

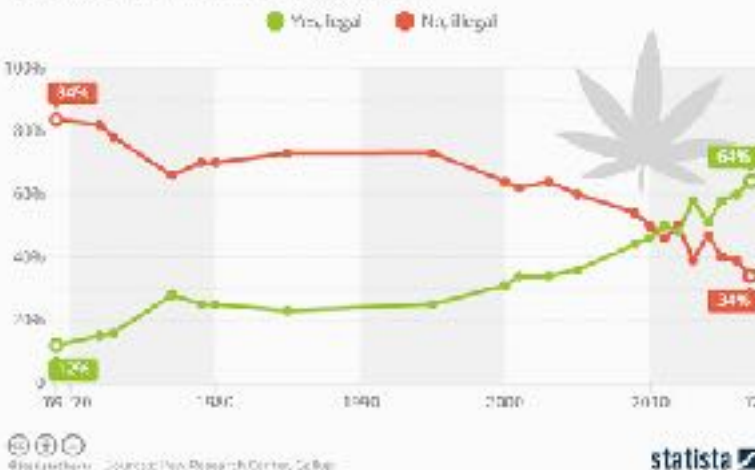
# Legalizing Cannabis in the United States

## Policy Brief

Hazal Bulut - Friday, 15 June 2018

### U.S. Support For Legalizing Marijuana Hits All-Time High

"Should the use of marijuana be made legal or not?"

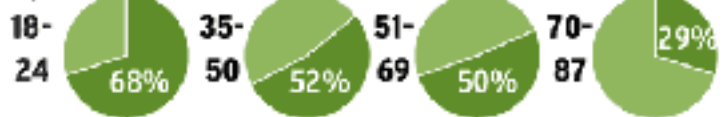


Percent in favor of legalization in 2015

Democrat Republican



Age



Men

Women

White

Black

Hispanic



### Marijuana Legalization in Colorado

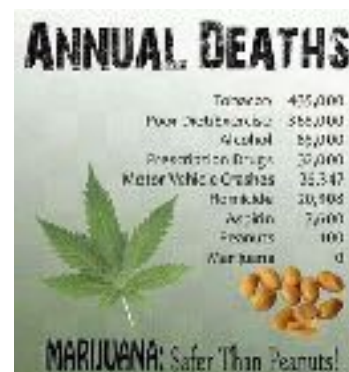
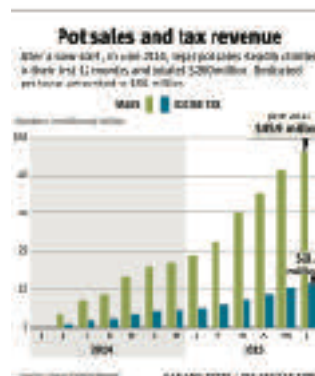
One Year Anniversary of Marijuana Retail Sales



# Introduction: Green is the new Gold

## Marijuana Policy Brief: Health&Economy

Legalizing cannabis has been a hot topic in the U.S for several years now. It has been illegal to use or have the possession of cannabis under Controlled Substances Act of 1970. Medical use was not accepted as well. Things started to change a lot during these past few years. Cannabis is now legalized for medical use after the 2016 elections in 28 states. In Colorado and Washington, the substance use and sale is fully approved. It is now known for sure according to researches and data analysis more and more states will find a way to legalize the use of cannabis, so the access will be easier. The question that concerns the public is whether the addiction rates will have a rapid increase or not. The data for the death rates from various substances, marijuana has a zero rate compared to even wrong way of dieting. According to the National Institutes of Health the use of marijuana compared to other drugs such as cocaine, heroin and many more, have much more mild effects on people. Though this does not mean that the substance is not addictive. Addiction refers to behaviours that are compulsive or partially out of control. The percentage of marijuana user that are dependent is only a %9 which is less than the number of tobacco and alcohol users. When looked at the usage rates in Colorado it has not increased since being legalized. Marijuana does not only have the effects of usage but has a massive impact on the labor market as well. According to the article on "Talent Economy" by Lauren Dixon; The legal marijuana sector is one of the fastest growing business in the U.S according to CNBC. The substance could come in variety such as sprays, candy, cookies, drinks and lotions. Founder of Mirth Provisions which is a company that makes cannabis-infused products, Adam Stites said " It never ceases to amaze me how creativity is intersecting with this market" According to " The Economic Impact of Marijuana Legalization in Colorado" marijuana excise and sales taxes combined were \$121.2 million in 2015. The impression is that this will surpass cigarette revenues by 2020. "The economic boost that's provided by the marijuana industry is really significant when it comes to related industries," said Morgan Fox, senior communications manager at Marijuana Policy Project, nonprofit organization focused on marijuana legalization and education in Washington, D.C. Empty warehouses are starting to fill up as more retail locations open. The real estate market had a lot of increase in clients because of the offices clearing up for marijuana-based businesses in Colorado and Washington. The data collected from companies show that marijuana will become more normalized in society and will in fact "become a substitute rather than a compliment to alcohol" said Paul Armentano, deputy director of National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, NORML, a nonprofit organization for marijuana reform based in Washington D.C. The economy and market concerning marijuana has been growing more and more since the elections in 2016. There are many jobs specified in the cannabis labor area such as master grower, dispensary manager, cannabis chef, security and so on. So, when looked at carefully it is a safe environment with the right strategies and policies.



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## Why is this Important for the U.S?

When looked at the statistics and large data researches from various companies, departments and organizations it is shown that legalizing cannabis use won't increase the addiction rates but in fact would raise the economy. If, 'hypothetically', cannabis was fully legalized to use and sell, there must be a controlled and clean environment for the purchase of the substance. The black markets or college students should not be the place to buy the cannabis because that is what's making it at more risk. People not knowing what they are getting, if there are other substances in it or even chemicals put them into high risk factors. Controlling once a month whether the substances are clean and natural should be a must if thinking about legalizing cannabis. Public Health Institutes needs to be involved. If sold in illicit markets, because it is illegal, which is run by criminal gangs will drive up the potency and toxicity. The only people who has a zero-tolerance towards marijuana being legalized is the criminal gangsters, violent gangs and international drug cartels because they will lose a big percentage of their profits. So, making it legal not only will reduce many drug cartels but also will be controlled by the government of how it will be sold, age restrictions and how natural is the substance without being mixed with other drugs, chemicals. A panel of expertise can develop the most effective and clean environment for a regulated market and design a cannabis growth place. The votes on decriminalising are more than half, majority being young people aged between 20-35. Politicians can afford to be with this matter since it is backed my solid evidence with data, polls and many researches from health/drug experts, law enforcement officials and development organisations. What would happen is that the government would make more money taxing it rather than spending money to oppose it. The product would be regulated, more quality from where it is bought most of the time, the back of an alley. Medical patients would find the exact strain, what works best for them and never face a supply drought. The cartels and criminal gangs would lose a huge amount of cash flow which would decrease a huge amount of criminal activities. If we look at the facts, graphics, data and researches it shows that legalizing marijuana will have, by %53, much more positive effects on the government, economics, decreasing criminal activities, gangs, cartels and the public.

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