

CBS NEWS POLL

LEGALIZING MARIJUANA

July 9-12, 2009

In the wake of California's economic troubles, there has been growing discussion about legalizing marijuana in part to raise revenue by taxing the sale of it. One group, the Marijuana Policy Project, is airing television ads in the state advocating for legalization.

A nationwide CBS News Poll out today finds that 41% of Americans think the use of marijuana should be made legal; 52% disagree.

The percentage supporting legalization has varied a bit recently. In March of this year 31% favored legalization, but the number was higher in January at 41%, matching what it is now. Thirty years ago just 27% thought the use of marijuana should be made legal.

SHOULD THE USE OF MARIJUANA BE MADE LEGAL?

	Now	3/2009	1/2009	7/1979
Yes	41%	31%	41%	27%
No	52	63	52	69
Don't know	7	6	7	4

Slim majorities of Americans under age 35 (52%) and liberals (55%) favor legalizing marijuana. By contrast, older people (36%) and conservatives (33%) are some of the least likely groups to back legalization. Men are a bit more likely than women to say using marijuana should be made legal.

Geographical region also impacts opinions. Opposition to legalizing marijuana is greatest in the South (59%), while over four in 10 of those living in other areas of the country support legalization.

46% of those residing in the west favor legalizing marijuana (the highest of any region), but 48% are opposed to the idea.

SHOULD THE USE OF MARIJUANA BE MADE LEGAL?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Total	41%	52	7
Men	44%	51	5
Women	39%	53	8
Under age 35	52%	38	10
Age 35 and over	36%	59	5
Northeast	44%	48	8
Midwest	43%	49	8
South	35%	59	6
West	46%	48	6

SHOULD THE USE OF MARIJUANA BE MADE LEGAL?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Liberal	55%	35	10
Moderate	41%	52	7
Conservative	33%	64	3

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 944 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone July 9-12, 2009. Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher.

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