

New Solutions Campaign

Promoting Fair & Effective Criminal Justice • Strengthening Families & Communities

Legalizing, taxing and regulating marijuana like alcohol for adults has worked in nine other states and the District of Columbia. It will work in New Jersey.

Nine states (Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, Vermont, Washington) and the District of Columbia have now legalized marijuana. These states have seen significant benefits from marijuana legalization.

Tax revenue

Colorado collected \$68 million in taxes on legal marijuana in the first full year of legalization (2014) and by its fourth year of legalization (2017) collected more than \$205 million. The tax revenue was used to fund school construction and other state programs.

Washington State collected \$65 million in tax revenue in its first year of legal marijuana sales (2015) and by its fourth year (2017) collected \$91 million. The tax revenue was used to fund substance abuse prevention and treatment programs, youth and adult drug education, community health care services and academic research on the effects of legalization.

Oregon's collected \$21 million in tax revenue in its first year of legal sales (2015-2016) and in its second full year (2016-2017) collected \$70 million. The revenue is slated to fund schools, mental health and drug treatment and law enforcement.

Alaska collected almost \$2 million in tax revenue in its first full year (2016-2017) and Nevada collected \$13 million in its first year of legal sales.

Youth use of marijuana

Concerns about an increase in youth use of marijuana have proven unfounded. While marijuana use rates fluctuate, data from Colorado and Washington show that the legalization had little to no effect on the overall rate of youth use of marijuana. Rates of use overall remained stable and some age and grade groups saw drops in youth use after legalization.

Road safety

Just as in all other states, it remains illegal to drive while impaired in the states that have legalized marijuana. DUI arrests are down in Colorado and Washington, the first states to legalize, and there is no correlation between marijuana legalization and crash rates. The crash rates in both states are statistically similar to comparable states without legal marijuana. There is more limited data for the other states that have legalized, but legalization does not appear to have increased DUI rates in those states.

Reduction in arrests

Arrests in all states and the District of Columbia have plummeted for marijuana possession, cultivation and distribution since legalization. This reduction in arrests has saved the states millions of dollars and prevented the criminalization of thousands of people.

Sponsored by

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