

2020 Candidate's Guide to **Marijuana Policy**



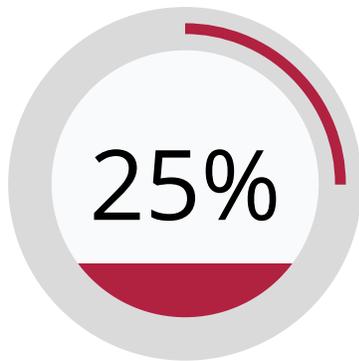
Marijuana use rates are bucking decades-long downward trends in overall drug use among our nation's youth. Illicit sales continue to be burdensome, even in states that have "legalized" the substance. As a result of commercialization, vulnerable communities are being targeted by predatory marketing tactics, and the vaping trend is breaking records in high schools. Meanwhile, lobbyists want to pass legislation to get billions of dollars of institutional investment into the industry. Furthermore, it seems we have forgotten that legalization breaks with our commitments to both federal and international law. The clouds may be getting thicker, but it is never too late to take a **Smart Approach to Marijuana**.

The Scientific View

"Marijuana use is likely to increase the risk of developing schizophrenia, other psychoses, and social anxiety disorders."

- [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine](#)

- Marijuana use is associated with significant dependence and addiction problems, as are alcohol and smoking. Four million Americans suffer from Cannabis Use Disorder ([NIH/NIDA](#)).
- Marijuana use is destructive to mental health. Daily use of high-potency marijuana results in five-times increased odds of developing a psychotic disorder like schizophrenia ([Lancet Psychiatry](#)), and is also associated with major depression and suicidal behavior in young people ([JAMA Psychiatry](#)).



The prevalence of Marijuana Use Disorder in **children 12-17** increased **25%** after recreational marijuana legalization.

JAMA Psychiatry: Association Between Recreational Marijuana Legalization in the United States and Changes in Marijuana Use and Cannabis Use Disorder From 2008 to 2016



More peer-reviewed research here: <https://learnaboutsam.org/research-studies-on-marijuana>

Rescheduling

Although more medical research should be encouraged, rescheduling marijuana may be a misguided place to begin. It will not necessarily have a substantial effect under the current rules, due to the complex interactions of regulatory agencies.

- Under the current framework, rescheduling marijuana would serve as little apart from a symbolic victory for industry lobbyists. Rescheduling under the current rules would do little to help those with the most pressing medical needs ([Wayne Law Review](#)).
- The Schedule I designation does not stop marijuana research. \$14 million in research on marijuana-derived medicine alone is currently going forward. However, agency-specific changes could be considered to promote medical research.
- Rescheduled, smoked marijuana would still not meet rigorous FDA approval standards: **it would not be prescribed as medicine.**
- **Current legislation, such as the Medical Marijuana Research Act (H.R. 3797), aims to fix many of the licensing, access, and other issues researchers face in their attempt to better understand the marijuana plant and its derivatives without the need for rescheduling the substance.**



Marijuana meets the technical definition of Schedule I because it has a high potential for abuse and has no FDA-approved use. Rescheduling whole marijuana - while symbolically important for special interest groups - would not have much of a real-world consequence in terms of reducing criminal penalties. Still, efforts to increase access to marijuana and its components for research to help the FDA find additional therapeutic uses for the drug are important.

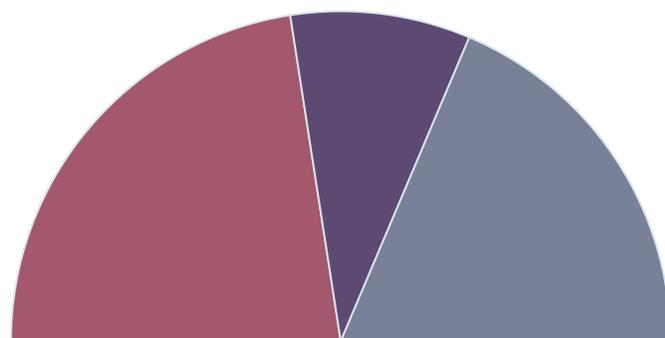
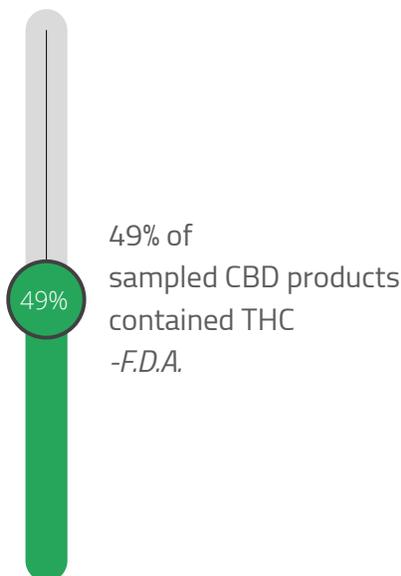
- SAM President Dr. Kevin Sabet, in his book *Reefer Sanity*, published by Beaufort

What About CBD?

While this may be a promising new field of medicine, the marijuana derivative is being abused by companies that do not play by the rules.

- The Drug Enforcement Agency, National Institute on Drug Abuse and Public Health Service should continue to make the authorization process more straightforward for physician researchers working with CBD.
- With the support and oversight of the aforementioned agencies, compassionate CBD research programs should be established for the seriously ill and CBD products should be dispensed for study by board-certified neurologists (SAM).
- Few companies comply with FDA requirements for proper manufacturing of CBD products, and this is hazardous to consumers. Many products sold as “supplements” are within the scope of the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and should be regulated.

CBD Marketplace Sampling: Label Inaccuracy



- Contained within 20% of CBD Indicated 45.1%
- Contained Less Than 80% of CBD Indicated 17.6%
- Contained More Than 120% of CBD Indicated 37.3%

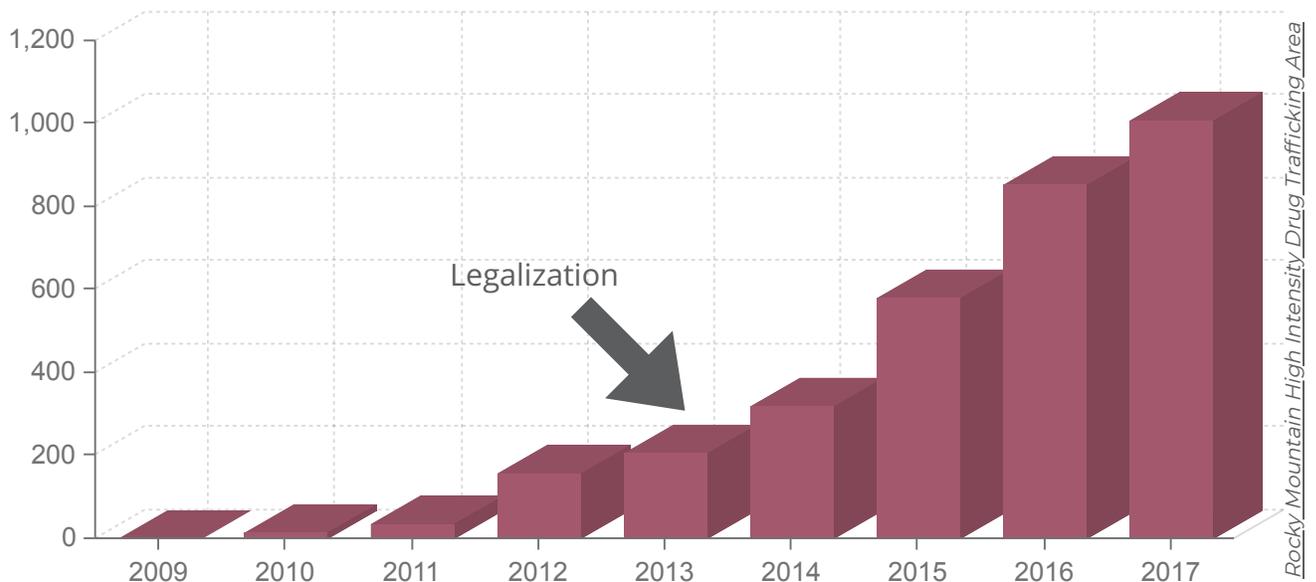
*U.S. Food and Drug Administration:
2020 Sampling Study of the Current Cannabidiol Marketplace*

Marijuana and Banking

Industry lobbyists are working to legitimize a predatory industry on the national level under the guise of granting marijuana retailers access to banking.

- The SAFE Banking Act (H.R. 1595 & S.1200) would set the stage for powerful investment firms to take ownership of the marijuana industry, and further normalize marijuana use. This would pit corporate interests against public health.
- This bill would expand the federally illegal marijuana marketplace, and create substantial potential for money laundering ([Drug Policy](#)).
- Under the guise of safety, this bill would bolster an industry of addiction. It is already clear that legalization has fueled the illicit market.

Parcels Containing Marijuana from Colorado, Mailed to Another State



There are parts of this state, and I represent them, that did not vote for [legalization] but are bearing the brunt of the growth of the [illicit] market that was generated from it...For all the other states going down this same green, green-brick road: if you legalize marijuana...this is what you can expect to happen.

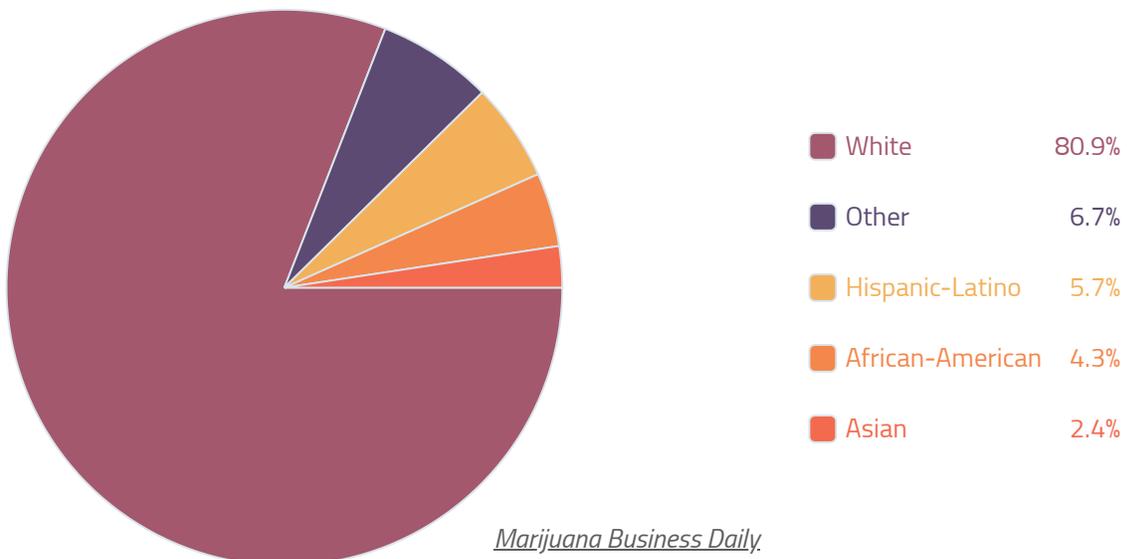
- Colorado District Attorney George Brauchler in May 2019, after the largest illicit market marijuana bust in state history. 80,000 plants were seized

Marijuana and Social Justice

There is a third way, which removes penalties for marijuana possession but avoids the ills of commercialization. Legalization is not real social justice, but the beginning of a nightmare for minority communities and low-income neighborhoods.

- While marijuana legalization is heralded as a way to address the disproportionate imprisonment of people of color, **zero (0) states** have seen a significant reduction in their prison populations since legalization ([SAM](#)).
- People of color are about six times more likely to be arrested for drug use than white people. Marijuana decriminalization and records expungement are necessary social justice reforms, but full legalization will enable a multi-billion-dollar addiction industry to target vulnerable communities.
- Some of Denver's low-income neighborhoods have one marijuana business license for every 47 residents. Disadvantaged communities, already affected by liquor stores on every corner, could face the added strain of weed shops on every block due to legalization ([Denver Post](#)). The problems are compounded considering the industry nationally is less than 2% minority-owned.

U.S. Marijuana Industry Owners & Founders by Race



Lessons from Legal States

Legalization has increased marijuana use among young people and illicit market drug sales across state borders. The trend of marijuana vaping threatens the health of countless teenagers and heightens the need for greater oversight on the national level.

Youth Use

- The rate of 18-to-25- year-old past month marijuana use in non-legal states is 20.8%. In legal states the rate is as much 29.2% (NSDUH, 2017).
- According to the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, since 2017, past month marijuana use among those aged 15 or younger has increased 14.8%. Overall, marijuana use amongst all age groups has risen 6.2%.
- In the year immediately following legalization in Colorado, marijuana exposure calls to poison control centers doubled. Unintentional exposure to children 0-8 years old quadrupled (Colorado DPHE, 2019). Oregon and Washington State experienced similar increases (Oregon Poison Center, 2018, and Washington State OFM, 2017).
- **Monitoring the Future (MTF) ranks teen nicotine and THC vaping from 2017-2019 as its largest single-year increases in drug usage in its 45-year history. This is an urgent issue that affects every state, regardless of legalization (MTF).**

Illicit Interstate Commerce

- The decisions of individual states have immense impacts across the country, which is why this should not be a states' rights issue. For example, up to five times the amount of marijuana sold in Oregon leaves the state for black market sales. Law enforcement across 16 states have reported seizing marijuana coming from Oregon (Flaccus, 2018).

International Commitments

The United States is a leading signatory to treaties that protect the people of the world from the perils of addiction and the illicit drug trade. Each step towards marijuana legalization is a step away from this leadership and the stability created by international trust.

U.N. Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988

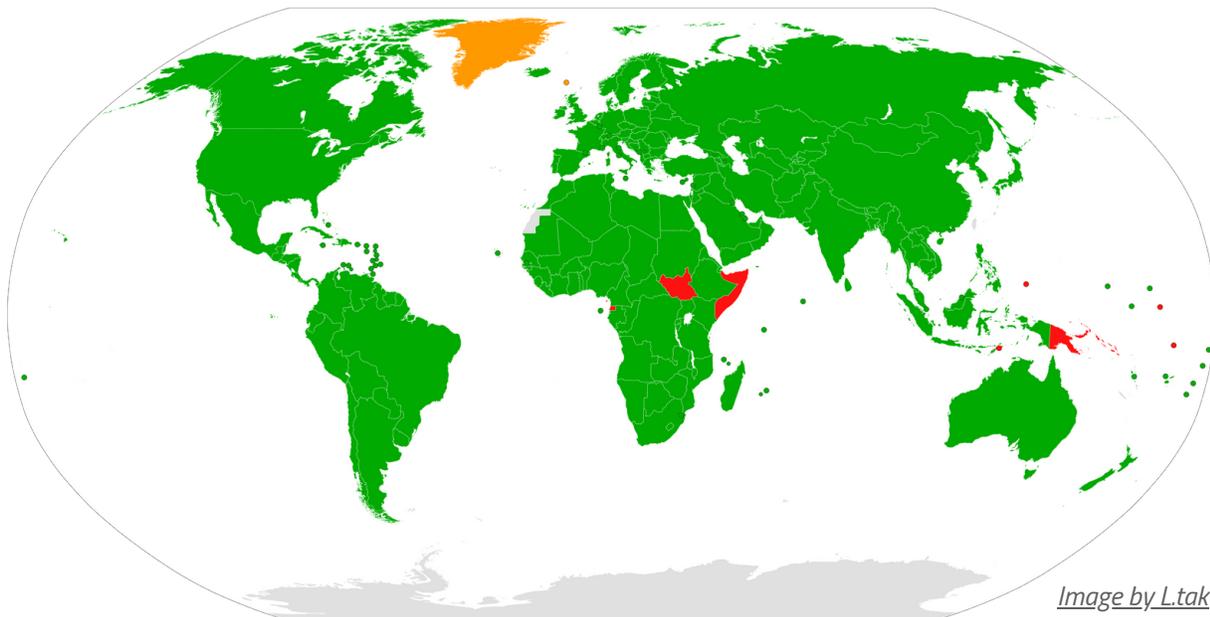


Image by L.tak

█ Parties to the convention
 █ Territories of Parties where the treaty is not applied
 █ Non-parties

- The United States is a signatory to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1953, which was ratified by 108 countries and introduced a new policy of curtailing opium and marijuana abuse ([UNODC](#)).
- The United States is a signatory to the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971, which was ratified by 108 countries and sought to further develop an international drug control system. This treaty also introduced treatment and rehabilitation provisions for drug users ([UNTC](#)).
- The United States is a signatory to the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988, which was ratified by 111 countries and sought to curtail a growing, multi-billion-dollar illicit drug trade. The treaty also addressed the threat to young people posed by growing demand for marijuana, cocaine, and heroin ([UNTC](#)).

International Commitments (Contd.)

- The United States has long been an “advocate and defender” of the aforementioned treaties, but with marijuana legalization occurring at the state level – while still illegal federally and under UN treaties – we are on hazardous legal ground. We may not be able to call upon other signatory countries to play their part in these, and other, treaties if we do not show an equal commitment to upholding international law. This may have ramifications that affect global trust beyond the enforcement of drug law ([Brookings](#)).
- Some states that have legalized marijuana are continuing to push for the legalization of other drugs. Oregon citizens will vote on the legalization of hallucinogenic mushrooms this year, as well as on the decriminalization of all drugs ([Huffington Post](#)). If these initiatives pass, they will push the United States further out of compliance with international law.

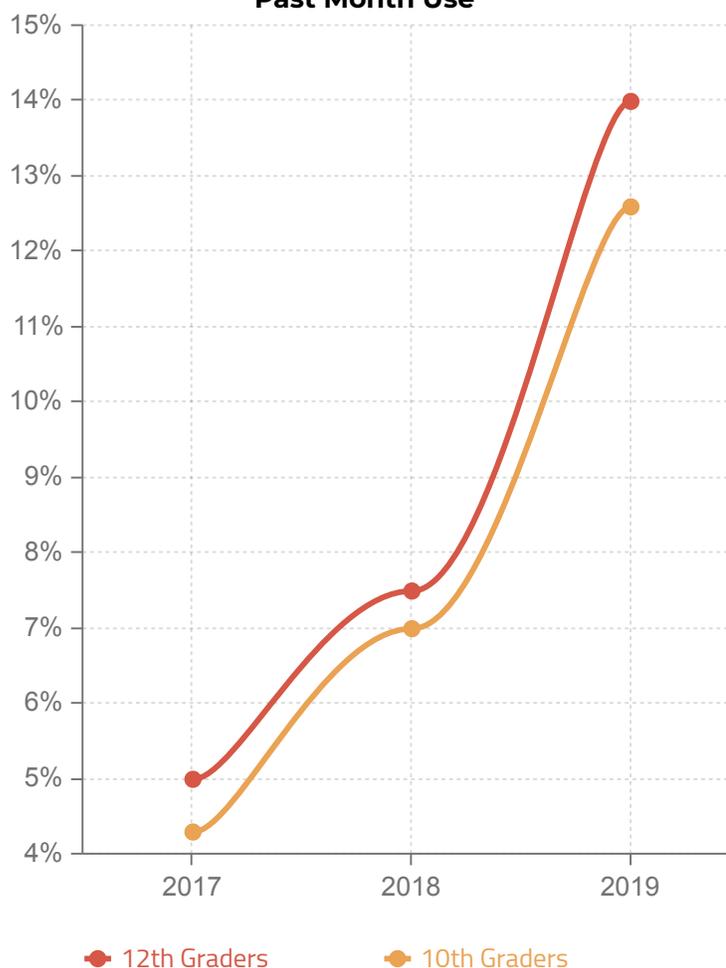


INCB remains concerned at the legislative developments permitting the use of cannabis for 'recreational' uses. Not only are these developments in contravention of the drug control conventions and the commitments made by States parties, the consequences for health and well-being, in particular of young people, are of serious concern.

- International Narcotics Control Board Annual Report, 2019

THC Vaping in Teens, 2017-2019

Past Month Use



Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The 2018-2019 increase amongst 12th Graders is the second largest one-year jump ever tracked for any substance in the 45-year history of the Monitoring the Future Survey (nicotine vaping was the largest, from 2017-2018).



As the number of adolescents who vape marijuana increases, so too does the scope and effect of any associated health consequences, which may include lung injury...the rapid rise of marijuana vaping indicates the need for new prevention and intervention efforts aimed specifically at adolescents.

- Dr. Jody W. Zylke, Monitoring the Future, 2019

SAM Smart Approaches to Marijuana
preventing another big tobacco

www.learnaboutsam.org