

## The Impact of Marijuana Legalization on Crime

- Research on the relationship between recreational marijuana legalization and crime at the state level found no impact on crime (Maier et. al, 2017). A county level study found a reduction in certain types of crime when comparing Washington and Oregon, which legalized in different years (Dragone et. al, 2019), while research at the neighborhood level has yielded mixed results (Freisthler et. al; Hughes et. al, 2019; Burkhardt & Goemans, 2019; Brinkman & Mok-Lamme, 2019). However, police clearance rates have shown to be improved (Makin et. al, 2019), which could increase arrests as a result.
- An annual report published by the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice (Reed, 2018) has indicated that while they saw significant decreases in marijuana possession arrests (-51%) and sales (-17%) arrests between 2012 and 2017, production arrests saw a significant increase (+51%). Additionally, marijuana-related felony court filings, while seeing an initial decline between 2012 and 2014, had returned to near pre-legalization levels in 2017.
- According to the Florida Department of Corrections, in FY 18-19, the majority of marijuana-related new commitments are for sale/manufacture/delivery (112) and possession of marijuana over 20 grams (69). Trafficking in cannabis between 25 pounds and 2,000 pounds (36) and the sale of marijuana and other drugs within 1,000 feet of a church or business (38) are the other two offenses bringing in the most new commitments. Although sentencing data is not currently available for FY 18-19, in FY 17-18 roughly 3.0% of offenders were sentenced to prison for possession, while 10.2% were sentenced to prison for sale/manufacture/delivery.
- The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice also found that while the number of DUI citations issued decreased between 2014 and 2017, the prevalence of marijuana or marijuana-in-combination identified as the impairing substance increased from 12% of all DUIs in 2014 to 15% in 2017. Further information provided indicates a relative stability in marijuana citations in this time period, rather than significant growth. Furthermore, the number of fatalities in which a driver tested positive for Delta-9 THC, a possible indicator of impairment, saw a decrease from 13% of all fatalities in 2016 to 8% of all fatalities in 2017. Other research has indicated evidence of impaired driving in states where recreational marijuana was legalized, while the relationship between legalization and traumatic injuries or fatalities is mixed regarding whether or not there is an increase (Chung et. al, 2019; Lynch & McMahon, 2019; Leyton, 2019).
- A study of marijuana use amongst adolescents yielded mixed results when analyzing Washington and Colorado between 2010-2012 and 2013-2015, showing increased use among eighth graders (+2.0%) and tenth graders (+4.1%) in Washington, which was significantly different from the decreases found for those grades in states that did not legalize recreational marijuana use, while no significant differences in use were found in Colorado (Cerdá et. al, 2017). However, more recent studies utilizing different data sets have indicated small decreases for Washington 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders following legalization (Dilley et. al, 2019) and a decrease in teenage use for recreational marijuana legalization states relative to other states (Anderson et. al, 2019).

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