



**TO:** Graham Boyd and Taylor West  
New Approach PAC

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**RE:** Implications of the November 2020 Election for Marijuana Legalization

**DATE:** December 9, 2020

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The bipartisan research team of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (D) and Fabrizio, Lee & Associates (R) recently completed<sup>1</sup> a post-election survey of voters in four states that voted to legalize adult use of recreational marijuana in November 2020: **Arizona, Montana, New Jersey and South Dakota.** The data have important implications for the continuing national conversation around marijuana laws. They show:

- strong support for legalization in principle across the ideological spectrum, reflecting steadily more positive attitudes from voters of all parties;
- a widespread belief that state legalization efforts should proceed free from federal interference; and
- a strong conviction that marijuana legalization is a non-partisan issue.

Key specific findings of the survey include:

- **More than two-thirds of voters in these states support the legalization of marijuana in principle - exceeding the proportion that voted in favor of this year's measures.** Across the four states (as detailed in Figure 1 below), more than two-thirds (68%) of voters feel marijuana should be taxed, regulated and legalized for adults -- more than half (55%) "strongly." This

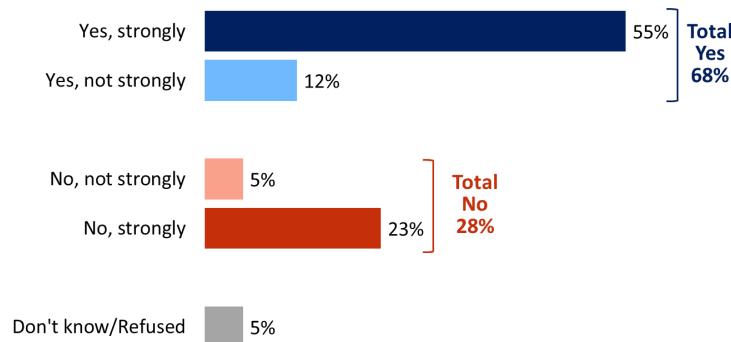
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<sup>1</sup> **Methodology:** From Nov. 5-8, 2020, FM3 and Fabrizio Lee completed 1,602 interviews (via landlines and cell phones) with randomly-selected voters who participated in the November 2020 election in Arizona, Montana, New Jersey and South Dakota (at least 400 per state). The margin of sampling error is +/-2.5% at the 95% confidence level for the full sample, and +/-4.9% for each state individually; margins of error for other subgroups within each sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.

comes despite the fact that voters in these states favored Donald Trump over Joe Biden by a combined five points (48% to 43%) and are more than twice as likely to identify as conservative (41%) as liberal (20%).

**Figure 1: Support for Marijuana Legalization in Principle**

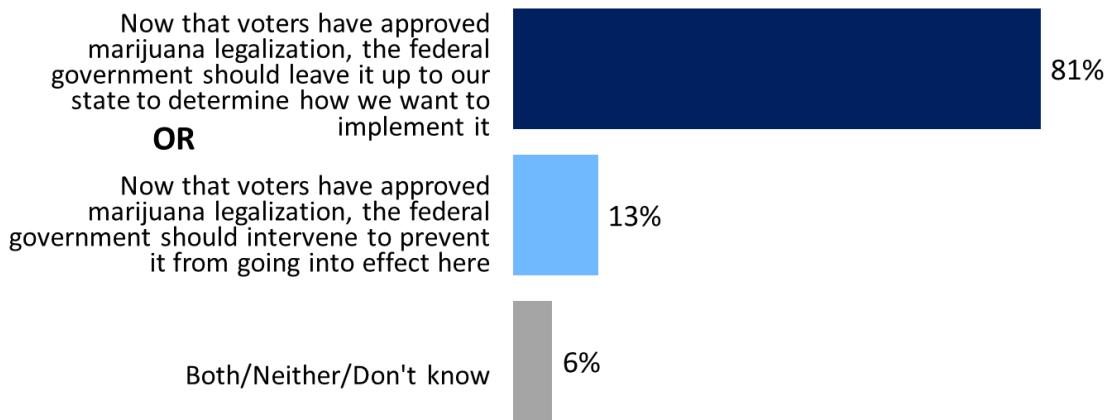
*Regardless of how you feel about this measure/these measures, do you think marijuana should be taxed, regulated, and legalized for adults?*



The view that marijuana should be legal in principle cuts across every major demographic subgroup of these states' electorates, including:

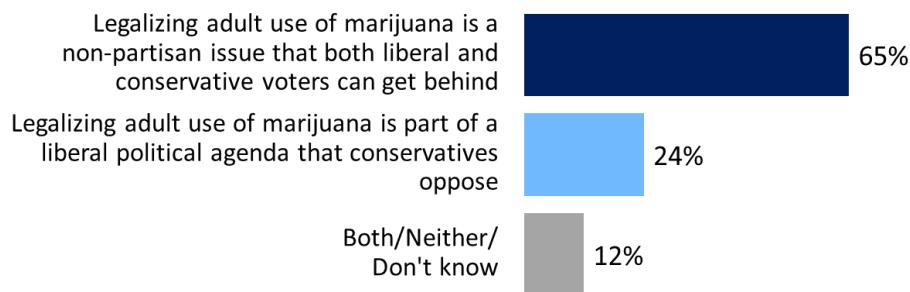
- 67% of men and 68% of women;
  - Majorities of every age cohort, including 83% of voters under 30 and even 52% among those 75 and older;
  - 85% of Democrats, 66% of independents and even 53% of Republicans;
  - 68% of white voters, 74% of Latino voters, and 67% of Black voters;
  - 84% of Biden voters, 54% of Trump voters, and 90% of Jorgensen voters; and
  - Substantial majorities of nearly every stripe of Republican: 64% of those under age 40, 55% of those aged 40 to 59; 56% of men and 51% of women, and 70% of self-identified liberals and moderates. The exceptions -- Republicans over age 60 and conservative Republicans -- are divided, with 47% and 49% support in principle, respectively.
- **By a wide margin, voters reject the idea of federal interference with states' action to legalize marijuana.** As shown in Figure 2 below, more than four in five voters want their state to be left to implement marijuana legalization without federal interference. This sentiment is completely bipartisan, and is shared by 89% of Democrats, 82% of independents, and 74% of Republicans. In fact, there are few demographic subgroups where fewer than seven in ten voters oppose federal intervention.

**Figure 2: Implementation Preference**



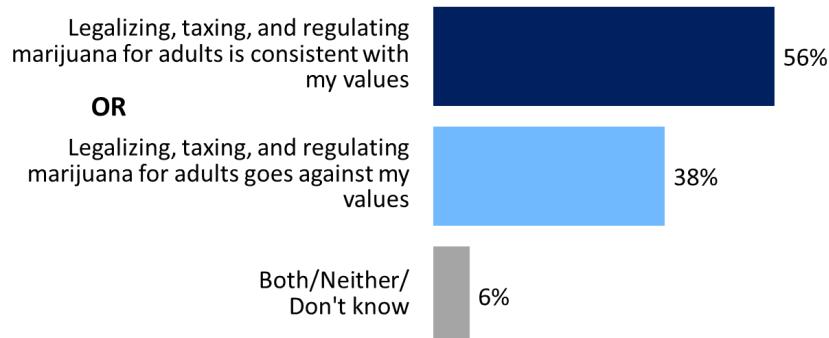
- **Despite polarization on many other issues, nearly two-thirds of these voters see marijuana as a nonpartisan issue.** As shown in Figure 3, two-thirds (65%) of voters across these four states see legalization of marijuana as an issue that "both liberal and conservative voters can get behind." This is the position of 79% of Democrats, 65% of independents, and 53% of Republicans -- including a majority (51%) of self-described "conservative Republicans."

**Figure 3: View of Marijuana Legalization as a Partisan Issue**



- **Most voters see marijuana legalization as consistent with their values.** By an 18-point margin, voters in these states say that legalizing, taxing and regulating marijuana is "consistent with" (56%) rather than opposed to (38%) their values. This sentiment is shared by Democrats (75%), independents (56%), and even liberal and moderate Republicans (52%).

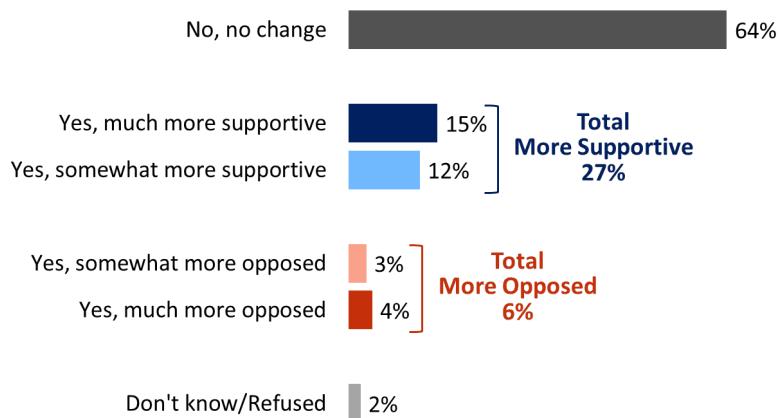
**Figure 4: Values Related to Marijuana Legalization**



- These views reflect shifting attitudes toward marijuana, which are growing more positive across the electorate. All of these positive sentiments reflect a marked change in voter attitudes toward marijuana over the past few years. Overall, as shown in Figure 5, more than one-quarter of voters (27%) say they have become more supportive of marijuana legalization over the past few years -- more than four times as many as say they have become less supportive (just six percent). These shifting views are common to voters of all parties - with 33% of Democrats, 25% of independents, and 23% of Republicans having grown more supportive in the past few years - in each case more than double the proportion who have grown more opposed.

**Figure 5: Change in Views of Marijuana Legalization**

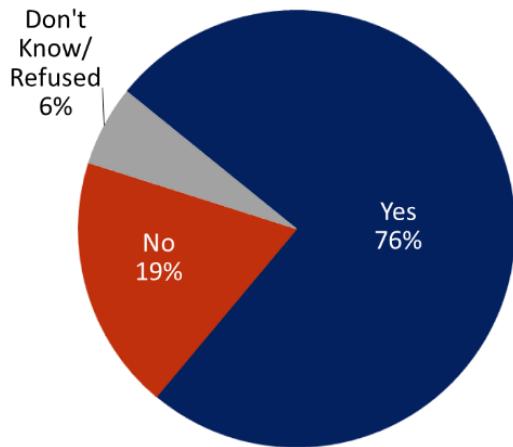
*Would you say your opinions about legalizing marijuana for adults have shifted in the last few years?*



- There is an overwhelming consensus that national legalization is inevitable. As shown in Figure 6 below, more than three-quarters of voters in these states believe this policy change is inevitable nationwide - a conviction that crosses all demographic and ideological lines - even among conservative Republicans.

**Figure 6: Inevitability of Marijuana Legalization**

*In general, do you believe that the national legalization of marijuana in the United States is inevitable?*



In sum, public opinion in the four states that legalized marijuana this fall shows a pattern of shifting opinions that bodes well for marijuana policy reform across the country. Support for legalization in principle has become broad, strong, and bipartisan - reflecting a steady positive shift in perceptions of voters of all parties over the last few years. Voters see marijuana legalization as a non-partisan issue, and a policy that is consistent with their values. And looking forward, voters view marijuana legalization at the national level as inevitable, and emphatically reject the idea of federal intervention in states enacting legalization policies.