

Study suggests 33% of high school seniors support legalized marijuana

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New research from Journal of Psychoactive Drugs has found that 33 percent of High School Seniors support legalized marijuana and 25.6 percent believe marijuana should be considered a crime. As debate has swept the country—with legalization already passed in four states and Washington DC —this study focuses on a group with an exceptionally strong pull on the future.

The study was conducted using a nationally representative sample of 11,594 [high school seniors](#) surveyed from 2007-2011. The survey hoped to find patterns in the opinions of [marijuana](#) among adolescents approaching adulthood. Overall, 33 percent felt that marijuana should be entirely legal, 28.5 percent that it should be treated as a minor violation, 25.6 percent felt that it should be a crime, and 12.9 percent were unsure. Concerning who should be able to buy marijuana, 29.2 percent said no one, 48 percent favored adults only, 10.4 percent said anyone, and 12.4 percent were unsure.

Some other statistics showed males were more likely to favor legalization than females. Black and Hispanic students favored a more flexible policy compared to their white counterparts, despite lower reported rates of use. Other matters studied include political affiliation, religiosity, level of parent education, and past use of marijuana, cigarettes, or alcohol.

Recent and frequent marijuana users were more likely to support legalization; however, 16.7 percent of non-lifetime marijuana users also

reported support for legalization. "These findings actually break some common misconceptions regarding support for marijuana legalization," said Dr. Palamar. "Support for legalization doesn't necessarily mean that one wants to go out and smoke a legal joint. It might instead mean that he or she supports liberty, increased tax revenues, or a reduction in the black market and associated crime. Other individuals feel legalization may reduce access to youth and make the drug more difficult to obtain, similar to alcohol."

More information: "An Examination of Opinions Toward Marijuana Policies Among High School Seniors in the United States." *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* Volume 46, Issue 5, 2014 [DOI: 10.1080/02791072.2014.962716](https://doi.org/10.1080/02791072.2014.962716).

Provided by Taylor & Francis

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