

Should Washington Legalize Marijuana?

a look at both sides of I-502...

(appearing on the November 6, 2012 general election ballot in Washington State)

Are you ready to vote?

Have you heard about Initiative 502 to legalize marijuana?

What impact could the passage of I-502 have on Jefferson County and Washington State?

In an effort to provide education and information about issues pertinent to substance abuse prevention, intervention, treatment and aftercare, the following information is provided by the: Jefferson County Community Network, Port Townsend Coalition and Jefferson County's Substance Abuse Advisory Board.

Here is how Initiative 502 will appear on your ballot:

Initiative Measure No. 502 concerns marijuana.

This measure would license and regulate marijuana production, distribution, and possession for persons over twenty-one; remove state-law criminal and civil penalties for activities that it authorizes; tax marijuana sales; and earmark marijuana-related revenues.

Should this measure be enacted into law?

Yes
 No

Topics Surrounding the Initiative:	Proponents of I-502 state the following*: [1]	Opponents of I-502 state the following:
\$582 Million in New Revenue Generated Every Year [2]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the state Office of Financial Management, a new 25% marijuana excise tax, combined with retail sales and B&O tax, will generate more than half a billion dollars in new revenue each year 40% of the new revenues will go to the state general fund and local budgets 60% will be dedicated to substance-abuse prevention, research, education and health care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxing marijuana will not help our economy. Any taxes collected by state or cities on the sales of marijuana (or income taxes on marijuana businesses) are subject to seizure by the federal government because they are proceeds of illegal drug trafficking. [3] Revenue would pale in comparison to social and health costs. Taxes cover just 7.8% of the \$185 billion in social costs associated with alcohol (medical, law enforcement, legal, treatment, etc.). [4] Dedicated funds for prevention are not sustainable—The state legislature can divert dedicated funds to the state general fund just two years after an initiative is approved by the people. [5]
Privately Owned and Operated Washington Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WA farmers and businesses will be allowed to apply for special licenses to grow & sell marijuana Marijuana will only be available in stores that sell no other products, are located at least 1000 feet from schools, playgrounds & parks, and do not display marijuana in a way that is visible to the public State employees will not be involved in growing, distributing, or selling marijuana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income taxes on marijuana businesses are subject to seizure by the federal government because they are proceeds of illegal drug trafficking [6]



Note: Majority of information in "Proponents" Column comes from New Approach Washington-www.newapproachwa.org, unless otherwise noted

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Impact on Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I-502 tightly restricts advertising and bans advertising in places frequented by youth New tax revenue is dedicated to proven community and school-based prevention programs Selling marijuana to minors will remain a felony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I-502 does not restrict marijuana advertising on broadcast media, print media, or the Internet. If legalized, marijuana distributors would be free to advertise marijuana just like alcohol. [7] Youth will have increased access to marijuana at home, at parties, and by giving money to someone older to buy it for them. When drugs are illegal, youth perceive them to be risky. Decreased perception of risk and increased availability of drugs show increases in youth use. [8] Marijuana is particularly harmful to the developing youth brain—may permanently impact IQ scores if smoked heavily prior to age 18. [9] Marijuana is the #1 reason youth enter substance abuse treatment in WA, even though alcohol is more commonly used. [10]
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State agencies will regulate numbers of stores per county, operating hours, security, quality control, labeling, and other health and safety issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legalizing a drug does not control access to it: Alcohol is tightly regulated, but it is the #1 drug of choice among youth. Tobacco is tightly regulated, but is the #2 drug of choice among youth. [11] Alcohol is the most widely abused substance in America. Alcohol taxes pay for only 7.8% of their societal costs (youth and adult). [12] The abuse of prescription drugs, some of the most tightly regulated substances in our country, is exploding, regardless of age. In 2009, 28% of fatally injured drivers tested positive for marijuana use [13] The American Medical Association, the American Society of Addiction Medicine, and the American Academy of Pediatrics oppose the legalization of marijuana [14] I-502 contains no funding for substance abuse treatment programs
Law Enforcement, Public Safety and Road Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new marijuana DUI standard that operates like the alcohol DUI standard will be established I-502 sets a science-based limit of 5ng/ml active THC blood concentration Police officers still need proof of impairment to make an arrest and take a driver to a medical professional for a blood draw-just like current law New Approach Washington ad states, "Frees up police to go after violent crime instead" [15] Will eliminate millions of dollars spent by Washington taxpayers on legal and judicial costs including building new jails. [16] <p data-bbox="375 1963 966 2005">*Note*: Majority of information in "Proponents" Column comes from New Approach Washington-www.newapproachwa.org, unless otherwise noted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cost of public safety will increase because with increased access, use will also increase and will have a larger burden on law enforcement. Between 2000-2011, 138,000 people in WA were arrested with marijuana-related charges as one of their offenses. NONE of them were arrested with marijuana possession as the most serious crime. NONE were sent to jail solely because they possessed marijuana for personal use. [17] Of those arrested with marijuana-related charges as one of their offenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -42% were under the age of 21 -86% were white -8% were black -6% were another race [18]

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Medical Marijuana Patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I-502 does not change WA's medical marijuana law Patients will finally receive protection from arrest because possession will no longer be a crime for anyone 21 or older Patients will finally receive access to safe, secure, reliable, and quality-controlled marijuana that has been grown locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are likely medical benefits from some parts of the marijuana plant. This is very different than legalizing smoked marijuana. The FDA has concluded that no sound scientific studies have supported the medical use of smoked marijuana for treatment. According to the Institute of Medicine, smoking marijuana is an unsafe delivery system that produces harmful effects. [19] Collective gardens are legal under state law, but remain illegal federally. [20]
Organized Crime and Gang Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Approach Washington ad states, "We would control the money, not the gangs" [21] "Marijuana prohibition has wasted billions of American taxpayers' dollars and has made our communities less safe. Just as when we repealed alcohol Prohibition, we need to take the marijuana profits out of the hands of violent organized crime." [22] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legalizing marijuana will not rid our state of organized crime Marijuana is only one, and a small percentage, of many illicit substances that are sold by drug-trafficking organizations. They are diversified and sell cocaine, meth, ecstasy and other drugs in addition to marijuana. [23] The taxation structure of I-502 may render legal marijuana as expensive as illicit marijuana. Organized crime will undercut the legal price and will compete successfully with the legal market. [24]
<p>"Marijuana is not an addictive drug."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>"Isn't marijuana generally harmless?"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Be aware that misinformation about marijuana is common. Trying to protect young people has encouraged exaggeration. On the one hand, it's rarely acknowledged that most adults who use marijuana do so without harm, but on the other, it's often claimed that marijuana is harmless. A useful website for science-based knowledge about marijuana is offered by the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute at the UW: http://ada.i.uw.edu/marijuana/."</i> [25] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marijuana is classified as a Schedule I drug meaning it has a high potential for abuse and no current accepted medical use in the US [26] Risks associated with marijuana use include learning and memory problems, increased risk of mental illness and compromised judgment which can lead to risky behavior [27] 9% of marijuana users become addicted. In 2010, 4.5 million people met the criteria for addiction (more than pain reliever, cocaine, hallucinogens and heroin... COMBINED!) [28] Marijuana addiction is linked to a withdrawal syndrome similar to that of nicotine withdrawal, which can make it hard to quit. People trying to quit report irritability, sleeping difficulties, craving and anxiety. [29]
Regulates Where Marijuana May be Used or Grown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibits public use and display of marijuana Does not allow home growing for people who are not medical marijuana patients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legalization would create unhealthy social norms, decrease youth perception of harm of the drug and subsequently increase use

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Additional Internet Resources:

- **Full Text of Initiative Measure 502:** https://wei.sos.wa.gov/agency/osos/en/press_and_research/PreviousElections/2012/General-Election/Documents/I-502_complete_text.pdf
- **WA 2012 General Election Voters' Guide for I-502:** https://wei.sos.wa.gov/agency/osos/en/press_and_research/PreviousElections/2012/General-Election/Pages/Online-Voters-Guide.aspx
- **Washington Association for Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention's (WASAVP) "Marijuana Education Toolkit:** <http://wasavp.org/marijuana-education-toolkit/>
- **New Approach Washington (Yes on I-502)'s Website:** <http://www.newapproachwa.org/>
- **No on I-502's Website:** <http://www.nooni502.com/wordpress/>

Will You Vote to Legalize Marijuana?



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