

New Solutions Campaign

Promoting Fair & Effective Criminal Justice • Strengthening Families & Communities

Marijuana prohibition is costly, unfair and ineffective.

New Jersey arrests more than 24,000 people a year for marijuana possession at a cost of more than \$140 million to New Jersey taxpayers. This absurd and wasteful policy criminalizes otherwise law-abiding people and wastes resources that would be better spent on projects that support our families and communities.

A conviction for marijuana possession can have severe long-term consequences. The resulting criminal record subjects a person to a system of legal discrimination that can last a lifetime and can make it difficult or impossible to secure employment, housing, student loans, or even a driver's license. Even without a conviction, the consequences of an arrest can include untold stigma and humiliation, the financial burden of a criminal court proceeding and lost hours at work or school.

Marijuana laws in New Jersey have a disproportionate impact on communities of color. African Americans are three times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than whites even though both use marijuana at the same rates. Anecdotal evidence suggests similar disparities for Latinos.

The solution is to legalize, tax and regulate marijuana like alcohol for adults.

Eight states (Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, Washington) and the District of Columbia have now legalized marijuana. These states have created new jobs and generated millions of dollars in tax revenues without negative consequences. These states have also seen a large drop in arrests for marijuana and thus fewer people labeled as criminals simply because they use marijuana. And legalizing, regulating and controlling marijuana is a more effective way to keep marijuana away from youth.

New Jersey should enact common sense and popular reform to create a responsible, safe and controlled system for marijuana.

A majority of New Jerseyans support legalization. New Jersey should pass fair and equitable legislation to legalize, tax and regulate marijuana like alcohol for adults. This would make marijuana laws consistent with the values and opinions of New Jersey residents and build on smart and common sense reforms across the country.

Legalizing, taxing and regulating marijuana like alcohol for adults will create a safe and controlled system with social and economic benefits for all New Jerseyans.

Legalizing marijuana will create new jobs and generate millions of dollars in tax revenue to fund projects that help all New Jersey residents. Otherwise law-abiding people will no longer be labeled as criminals and racial disparities and harms will be reduced. Resources that are currently wasted on marijuana prohibition will be freed to use for projects that support our families and communities. The time has come for New Jersey to legalize marijuana. It is the fair and responsible thing to do.

Sponsored by

Drug Policy Alliance | 16 West Front Street, Suite 101A, Trenton, NJ 08608
nj@drugpolicy.org | 609.396.8613 voice | 609.396.9478 fax | @DrugPolicy_NJ

