

Medical Marijuana

**Statewide Survey of 700 Registered
Voters in New Jersey**

presented to:

Drug Policy Alliance New Jersey

presented by:

the polling companyTM, inc.

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Introduction and Methodology

the polling company™, inc./WomanTrend is pleased to present to **Drug Policy Alliance New Jersey** this analysis of findings from a recent statewide telephone survey of 700 registered voters in New Jersey.

Interviews were conducted over three consecutive nights at a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility by telephone and with live callers. Respondents were randomly selected from a list of registered voters residing in New Jersey.

The survey was fielded May 23-25, 2006. The original instrument contained 24 questions, including 16 demographic inquiries, and was approved by an authorized representative of Drug Policy Alliance New Jersey prior to commencement of data collection.

The margin of error for the survey is $\pm 3.7\%$ at a 95% confidence interval, meaning that the data obtained would not differ by any more than 3.7 percentage points in either direction had the entire population of registered voters in New Jersey been surveyed. Margins of error for subgroups are higher.

Analysis of Findings

Top-of-Mind Associations with “Medical Marijuana” Show Positive Perceptions Dominate Negative Ones; A Plurality Link It To Curative Properties.

When asked to spontaneously offer what they think of when they hear “medical marijuana,” voters in New Jersey tend to focus on the first half of the term. A full one-third (34%) of New Jersey voters immediately thought of a treatment of disease or illness, including 23% who named specific uses for the drug, like helping cancer patients, pain management, and glaucoma.

Another 28% offered a non-specific positive assessment of medical marijuana, more than 2.5 times the number (11%) who responded negatively to the term. Another 17% offered no response at all, suggesting residual confusion or lack of clarity among some voters as to its true meaning, an information gap that could be narrowed through a voter education campaign and an increase in legislative activity.

What is the first thing you think of when you hear the term “medical marijuana”?
(OPEN ENDED – SELECT CODED RESPONSES)

34% MEDICAL USES (NET)

- 11% USED TO TREAT ILLNESSES
- 10% CANCER PATIENTS
- 7% PAIN MANAGEMENT
- 4% GLAUCOMA
- 1% CHEMOTHERAPY
- 1% AT RISK PATIENTS
- * ARTHRITIS
- * STOMACH AILMENTS
- * MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS
- * AIDS
- * ASTHMA
- * QUADRIPLEGICS
- * ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

28% APPROVE/POSITIVE (NET)

- 9% A GOOD THING/IN FAVOR OF IT
- 7% CAN HELP PEOPLE
- 6% SHOULD BE MADE LEGAL
- 5% PEOPLE SHOULD USE IT IF IT HELPS
- 1% NECESSARY

11% DISAPPROVE/NEGATIVE (NET)

- 9% DON'T APPROVE OF IT
- 2% IS USED THE WRONG WAY
- * A WAY TO MAKE MONEY
- * UNPROVEN

6% LEGALITY (NET)

- 4% IT IS ILLEGAL
- 2% DEBATE OVER WHETHER IT SHOULD BE LEGAL
- * CONTROLLED BY GOVERNMENT

6% DRUGS (NET)

- 5% DRUGS (NON-SPECIFIC)
- 1% DRUG ADDICTS

3% MISCELLANEOUS (NET)

- 2% SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED BY QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL
- 1% CALIFORNIA
- * RELATIVE
- * RESEARCH

17% DO NOT KNOW/NO ANSWER

New Jersey Voters Believe in the Medical Benefits of Marijuana.

A majority (59%) of voters in New Jersey believe in the “medical benefits” of marijuana, a surprisingly high number given conflicting reports about the topic that have been published recently. Only 17% dismissed the premise that marijuana has intrinsic therapeutic properties.

Interestingly, *a full 24% admitted they did not possess enough knowledge about the issue to render a judgment on way or the other.* The fact that one-quarter of voters remain undecided about the potential benefits of marijuana portends promise for those advancing the cause. It would have been just as easy for them to dismiss its prospective value out of hand rather than to admit a lack of knowledge. This group must be targeted aggressively with facts, figures, and personal anecdotes that underscore proponents’ position.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Marijuana has medical benefits”?

59% TOTAL AGREE (NET)

- 30% STRONGLY AGREE
- 29% SOMEWHAT AGREE

17% TOTAL DISAGREE (NET)

- 7% SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
- 10% STRONGLY DISAGREE
- 24% DON'T KNOW/UNSURE (VOLUNTEERED)
- * REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

An examination of the cross-tabs reveals the following:

- As household income and education increased, so, too, did likelihood of voters agreeing marijuana had legitimate medical purposes.
- Religiosity also played a role in the acceptance or rejection of medical uses for marijuana – the *more* often a voter attended religious services, the *less* likely he or she was to believe the drug was beneficial, although majorities of both agreed: 54% of those who attend services at least a few times per week believed it, vs. 70% who never attend services.
- Groups more likely than most to assert the treatment powers of marijuana included 35-44 year olds, 55-64 year olds, self-identified Democrats, moderates and liberals, and those who admitted to personally using marijuana or knowing someone who did.
- Those more apt than voters overall to deny any medical benefits of marijuana included 18-34 year olds, self-identified Republicans and conservatives, and urban dwellers.
- Voters more likely than most to be unsure about marijuana’s medical uses included seniors (65+) and South Jersey¹ residents.

Whether or not a voter believed that marijuana had medical benefits had a direct, causal connection to the extent to which he or she supported allowing seriously ill patients access to marijuana with a doctor’s recommendation and guaranteeing that ability by passing new legislation.

New Jersey Voters Overwhelmingly Approve Allowing Ailing Patients Access to Medical Marijuana with a Doctor’s Nod.

A majority of those surveyed said they believe in the medical benefits of marijuana, but these voters were even more convinced that “seriously ill patients should have access to marijuana for medical purposes if a physician recommends it.” By a margin of nearly 8-to-1 (86%-11%), New Jerseyans agree with this position. Support was both broad and intense, as a sizeable majority (63%) “strongly” affirmed that marijuana should be a treatment option for the gravely ill.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Seriously ill patients should have access to marijuana for medical purposes if a physician recommends it”?

86% TOTAL AGREE (NET)

63% STRONGLY AGREE

23% SOMEWHAT AGREE

11% TOTAL DISAGREE (NET)

3% SOMEWHAT DISAGREE

8% STRONGLY DISAGREE

3% DON’T KNOW/UNSURE (VOLUNTEERED)

- REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

¹ South Jersey includes Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem Counties.

Agreement spanned demographic divides, with no less than three-quarters of every major demographic group studied, including members of all three political parties, endorsing access to medical marijuana with a doctor's recommendation.

- A stunning 100% of voters who reported personally having suffered a disease or condition that could have been helped by medical marijuana² and 97% who knew someone in that situation agreed that seriously ill patients should be granted access to the drug.
- Belief in the existence of medical benefits of marijuana was a very significant factor in voter support: 97% of those who asserted that the drug *did* have actual medical uses agreed it should be available with a doctor's approval compared to just half that number (48%) who stated marijuana was *not* a legitimate treatment.
- Support for medical marijuana increased with voters' household income level and educational attainment.
- Other groups more likely than New Jersey voters overall to advocate allowing ailing patients to use marijuana for medical purposes included 35-44 year olds, 55-64 year olds, Central Jersey³ residents, self-identified liberals, and suburban residents.

Voters displayed similar support for medical marijuana when asked a separate, but related question pertaining specifically to allowing patients in New Jersey to use marijuana with a doctor's approval. After learning that "*the use of marijuana, including for medical reasons, is illegal in New Jersey [but] about 11 other states now allow seriously ill patients to have medical marijuana with a doctor's recommendation,*" more than 8-in-10 (83%) indicated that patients in their own state should have the same rights. Just 13% opposed the idea and a paltry 3% were unsure.

The demographic breakdown of support was also very similar to the results found in the previous inquiry, in that disagreement was scarce.

- Again, respondents who felt that they or someone close to them could have benefited from marijuana for treatment of an illness were nearly unanimously supportive of allowing others to use it (100% and 95%, respectively) with a physician's okay.
- Those who perceived positive medical benefits of marijuana were more than twice as likely to support giving access to marijuana to ailing New Jerseyans as those who denied its medical uses (95%-42%).
- As voters' household income increased, so did their inclination to grant seriously ill patients in New Jersey access to marijuana.
- Groups most apt to agree that Garden State patients should be allowed to use medical marijuana at the advice of their doctor included 35-44 year olds, 55-64 year olds, and self-identified liberals.

² Only 13 voters indicated that they had a disease or illness that could have been helped by marijuana – a sample size that is too small for meaningful statistical analysis.

³ Central Jersey includes Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean Counties.

Majority Would Get Marijuana for a Loved One in Need.

If a close friend or family member was suffering from a condition that could be eased by marijuana, more than half (59%) of New Jersey voters would defy current law to obtain the drug for him or her. A decisive 31% said they would not, and another 10% felt unsure about what they would do in that situation.

Intensity was notable on both sides of the issue: those convinced of their decision to obtain marijuana for a sick friend or family member outnumbered those who would just probably do so by 25 points (42%-17%); similarly, the number of voters positive they would *not* take that course of action were double those less certain of their refusal (21%-10%).

- Those most willing to break the law to get marijuana for an ailing loved one included “Junior Seniors” (55-64 year olds), self-identified liberals, and high-income earners (\$70,000+).
- Self-identified Republicans and conservatives, urban and rural dwellers, South Jersey residents, and those who attend religious services a few times a week or more expressed the strongest reservations about obtaining marijuana for someone whose pain might be eased by using it for that purpose.

To Each His Own: Medical Marijuana an Issue for the States.

A slim majority (52%) of New Jersey voters rejected centralizing power within Washington, DC and instead declared the decision on “whether to allow the use of marijuana for medical purposes” one for each state government to decide independently. By a 22-point margin, state governments were preferred to the feds (30%) as the arbiter of medical marijuana law. Another 6% felt “both” bodies should have a say, while only 6% said “neither,” underscoring opinions expressed elsewhere in the survey that the use of marijuana must be regulated, even if legalized.

- Majorities of adherents to all three political “parties” agreed laws governing medical marijuana should be written and enforced by the states.

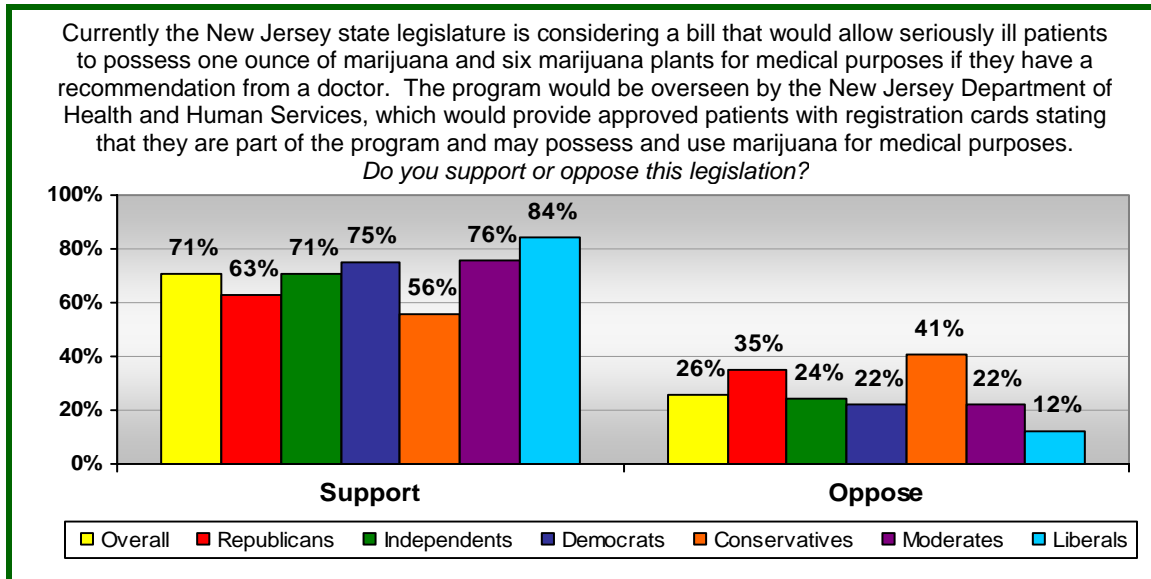
Do you think the decision on whether to allow the use of marijuana for medical purposes should be decided by each state government or the by the federal government?

52%	STATE GOVERNMENT
30%	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
6%	BOTH (VOLUNTEERED)
6%	NEITHER (VOLUNTEERED)
6%	DON'T KNOW/UNSURE (VOLUNTEERED)
-	REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

While overall both men and women elevated states’ rights with respect to marijuana, there was a definite gender gap in the intensity of those feelings. Women were more likely than their male counterparts to suggest the federal government should have dominion (34%-25%), while men were more certain than women that the state should hold sway (57%-48%).

Clear Backing for Legislation Allowing Physician-Sanctioned Medical Marijuana.

The belief among New Jersey voters that seriously ill patients should be allowed access to medical marijuana is not a hypothetical one; rather, they support guaranteeing that right by law. As illustrated by the following graph, seven-in-ten (71%) respondents were in agreement with the New Jersey state legislature passing a bill that would permit patients to possess “one ounce of marijuana and six marijuana plants for medical purposes if they have a recommendation from a doctor,” and 47% did so “strongly.”

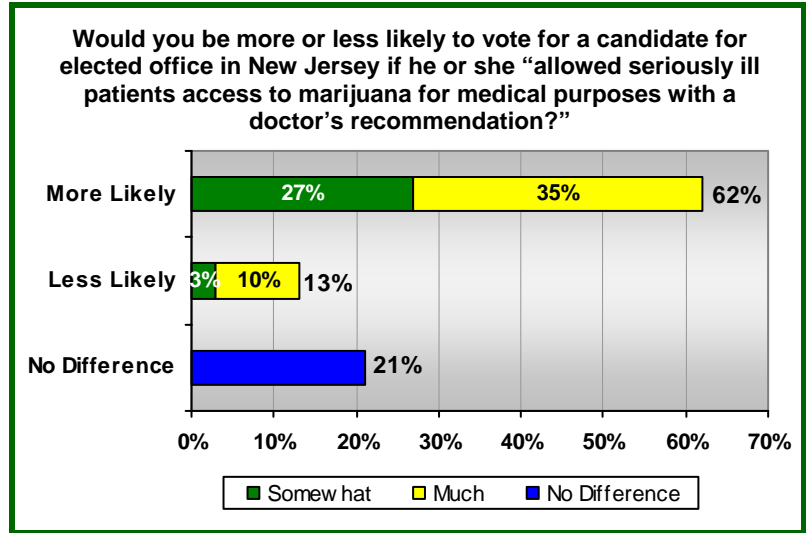


By comparison, 26% of voters opposed this legislation (19% of them with intensity). Just 3% remained undecided.

- The medical marijuana legislation achieved tri-partisan support as marked majorities of self-identified Democrats (75%), Independents (71%), and Republicans (63%) supported its passage in New Jersey.
- Agreement with this bill was more stratified along the ideological spectrum, with 28-points separating conservatives and liberals.
- Voters who believed that marijuana had medical benefits were more than 2.5 times as likely as those who did not see it as a legitimate medical treatment to support this legislation (85%-32%).
- As voter education level and household income grew, so did agreement with medical marijuana legislation.
- As religiosity *decreased*, likelihood of respondents backing this bill *increased*.
- Voter groups more likely than most to support the legislation included 35-44 year olds, 55-64 year olds, Central Jersey residents, and those with parents and/or grandparents still living.

Pro-Medical Marijuana Platform 49-point Net Positive for NJ Candidate.

A candidate who spoke in favor of allowing ailing patients access to medical marijuana upon the advice and consent of a physician would find strong support among New Jersey voters. In fact, votes were nearly five times as likely to vote for him or her based on this position alone (62%-13%). An additional one-in-five remained unmoved by this alone; 21% who said it would “make no difference.”



- While self-identified Democrats (66%) were the most likely to endorse this candidate, majorities of Independents (63%) and Republicans (52%) agreed
- Groups more likely than voters overall to back a candidate who supported allowing patients to access marijuana if it is recommended as a treatment by their doctor included 55-64 year olds, Blacks, self-identified liberals, and those who agreed that marijuana has medical benefits.

Though there were definite demographic differences, support for this legislation crossed party, ideological, economic, and social lines and truly united the voters of New Jersey. While some regard medical marijuana as a “controversial” issue, it appears, on the contrary, to be quite mainstream in its acceptance. Political leaders have little excuse for delaying passage of a “compassionate use” law in New Jersey and should be urged that doing so will actually improve their standing in the eyes of many viewers.