenue to transportation and infrastructure at 20 percent, in comparison to 6 percent of African Americans and 7 percent of Hispanics.

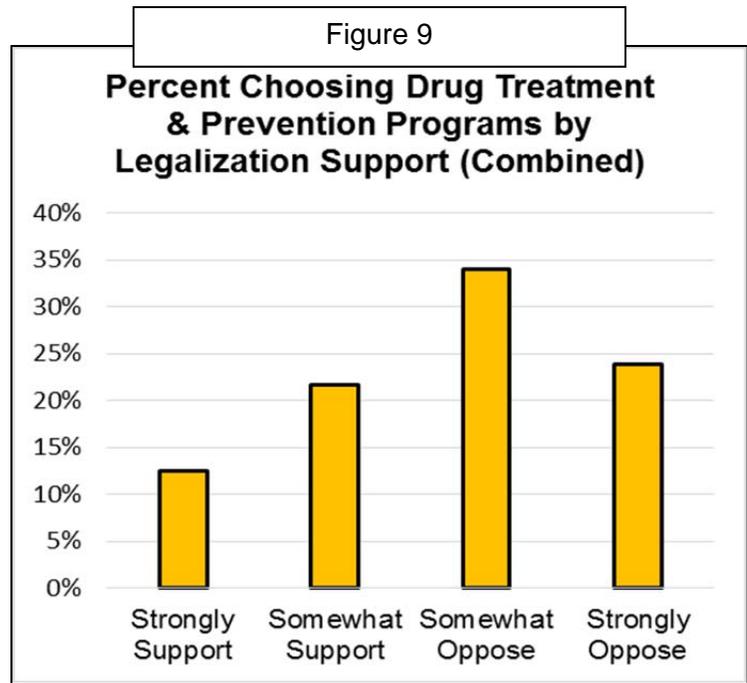


Table 6

Significant and insignificant differences for use of tax revenue.

Significant Differences	Insignificant Differences
Party identification	Parenthood
Ideology	
Gender	
Race	
Registered voter status	
Region	
Education	
Age group	
Religion	
Income	

Note. All differences are significant at the .05 level or higher.

Party Identification

As with support for marijuana legalization, there are again highly statistically significant differences by party identification. Across all parties, the top preference is that education receive marijuana tax revenue, with Democrats at 41 percent, independents at 40 percent, and Republicans at 31 percent.

Nearly 1 in 5 Democrats and Republicans (17 percent and 20 percent, respectively) choose transportation and infrastructure, with independents much lower at 9 percent.

Lastly, independents are slightly more supportive of using tax revenue for drug treatment and prevention programs at nearly a quarter (24 percent), compared to 19 percent of Democrats and 20 percent of Republicans.

Registered Voter Status

There are stark differences in the answers registered voters gave compared to those who have not yet registered to vote. Registered voters are less likely to cite education as their top tax revenue priority at 36 percent compared to nearly half (47 percent) of those who are not registered.

Registered voters are also twice as likely to report that transportation and infrastructure should receive marijuana tax revenue at 18 percent, compared to 7 percent of those not registered to vote.

Age

When it comes to age, the results are somewhat predictable. As people age they become less likely to say that education should receive money from the revenue of taxing marijuana.

Over half (51 percent) of those 18 to 29 choose education while less than a quarter (23 percent) of those 65 and over say the same.

Additionally, as age increases, respondents are more likely more likely to state that drug treatment and prevention programs should receive the money made by taxing marijuana. Just 14 percent of those between the ages of 18 to 29 say that they would like drug treatment and prevention programs, compared with fully one-third of adults 65 and older.

Parental Status

Residents who have children that are in grades K through 12 have somewhat different priorities for the use of tax revenue from the legalization of marijuana than do those whose children are too old for grade school or high school. Forty percent of parents of children in K through 12 choose education, and less than 1 in 5 (18 percent) prioritize drug treatment and prevention. In contrast, over a quarter (26 percent) of those who have children that are older than the 12th grade chose drug treatment and prevention, and just 28 percent chose education.

Religion

We find significant differences by religion, categorized as Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and those that define themselves under another religion or none at all, which will be defined as “other” (this is because we may not have enough respondents from these other groups to be able to make statements in regards to those who follow some other religion). Those of another religion or who are agnostic or atheist are the most likely to support education at nearly half (49 percent), compared to one third of Catholics, and 29 percent of Protestants. While the Jewish

subsample is small, and thus estimates are imprecise, about 1 in 5 say funds should go to education.

Jewish respondents seem to be most willing to put money towards transportation and infrastructure at 31 percent, followed by Protestants at 20 percent.

Catholics and Protestants are more willing to put money towards drug treatment and prevention programs at 27 percent and 25 percent, respectively, compared to 16 percent of Jews.

Income

Those with household incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000 are most likely to cite education for use of funds, at 43 percent, compared to 32 percent of those with incomes over \$150,000.

As income increases, people are more likely to say transportation and infrastructure should be the top priority for money raised by taxing marijuana. Just 7 percent of those making less than \$50,000 say transportation and infrastructure, compared to 26 percent of the highest earners.

The lowest earning respondents are the most willing to put money towards drug treatment and prevention programs at 30 percent, about twice the level of other income groups.

Education

Finally, there are significant differences by educational attainment. Those who have completed graduate work are the least likely to say education should receive marijuana tax revenue at 30 percent, compared to 39 percent of those with a high school education or less, 42 percent of those who completed some college, and 42 percent of college graduates.

Those with a high school education or less are most likely to focus on drug treatment and prevention programs at 24 percent. Those with some college and those with graduate work are both at 22 percent on this option, while college graduates are the least likely to choose drug treatment at 15 percent.

Message Testing

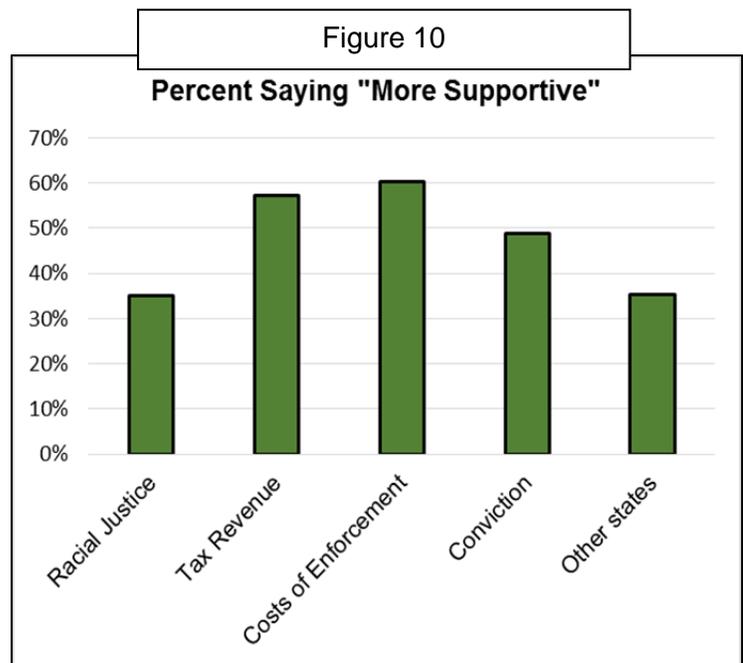
At the beginning of this project, The Drug Policy Alliance provided an executive summary of all of their most powerful messages used to gain public support for their mission to legalize, tax and regulate marijuana like adults for those 21 and over. The intent was to test the effectiveness of the messages being used in order to better understand which messages might lead New Jerseyans to be more supportive of legalization. Since there were far more messages being used by the Drug Policy Alliance than we could possibly test, the study was limited to five chosen in consultation with the DPA. Each respondent was asked if knowing the information provided in the message made him or her more supportive marijuana legalization, taxation, and regulation, less supportive, or if it made no difference (QM5A-E in Appendix I). In order to minimize question order bias, the five messages were presented in a randomized order to the respondent.

The five messages chosen centered on racial justice, tax revenue, costs of enforcement, conviction consequences, and the policy reforms of other states:

1. **Racial justice:** African Americans are almost three times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than whites, even though both races use marijuana at the same rates.

2. **Tax revenue:** Tax revenue from the sale of marijuana in New Jersey could generate millions of dollars, which could be dedicated to specific projects that benefit residents.
3. **Costs of enforcement:** New Jersey spends more than \$125 million arresting individuals for marijuana possession, using up law enforcement resources that could be spent on more serious crime and public safety issues.
4. **Conviction consequences:** A conviction for marijuana possession can have long-term consequences, making it difficult or impossible to secure employment, housing, student loans, or even a driver's license.
5. **Other states:** Colorado, Washington State, Oregon, Alaska, and Washington, D.C. have legalized the possession of small amounts of marijuana.

Results show that across the full sample, the two strongest messages were the ones focused on **costs of enforcement** and the **potential benefit of tax revenue** that would come from legalization, with 60 percent and 58 percent (respectively) of New Jerseyans saying the message would make



them more supportive of legalization (Figure 10). The difference between these two most powerful messages is not statistically significant; they are equally likely to be effective on this sample. Across the full sample, the two least powerful messages were those about **African**

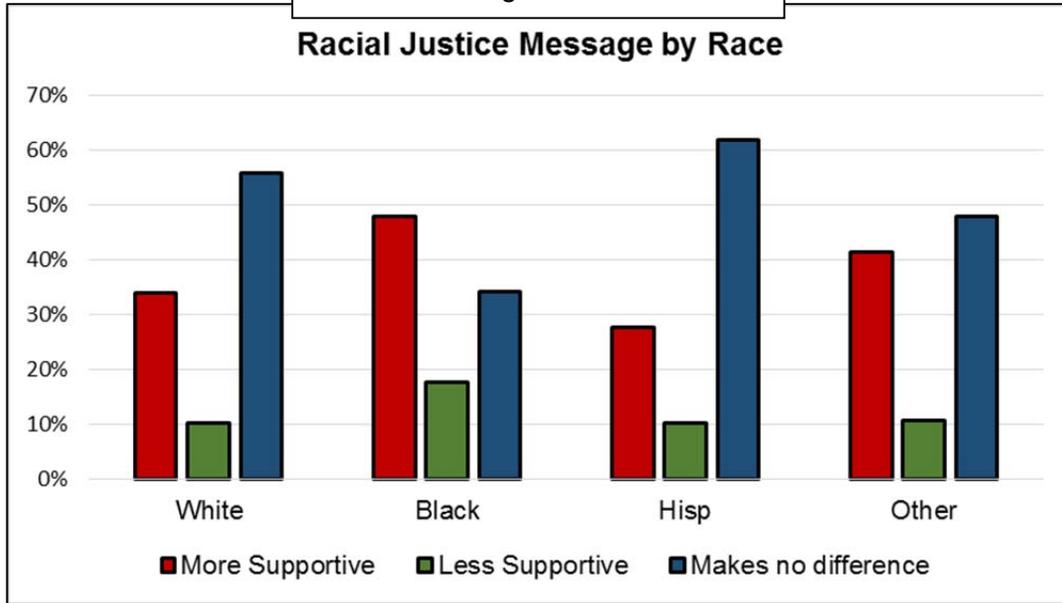
Americans being convicted at higher rates than whites and the **list of other states** that have already legalized marijuana for personal use; for both about 35 percent say the message would make them more supportive of legalization. It is clear that when it comes to legalizing marijuana money talks and that stressing social realities in an attempt to sway New Jersey residents does not seem to be particularly effective. It also does not seem to be effective to tell New Jersey residents that other states have already taken steps to legalize small amounts of marijuana.

Subgroup Analyses

Race

When we look at how race affects those being surveyed we see statistical significance in the data. The **racial justice** message focused on African American arrests made both African Americans and those who are multiracial or of a race other than white, black, or Hispanic far more likely to be more supportive of legalizing regulating and taxing marijuana for adults 21 and over. 48 percent of African Americans became more supportive given this message, while “other” races were 42 percent more supportive, compared to whites at 34 percent and Hispanics at 28 percent (Figure 11). Hispanics were most likely to state that the message made no difference at 62 percent compared to whites at 56 percent and blacks at 34 percent. African Americans were also more likely to state that the message made them feel less supportive at 18 percent, compared to whites and Hispanics at 10 percent each.

Figure 11



Age

As people age they become less likely to be supportive when hearing the **racial justice** argument, with those between 18 to 29 at 46 percent more supportive and those 65 and older at only 29 percent more supportive.

With the **tax revenue message**, as people age they are also less likely to say they are more supportive with 18 to 29 year olds at 70 percent more supportive and those 65 and older at 44 percent. 21 percent of senior say the message makes them less supportive compared to just 7 percent of those 18 to 29.

The **cost of enforcement** message and the **other states** have legalized marijuana message both show similar patterns with the elderly less likely to be convinced by them.

The only message in which there are no age differences is the **conviction consequences** message.

Registered Voter Status

Those who report being registered voters are more likely to say that they are more supportive after hearing any message compared to those who report not being a registered voter. Given the **racial justice** message, registered voters say more supportive at 37 percent while non-registered say it makes them more supportive at 27 percent of the time. Non-registered voters also say that they are in fact less supportive at 21 percent compared to registered voters at 9 percent. This pattern is persistent across all of the messages.

Party Identification

With the exception of the message related to **conviction consequences**, which shows no difference between parties, the remaining messages test as would be expected. Across all messages, Democrats are more supportive and Republicans less supportive.

On all messages aside from the one regarding **other states** legalizing marijuana, independents are closer to Democrats than they are Republicans on their support for marijuana legalization after the messages were read to them.

Religion

Three messages are significantly different across religious groups. The **racial justice** message seemed to resonate better with Protestants and Jews than it did with Catholics. Just one-quarter of Catholics said the message made them more supportive, while 36 percent of Protestants said the same.

The **cost of enforcement** question resonated similarly across Catholics and Protestants at 54 percent and 57 percent respectively.

Finally the message of **other states** legalizing marijuana was more effective with “other” religion category at 44 percent, while Catholics only said more supportive at 30 percent.

Education

Education does not play a role in the **tax revenue** or **wasted resources** messages but does in the other three.

The more educated a respondent is, the more likely the **racial justice** message increases support for legalization. Just 28 percent of those with a high school or less are more supportive after hearing the message, compared to 41 percent of those who have attended graduate school.

Those who have gone through more schooling also say more supportive after hearing the message related to **conviction consequences** with those having some college at 56 percent and those with high school or less at 42 percent. College graduates drop to 46 percent more supportive, but respondents who have attended graduate school are at 51 percent more supportive.

Finally the message related to **other states** laws seems to be affective only to those who have attended some college at 43 percent more supportive compared to graduate school at 31 percent, college graduate at 34 percent and high school or less at 33 percent.

Conclusions and Recommendations

One of our overarching goals in conducting this study was to help the Drug Policy Alliance achieve its goals of reforming current marijuana laws by examining the strengths and weaknesses of the current state of public opinion. The good news is that that in terms of support, the Drug Policy Alliance is already over halfway there, with 60 percent of New Jerseyans either

somewhat or strongly supporting marijuana legalization, taxation, and regulation. The rest of our analysis was devoted to determining how to convince the remaining 40 percent to support legalization.

A framing experiment leads us to conclude that it does not matter whether or not the Drug Policy Alliance compares marijuana legalization to alcohol, and that it also does not matter if they speak in terms of the issue in general or in terms of a specific bill. After analyzing where New Jerseyans would most like to see tax revenue go, we recommend that the Drug Policy Alliance focus on promoting education as a possible use for increased funds. To sway those who do not support marijuana legalization, the DPA should focus on drug treatment and prevention programs, which was most popular among those in opposition. We recommend that the DPA target older New Jerseyans with the prospect of increased funding for transportation and infrastructure, which is the proposed use of taxes in Senate Bill 1896/Assembly Bill 3094. After testing five messages used by the Drug Policy Alliance in their literature, we recommend that the DPA focus on using economic arguments relating to increased tax revenue and the amount of money currently spent on enforcement of marijuana laws. While a message of racial justice is not convincing in the aggregate, we recommend using it when targeting African Americans to increase support.

Appendix I: Question Wording and Frequencies

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Refusals are dropped.

Now, changing topics, I am going to ask you some questions about marijuana legalization.

[SPLIT SAMPLE; RANDOMLY ASSIGN ½ SAMPLE TO VERSION A (QM1A & QM2A) AND ½ SAMPLE TO VERSION B (QM1B & QM2B)]

[VERSION A; ROTATE QM1A, QM2A]

QM1A Thinking about the issue in general, to what extent do you personally support or oppose legalizing, taxing, and regulating marijuana for adults 21 and over? Do you strongly support it, somewhat support it, somewhat oppose it, or strongly oppose it?

1	Strongly support	28 %
2	Somewhat support	28 %
3	Somewhat oppose	12 %
4	Strongly oppose	29 %
8	DK/Not Sure (VOL)	3 %
9	Refused (VOL)	

QM2A There is currently a bill in the New Jersey State Legislature that would legalize, tax, and regulate marijuana for adults 21 and over. Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this bill?

1	Strongly support	29 %
2	Somewhat support	26 %
3	Somewhat oppose	12 %
4	Strongly oppose	31 %
8	DK/Not Sure (VOL)	3 %
9	Refused (VOL)	

[VERSION B; ROTATE QM1B, QM2B]

Alcohol is legal, taxed, and regulated. Some have proposed doing the same with marijuana.

QM1B Thinking about the issue in general, to what extent do you personally support or oppose legalizing, taxing, and regulating marijuana like alcohol for adults 21 and over? Do you strongly support it, somewhat support it, somewhat oppose it, or strongly oppose it?

1	Strongly support	35 %
2	Somewhat support	25 %
3	Somewhat oppose	11 %
4	Strongly oppose	26 %
8	DK/Not Sure (VOL)	3 %
9	Refused (VOL)	

QM2B There is currently a bill in the New Jersey State Legislature that would legalize, tax, and regulate marijuana, like alcohol, for adults 21 and over. Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this bill?

1	Strongly support	31 %
2	Somewhat support	27 %
3	Somewhat oppose	11 %
4	Strongly oppose	27 %
8	DK/Not Sure (VOL)	3 %
9	Refused (VOL)	

[END SPLIT SAMPLE]

QM3 How important is the issue of marijuana legalization to you personally? Is it very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or not very important?

1	Very important	20 %
2	Somewhat important	22 %
3	Somewhat unimportant	12 %
4	Not very important	45 %
8	DK/Not Sure (VOL)	1 %
9	Refused (VOL)	

QM4 Regardless of your views on marijuana legalization, of the following, which would be your TOP priority for the use of tax revenue generated by the sale of marijuana? Would it be:

[ROTATE 1-5; READ 1- 6]

[IF NEEDED, PRESS FOR A SINGLE RESPONSE, DO NOT ACCEPT MORE THAN ONE]

1	Education	36 %
2	Transportation and infrastructure	15 %
3	Social services	9 %
4	Corrections and prison	3 %
5	Drug treatment and prevention programs	20 %
6	Or something else? [SPECIFY:]	12 %
	Reducing taxes	34 % (within "something else")
	Nothing	12 % (within "something else")
	Healthcare	12 % (within "something else")
	All of the above	10 % (within "something else")
	Other	32 % (within "something else")
8	DK/Not Sure (VOL)	5 %
9	Refused (VOL)	

QM5 For each of the following statements, please tell me if knowing this makes you more supportive of marijuana legalization, regulation, and taxation, less supportive, or if it would make no difference. As I read each statement, please think of each one independently:

[ROTATE QM5A-QM5E]

QM5A African Americans are almost three times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than whites, even though both races use marijuana at the same rates.

1	More supportive	38 %
2	Less supportive	11 %
3	Makes no difference	51 %
8	DK/Not Sure (VOL)	4 %
9	Refused (VOL)	

QM5B Tax revenue from the sale of marijuana in New Jersey could generate millions of dollars, which could be dedicated to specific projects that benefit residents

1	More supportive	56 %
2	Less supportive	12 %
3	Makes no difference	30 %
8	DK/Not Sure (VOL)	2 %
9	Refused (VOL)	

QM5C New Jersey spends more than \$125 million arresting individuals for marijuana possession, using up law enforcement resources that could be spent on more serious crime and public safety issues

1	More supportive	58 %
2	Less supportive	11 %
3	Makes no difference	27 %
8	DK/Not Sure (VOL)	4 %
9	Refused (VOL)	

QM5D A conviction for marijuana possession can have long-term consequences, making it difficult or impossible to secure employment, housing, student loans, or even a driver's license

1	More supportive	47 %
2	Less supportive	15 %
3	Makes no difference	35 %
8	DK/Not Sure (VOL)	4 %
9	Refused (VOL)	

QM5E Colorado, Washington State, Oregon, Alaska, and Washington, D.C. have legalized the possession of small amounts of marijuana

1	More supportive	35 %
2	Less supportive	13 %
3	Makes no difference	50 %
8	DK/Not Sure (VOL)	2 %
9	Refused (VOL)	

Appendix II: Open-Ended Responses

Below are the verbatim open-ended responses for those who chose to specify “other” for the use of tax revenue generated by the sale of marijuana (QM4), arranged in alphabetical order.

- ALL OF THE ABOVE
- ALL OF THE ABOVE
- ALL OF THE ABOVE
- ALL OF THEM
- ANYTHING, LOWER TAXES
- BACK INTO THE ECONOMY
- BUDGET
- CARE FOR THE ELDERLY, INSURANCE
- CIGARETE TAXES
- COMBINATION
- COMBO OF DRUG TREATMENT & CORRECTIONS
- COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT
- CORRUPTION
- CRIME PREVENTION
- CRIME PREVENTION
- CUTTING OTHER TAXES
- DISTRIBUTED AMONG ALL
- DIVIDE IT AMONG ALL
- ALL OF THE ABOVE
- ECONOMY
- ED AND DRUG TREATMENT
- EDUCATE KIDS TO NOT USE MARIJUANA
- EDUCATION AND CRIME WATCH (VIOLENCE)
- ELIMINATE MARAJUANA
- ENFORCEMENT OF LAW AND ORDER
- EVERYTHING
- FOOD FOR CHILDREN
- GENERAL BUDGET
- GENERAL FUNDS
- GENERAL FUNDS
- GENERAL TAX FUND
- HAVENT THOUGHT ABOUT
- HEALTH BENEFITS FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T AFFORD MEDICAL
- HEALTH CARE
- HELP ECONOMY AND JOBS, LOWER TAXES, MEDICAL RESEAC
- JOB CREATION
- JOBS
- LOFSETTING TAX REVENUE OR IMCOME TAX AND ICOME TAX
- LOWER PROPERTY TAX
- LOWER PROPERTY TAXES
- LOWER TAXES
- LOWER TAXES
- LOWERING TAXES
- LOWERING THE TAX BUDGET
- MEDICAL
- MEDICAL USE
- MEDICINE
- MENTAL HEALTH
- NO PASSED
- NO SPECIFICATION
- NO SPECIFICATION
- NO SPECIFICATION
- NONE
- NONE
- NONE
- NONE - DO NOT LEGALIZE
- NOT SPECIFY
- NOTHING
- NOTHING AT ALL
- OFFSET PROPERTY TAX
- PAY NJ DEBT
- PAY OUR VETERANS
- PAYING DEBTS
- PAYING STATE DEBT
- PENSION
- PENSIONS
- PENSIONS
- PENSIONS
- POLICE EQUIPMENT
- PROPERTY TAXES
- PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION
- PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION
- PROPERTY TAXES
- PROPERTY TAXES
- PROPERTY TAXES
- PROPERTY TAXES
- PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT
- REDUCE THE DEFICIT
- REDUCING PROPERTY TAXES
- REDUCING TAXES
- REDUCTION OF TAXES
- SHOULD NOT BE TAXED
- SHOULDN'T BE LEGAL, NOWHERE
- SOMETHING NEW
- SPREAD IT AROUND TO DIFFERENT PLACES
- TAX REFUND TO PEOPLE
- TAX RELIEF
- TAX RELIEF, DON'T NEED TO CREATE NEW STREAM OF REV
- TAXES
- TAXES
- TAXES
- TAXES OF NJ
- TOWARDS PROPERTY TAXES
- PROPERTY TAX
- TREATMENT OF MENTAL ILLNESS
- VETERANS AFFAIRS
- WOULD NOT SPECIFY
- WOULD NOT SUPOORT TAXING MARIJUANA

Appendix III: Detailed Methodology Statement

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone using live callers March 27 – April 3, 2015 with a scientifically selected random sample of 860 New Jersey adults, 18 or older. Respondents within a household are selected by asking randomly for the youngest adult male or female currently available. If the named gender is not available, the youngest adult of the other gender is interviewed. The poll was available in Spanish for respondents who requested it. This telephone poll included 545 landline and 315 cell phone adults, all acquired through random digit dialing using a sample obtained from Survey Sampling International. Distribution of household phone use in this sample is:

Cell Only:	15 %	Dual Use, Reached on Cell:	21 %
Dual Use, Reached on LL:	58 %	Landline Only:	6 %

Data were weighted to the demographics adults in New Jersey. Weights account for the probability of being selected within the sample frame and the probability of being sampled within a household, based on the number of individuals living in the household and the phone composition (cell, landline) of the household. The samples were weighted to several demographic variables reflecting the population parameters of the state of New Jersey: gender, race, age, and Hispanic ethnicity. The final weight, which combined all of the parameters mentioned, was trimmed at the 5th and 95th percentile so as to not accord too much weight to any one case or subset of cases. All results are reported with these weighted data

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. Sampling error should be adjusted to recognize the effect of weighting the data to better match the population. In this poll, the simple sampling error for the 860 adults is +/-3.2 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The adult sample weighting design effect is 1.27, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 3.8 percentage points for the adult sample.

Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adults in this sample favor a particular position, we would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 46.2 and 53.8 percent (50 +/-3.8) if all New Jersey adults had been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample.

Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded in house by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling. The questionnaire was developed and all data analyses were completed in house. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, a non-partisan academic center for the study of politics and the political process. Full questionnaires are available on request, and can also be accessed at the Eagleton Poll archive at www.eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu. For more information, please contact eagleton.poll@rutgers.edu.