



CBS NEWS POLL
For release: Wednesday April 20, 2016
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Marijuana Use and Support for Legal Marijuana Continues to Climb

April 8-12, 2016

- 56% of Americans think marijuana use should be legal, a slight increase from last year and the highest percentage recorded so far in the CBS News Poll.
- 51% of Americans now say they have tried marijuana, up from 43% just last year and 34% in 1997.
- 52% say alcohol is more dangerous than marijuana, while just 9% think marijuana is more dangerous.
- Most Americans say that a presidential candidate using marijuana or supporting legalized marijuana would not make a difference in their vote.

Legalized Marijuana Use

56% of Americans say the use of marijuana should be legal – a new high, and a slight increase from a year ago. Now just 36% think it should not be legal, down seven points from last year.

Public opinion on legalizing pot has changed dramatically over the years. In 1979, just 27% said marijuana use should be legal. As recently as 2011, a slight majority of Americans opposed legalized marijuana use.

		Should Marijuana Use be Legal?						
		Now	4/2015	2/2014	4/2013	10/2011	7/2009	7/1979
Yes	56%	53%	51%	45%	40%	41%	27%	
No	36	43	46	45	51	52	69	

A majority of men continues to favor marijuana legalization (59%), and now most women favor it as well (54%). Most Americans under 65 support legal marijuana use, particularly younger adults: 71% of adults under 35 think marijuana use should be legal, a jump of 10 points since last year. Older Americans tend to think differently: Just 31% of Americans 65 and over think marijuana use should be legal.

There are partisan differences too. Most Democrats and independents think marijuana use should be legal, while most Republicans do not. Support among independents for legalized marijuana use has risen seven points since last year.

Marijuana Use Should be Legal

	Now	One Year Ago
Total	56%	53%
Men	59%	58%
Women	54%	48%
18-34	71%	61%
35-64	57%	54%
65+	31%	36%
Reps	44%	45%
Dems	63%	60%
Inds	58%	51%

There is even greater support for allowing doctors to prescribe small amounts of marijuana for patients suffering from serious illnesses: nearly nine in 10 think this should be allowed.

Should Doctors be Allowed to Prescribe Marijuana for Medical Use?

	Now	4/2015	11/2012	10/2011	1/1997
Allowed	87%	84%	83%	77%	62%
Not allowed	11	13	13	17	33

Marijuana use remains illegal under federal law, though a majority of Americans don't think this is a matter that should involve the federal government. Six in 10 think legalizing marijuana should be left up to each state government to decide rather than be decided by the federal government.

Who Should Determine Whether Marijuana is Legal?

	Now	4/2015	1/2014	11/2012	9/2012
State governments	59%	58%	62%	59%	62%
Federal governments	33	37	35	34	32

One in Two Americans Have Now Tried Marijuana

The percentage of Americans who say they have personally tried marijuana has risen sharply over the past twenty years, and it has jumped eight points since just last year. 51% of Americans say they have tried marijuana, up from 43% a year ago. Most men and most Americans under 65 have tried marijuana, while most women and most seniors have not.

Have You Ever Tried Marijuana?

	Now	4/2015	1/1997
Yes	51%	43%	34%
No	47	56	65

Marijuana vs. Alcohol

52% of Americans view marijuana as safer than alcohol; just 9% thinks it is more harmful. 27% volunteer that both are equally harmful, while 9% pick neither. 68% of Americans who have tried marijuana think alcohol is more harmful, while those who have not are more likely to think they are equally harmful.

Marijuana or Alcohol: Which is More Harmful?

	Total	Tried Marijuana	Not Tried Marijuana
Alcohol	52%	68%	33%
Marijuana	9	5	14
Neither	9	10	9
Both equally (vol.)	27	15	40

Marijuana and the Presidential Campaign

The issue of legalizing marijuana doesn't seem to matter much in how Americans might cast their vote for president. Six in 10 Americans say it wouldn't matter if a presidential candidate supported legalizing marijuana use, including most Republicans, Democrats, and independents. Of those who say it would matter, Republicans are more likely to oppose a candidate who supported marijuana use, while Democrats would be more likely to support that candidate. Independents are divided.

If A Presidential Candidate Supported Legalizing Marijuana Use How Would it Affect Your Vote?

	Total	Reps	Dems	Inds
More likely to vote for the candidate	18%	9%	23%	20%
Less likely to vote for the candidate	21	35	13	19
Wouldn't matter	58	55	62	57

Whether a candidate has used marijuana in the past matters even less: eight in 10 say it wouldn't make a difference if a presidential candidate had used marijuana, including large majorities of Republicans, Democrats, and independents.

If A Presidential Candidate Used Marijuana, How Would it Affect Your Vote?

	Total	Reps	Dems	Inds
More likely to vote for the candidate	6%	3%	8%	6%
Less likely to vote for the candidate	12	19	8	12
Wouldn't matter	80	76	83	80

This poll was conducted by telephone April 8-12, 2016 among a random sample of 1,020 adults nationwide. Data collection was conducted on behalf of CBS News by SSRS of Media, PA. Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard land-line and cell phones.

The poll employed a random digit dial methodology. For the landline sample, a respondent was randomly selected from all adults in the household. For the cell sample, interviews were conducted with the person who answered the phone.

Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish using live interviewers.

The data have been weighted to reflect U.S. Census figures on demographic variables. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus four percentage points. The error for subgroups may be higher and is available by request. The margin of error includes the effects of standard weighting procedures which enlarge sampling error slightly.

This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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April 8- 12, 2016**

MJ-01. Do you think that the use of marijuana should be legal, or not?

	*** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ***				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Apr15a
	%	%	%	%	%
Legal	56	44	63	58	53
Not legal	36	51	29	34	43
Don't know/no answer	7	5	8	8	5

MJ-02. Do you think doctors should be allowed to prescribe small amounts of marijuana for patients suffering from serious illnesses, or not?

Allowed	87	82	92	87	84
Not allowed	11	17	6	11	13
Don't know/No answer	2	1	2	3	3

MJ-03. Do you think laws regarding whether the use of marijuana is legal or not should be (determined by the federal government), or (left to each individual state government to decide)?

State governments	59	70	55	56	58
Federal government	33	27	36	34	37
Both (vol.)	2	1	2	2	1
Don't know/No answer	6	2	7	8	4

MJ-04. Which do you think is more harmful to a person's health: (using marijuana) or (using alcohol), or don't you think either of them are harmful to a person's health?

Alcohol	52	44	55	53	51
Marijuana	9	15	8	7	12
Neither	9	7	9	10	6
Both equally	27	32	25	27	28
Don't know/No answer	3	2	3	3	3

MJ-05. If a candidate for president used marijuana in the past, would that make you more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for that candidate, or wouldn't this matter much in your vote?

More likely	6	3	8	6	4
Less likely	12	19	8	12	19
Wouldn't matter	80	76	83	80	75
Don't know/No answer	2	2	1	3	2

MJ-06. If a candidate for president supports legalizing the use of marijuana, would that make you more likely to vote for the candidate, would it make you less likely, or would the candidate's support of legalizing the use of marijuana not make much difference in your vote?

More likely	18	9	23	20
Less likely	21	35	13	19
Wouldn't matter	58	55	62	57
Don't know/No answer	2	1	2	4

MJ-07. Have you ever tried marijuana?

*** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ***

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Apr15a
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	51	45	55	52	43
No	47	52	44	45	56
Don't know/No answer	2	2	1	3	1

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	1,020	
Republicans	241	240
Democrats	338	324
Independents	441	457