

MARIJUANA POLICY ATTITUDES OF PENNSYLVANIANS

OVER 80% OF PENNSYLVANIANS SUPPORT SOME FORM OF MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION

SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH:

- **Over 80% support some form of marijuana legalization**
- **33% support legalization, while 50% support legalization for medical purposes**
- **Belief that marijuana is a “gateway drug” seems to be tied to people’s attitudes toward legalization**

About 33% of Pennsylvanians believe that marijuana should be legalized, and another 50% believe it should be legal for medical use. Of those who believe it should remain illegal, just under 10% say marijuana use should be a misdemeanor, and about 5% believe it should be a felony.

Of those who believe marijuana should be legal in some form, most believe that marijuana distribution should be state-regulated. This group includes 97% of the medical marijuana proponents and 75% of the legalization supporters.

Attitudes toward criminal and medical marijuana policy seem to be tied to beliefs about marijuana as a “gateway drug”- meaning that marijuana use will open the

door to the use of other substances.

Only 6% of legalization supporters believed that marijuana is a gateway drug. Of the rest of the respondents (meaning those who believed marijuana use should either be prohibited or allowed only for medical purposes), 70% believed that marijuana is a gateway drug to other substances.

Not surprisingly, most respondents (80%-90%) who believed that marijuana use should be a felony also believed that marijuana is a gateway drug. Those who believed marijuana use should be a misdemeanor were somewhat less likely to believe that marijuana is a gateway drug (52%-60%).

THE RESEARCH

The Penn State Crime and Justice Poll is a survey of 600 randomly-selected Pennsylvanians designed to assess attitudes and beliefs about crime and the criminal justice system. Topics include:

- Attitudes toward police
- Prison policy
- Community corrections
- Capital punishment
- Militarization of police
- Police visibility
- The PA sex offender registry
- Juvenile justice
- Parole policy
- and other topics

The Pennsylvania Crime and Justice Poll was developed by the Criminal Justice faculty of the School of Public Affairs at Penn State Harrisburg and sponsored by the Penn State Justice and Safety Institute. Data were collected by The Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg.

You can get more information on the PA Crime and Justice Poll and the Criminal Justice Program online at: <http://harrisburg.psu.edu/public-affairs/criminal-justice>

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