



Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy

DRUG POLICY

Marijuana Reform: Fears and Facts

Three ways to reform marijuana laws

- **Decriminalization:** Lowers status and penalties, reduces chances of getting a criminal record
- **Medical Marijuana:** Proven to help a variety of medical conditions; whole-plant medicine better than CBD-only; components of this complex plant work better together than in isolation
- **Legalization:** Colorado, Washington, Alaska, Oregon

What will happen if Texas changes its laws?

- Teen use has not increased significantly in states that have decriminalized, allowed medical marijuana, or legalized recreational use.
- Crime rates have not increased in Colorado. Some crimes have declined.
- Traffic accidents and fatalities have not increased in Colorado. Driving while using marijuana is considerably safer than driving while using alcohol or a cell phone, especially when texting. Driving while using any drug at intoxicating levels is not safe.
- Tax revenues will increase and expenses used to arrest, process, and punish offenders will be reduced.
- People in need of the therapeutic benefits of marijuana will find relief and will reduce or eliminate their use of powerful and more dangerous prescription drugs.
- Life-ruining arrests and resulting criminal records will be greatly reduced.

Although reform of marijuana laws may lead to some increase in use, extensive evidence indicates that growth in problematic use will be minor or non-existent.

A majority of Texans believe our marijuana laws should be changed. Reform is coming. Texas can choose to lag behind and suffer continuing costs of prohibition or it can guide the rest of the nation toward responsible, practical, and effective marijuana policy.