



...working to legalize responsible adult use...

National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

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NORML Supports Personal Use Cannabis Cultivation in Washington

In November of 2012, 56 percent percent of Washington state voters approved Initiative 502 (I-502), which permits adults to legally obtain up to one ounce of cannabis from licensed retail facilities.

Separate provisions in this Initiative require the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to conduct research with regard to the law's impact on public safety. According to the Institute's 2017 report¹, the enactment of adult use cannabis regulation is not associated with increased cannabis use or abuse by young people. Authors reported, "[A]cross grades 6, 8, 10, and 12, cannabis use indicators have been stable or fallen slightly since I-502 enactment." They added, ""We found no evidence that I-502 enactment, on the whole, affected cannabis abuse treatment admissions. ... [and] we found no evidence that the amount of legal cannabis sales affected youth substance use or attitudes about cannabis or drug-related criminal convictions."

In addition, a separate 2017 review² published by the IZA Institute of Labor Economics reports that the enactment of cannabis legalization in Washington is associated with a drop in violent crime. Others' assessments of medical cannabis regulation states have yielded similar findings.³

Public polling indicates that support for cannabis liberalization in Washington has increased among voters in the years since I-502's passage. According to 2016 polling, 78 percent of Washington adults now support adult use cannabis legalization.⁴ Further, a significant portion of those voters who initially decided 'no' on I-502 now say that they support the law.⁵ Nationwide

¹ Washington State Institute for Public Policy. I- 502 Evaluation Plan and Preliminary Report on Implementation. http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1616/Wsipp_I-502-Evaluation-Plan-and-Preliminary-Report-on-Implementation_Report.pdf

² Dragone et al. 2017. Crime and the Legalization of Recreational Marijuana. <http://ftp.iza.org/dp10522.pdf>

³ Morris et al. 2014. The Effect of Medical Marijuana Laws on Crime: Evidence from State Panel Data, 1990-2006. PLOS One: <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0092816>

⁴ Subbaraman and Kerr. 2017. Support for marijuana legalization in the US state of Washington has continued to increase through 2016. Drug and Alcohol Dependence [http://www.drugandalcoholdependence.com/article/S0376-8716\(17\)30171-0/fulltext](http://www.drugandalcoholdependence.com/article/S0376-8716(17)30171-0/fulltext)

⁵ Subbaraman and Kerr. 2017. Marijuana Policy Opinions in Washington State Since Legalization: Would Voters Vote the Same Way? Contemporary Drug Problems <http://sci-hub.bz/10.1177/0091450916667081>

polling similarly shows record levels of support for cannabis legalization among voters.⁶ As a result, voters in eight states have now decided in favor of similar adult use regulatory policies.

However, unlike Washington, each of these states: Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Oregon, Nevada, permits adults to cultivate limited quantities of cannabis in their homes. Similar home use cultivation is also permitted in more than half of all states that presently regulate the use of cannabis for therapeutic purposes. Many of these programs, such as Washington state's own medical cannabis regulations, have been in place for the better part of two decades. They have not led to adverse consequences, such as a spike in home invasions or burglaries, nor is there strong evidence that cannabis from legally permitted home grows is being diverted to the underground market. In fact, to date, no state permitting home cultivation has ever amended their statutes to eliminate this practice.

Washington state possesses a nearly two-decade real-world experience with permitting patients to cultivate personal use quantities of cannabis in private. NORML believes that this right ought to similarly be extended to all adults. Such a change would make Washington's adult use regulations consistent with those of other states, as well as with its own existing medical use statutes.

NORML maintains that the inclusion of legislative provisions permitting the non-commercial home cultivation of cannabis serves as leverage to assure that the product available at retail outlets is high quality, safe, and affordable to the general consumer. Just as adults have the right to brew small amounts of alcohol for personal purposes, adults should also have the right to cultivate personal use quantities of cannabis at home. There is no reason or compelling state interest to infringe this right in a jurisdiction where the cannabis plant is no longer defined as contraband.

Therefore, NORML supports the enactment of public policies that will permit adults the legal option to cultivate personal use quantities of cannabis in their private residence for non-commercial purposes, presuming such activities are not readily accessible to children or create a public nuisance to neighbors or others in the community. NORML encourages members of the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board to recommend that lawmakers implement such changes in 2018.

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⁶ Quinnipiac summer 2017 national polling: <https://poll.qu.edu/national/release-detail?ReleaseID=2477>