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**RUTGERS-EAGLETON POLL: MAJORITY OF NEW JERSEY VOTERS  
SUPPORT MARIJUANA DECRIMINALIZATION**

**Overwhelming support for medical use**

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – In the almost 40 years since the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll first asked about penalties for marijuana use, New Jersey voters have become more relaxed about the issue, according to the latest poll from the Eagleton Institute at Rutgers University.

In May 1972, 40 percent of New Jerseyans said penalties for marijuana use should be reduced. Today nearly six in 10 feel the same. Just over half now think pot possession should not be penalized at all, up from 35 percent, and one-third would now completely legalize its sale and use, compared to 21 percent in 1972.

Like many other issues, marijuana has become more partisan over the years: in 1972, Democrats and Republicans were only four points apart, but today the gap has grown to 20 points, with 64 percent of Democrats, but only 44 percent of Republicans supporting reduced penalties for its use. At the same time, the vast majority of current respondents (86 percent) support the availability of medical marijuana by prescription, including 92 percent of Democrats and 77 percent of Republicans.

“When we first asked these questions in the early 1970s, Garden Staters were much less supportive, although attitudes became more liberalized throughout that decade,” said David Redlawsk, poll director and professor of political science at Rutgers University. “The change since then is significant, but not unexpected. What is new is the wide support for medical marijuana, even among those who otherwise oppose reducing or eliminating penalties for its recreational use.”

Today’s results are from a poll of 753 registered New Jersey voters, conducted from Nov. 9-12. The full sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.6 percentage points. The 1972 results are from a poll of 1218 registered voters, conducted during May 1972. This sample has a margin of error of +/- 2.7 percentage points.

**Not an issue in 1972, medicinal marijuana has broad support today**

While medical marijuana was not on the agenda in the 1970s, 86 percent of current respondents favor legalization for medical purposes. Support is strong across almost all groups of voters, though

there is stronger among the most highly educated (92 percent) compared to those with a high school education or less (80 percent). Age does not seem to play much of a role – those over 65 are just about as likely to support medical marijuana as those under 45.

Voters with household incomes under \$50,000 are slightly less supportive (84 percent) than higher earners (90 percent). Catholics (87 percent) are slightly stronger supporters than Protestants (82 percent) while virtually all Jewish respondents are positive. Race seems to play some role. Whites are more supportive of medical marijuana than blacks, 86 percent to 78 percent.

“The slowness with which the Christie administration appears to be implementing the medical marijuana law passed at the end of the Corzine administration seems to fly in the face of public opinion,” said Redlawsk. “While recent reports say some of the problem is related to the difficulties of opening the dispensaries called for under the law, public support for the concept is very strong.”

### **With increased overall support comes partisanship**

In 1972, only 40 percent of New Jerseyans believed that penalties for marijuana use should be reduced. By decade’s end, that had climbed to 51 percent. Today, 58 percent favor more lenient laws.

While support has climbed slowly, political partisans have grown apart on the issue of reduced penalties. By a 20-point margin, Democrats are more in favor of reducing penalties than Republicans. Fifty-eight percent of independent voters agree. In the 1972 poll, independents were the strongest supporters of reducing marijuana penalties at 53 percent. Democrats and Republicans were less likely to agree that penalties for marijuana use should be reduced and were only four points apart (42 percent and 38 percent, respectively).

Age cohorts have shown interesting changes. Those in their 20s in 1972 were the strongest supporters (66 percent). That same cohort – now in their 60s – is still supportive, but only by a 50 percent to 40 percent margin. Voters in their 50s are today’s strongest supporters (70 percent) for reducing penalties for marijuana use. “As they have aged, the young voters of the 70s have become somewhat less supportive of reduced penalties,” said Redlawsk. “Even so, while senior citizens are often more conservative on social issues, a majority continues to support greater leniency in marijuana use penalties.”

In 1972 there was a distinct gender gap on this question, with women significant less likely to support reduced penalties for use. Over the past 40 years, support among men is little changed at 56 percent, but support among women has grown dramatically from 37 percent in 1972 to 54 percent today.

### **Majority support eliminating penalties for possessing small amounts of marijuana**

More than half of respondents agree that penalties for possessing small amounts of marijuana should be eliminated; about one-third agreed 40 years ago. As with the question about use, the gap between Republicans and Democrats has grown. In 1972, 38 percent of Democrats and 29 percent of

Republicans supported eliminating penalties for possession. Today 60 percent of Democrats are in favor, as well as 42 percent of Republicans. Independents have also become more lenient; 56 percent now say penalties for possession of small amounts of marijuana should be eliminated. Previously, 45 percent felt the same.

Most age groups support eliminating possession penalties today, except for those in their 40s, who favor penalties by a 50 percent to 44 percent margin. This is in spite of the fact that the same group does support reducing penalties for use, by a 52 percent to 39 percent margin. “Those in their 40s came of age primarily during the Reagan-Bush years, which was an era of strong negative messages about drugs,” noted Redlawsk. “The results seem to be reflected here, with this group significantly less supportive of reduced penalties for use and possession than most others.”

In the early 1970s, education seemed to be a significant indicator of support for decriminalizing some marijuana offenses, with support increasing with the level of education. Today there is little difference among voters with different levels of education.

### **Completely legalizing the sale and use of marijuana is still opposed by most**

While generally supporting reduced penalties for possession and use of small amounts of marijuana, New Jersey voters remain adamantly opposed to complete legalization. Only 35 percent would support legalizing the sale and the use of marijuana, though this is substantially higher than the 21 percent reported in 1972.

Voters of all political leanings show increased support since 1972, with Democrats nearly doubling support to 40 percent (up 19 points), followed by independents at 37 percent (up from 30 percent) and Republicans at 24 percent, who also nearly double their 14 percent support 40 years ago.

The historical data shows that in the early 1970s, younger people were more likely to favor the complete legalization of marijuana than older people. The same holds today, as those over 60 are more than 10 points less likely to support legalization than other age groups.

“Issues surrounding marijuana remain similar to where they were 30 or 40 years ago, when we last asked, but voters have become a bit more liberal over the years,” said Redlawsk. “Even so, people continue to stop short at complete legalization, except for medical use. There simply does not seem to be any momentum for going much further than that.”

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**QUESTIONS AND TABLES BEGIN ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE**

**Questions and Tables**

The questions covered in the release of November 30, 2011 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are Registered Voters (RV).

**Q. There have been discussions about the legalization of marijuana. Which of the following statements about the use of marijuana do you agree with? Do you agree or disagree that:**

**Penalties for the *use* of marijuana should be *reduced*?**

	Nov 11	Trend....					
		Jan 81*	Jan 79	Sept 77	April 77	Nov 74	May 72
Agree	58%	40%	51%	50%	54%	45%	40%
Disagree	35%	47%	46%	44%	42%	51%	52%
DK	7%	13%	3%	5%	4%	4%	8%
UWGHT N=	749	1003	1003	1006	1004	1001	1218

\* Note, January 1981 question asked: Do you favor or oppose reducing penalties for the possession of a small amount of marijuana?

	Party ID			Ideology			Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Mod	Conserv	HS or less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Agree	64%	58%	44%	78%	57%	39%	52%	54%	62%	66%
Disagree	28%	33%	50%	17%	36%	54%	39%	40%	33%	27%
DK	8%	9%	6%	5%	7%	7%	9%	6%	6%	7%
UWGHT N=	316	216	217	154	408	168	172	184	209	181

	Employment			Race			Age			
	FT	PT	Retired	Not Empl	White	Black	18-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Agree	63%	54%	51%	47%	57%	58%	63%	52%	70%	50%
Disagree	30%	38%	39%	46%	37%	31%	35%	39%	23%	40%
DK	6%	7%	10%	6%	7%	11%	3%	9%	7%	10%
UWGHT N=	357	68	220	99	593	64	116	157	180	285

	Income				Gender			Religion			Born Again
	< 50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	Jewish		
Agree	52%	61%	64%	65%	59%	54%	56%	50%	69%	40%	
Disagree	39%	34%	32%	27%	34%	38%	39%	42%	24%	52%	
DK	10%	5%	4%	8%	7%	9%	6%	8%	7%	8%	
UWGHT N=	163	212	140	101	350	399	314	215	54	108	

**Penalties for the *possession* of a small amount of marijuana should be *eliminated*?**

	Nov 11	Trend...			
		Jan 79	April 77	Nov 74	May 72
Agree	55%	51%	54%	46%	34%
Disagree	40%	46%	42%	51%	56%
DK	4%	3%	4%	3%	9%
UWGHT N=	750	1004	1004	1002	1218

**Attitudes toward Marijuana, Nov 2011**  
**Rutgers-Eagleton Poll**

	Party ID			Ideology			Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	HS Or less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Agree	60%	56%	42%	73%	54%	37%	54%	57%	55%	56%
Disagree	35%	38%	55%	24%	41%	60%	40%	40%	42%	40%
DK	5%	6%	3%	3%	5%	3%	6%	3%	4%	5%
UWGHT N=	316	217	217	154	408	169	173	184	210	180

	Employment				Race		Age			
	FT	PT	Retired	Not Empl	White	Black	18-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Agree	56%	42%	53%	56%	54%	56%	60%	44%	62%	54%
Disagree	39%	57%	41%	40%	42%	38%	38%	50%	33%	41%
DK	5%	1%	6%	4%	4%	6%	1%	6%	5%	5%
UWGHT N=	358	67	221	99	593	64	116	157	180	286

	Income				Gender		Religion			Born Again
	<50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	Jewish	Again
Agree	53%	58%	53%	57%	57%	51%	50%	50%	62%	46%
Disagree	40%	40%	44%	38%	38%	44%	46%	46%	31%	50%
DK	6%	2%	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%	7%	4%
UWGHT N=	163	211	140	102	352	398	313	216	55	109

**The sale and use of marijuana should be *completely* legalized?**

	Nov 11	Trend...			
		Jan 79	April 77	Nov 74	May 72
Agree	35%	25%	30%	23%	21%
Disagree	58%	71%	66%	73%	72%
DK	6%	4%	5%	4%	8%
UWGHT N=	750	1004	1004	1002	1218

	Party ID			Ideology			Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	HS Or less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Agree	40%	37%	24%	48%	38%	18%	30%	39%	35%	38%
Disagree	51%	56%	72%	46%	56%	79%	58%	58%	60%	55%
DK	9%	6%	3%	6%	7%	4%	11%	3%	5%	7%
UWGHT N=	316	216	218	153	409	169	173	184	209	181

	Employment				Race		Age			
	FT	PT	Retired	Not Empl	White	Black	18-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Agree	37%	36%	31%	35%	35%	38%	39%	35%	40%	29%
Disagree	56%	60%	62%	61%	60%	53%	57%	57%	54%	64%
DK	7%	4%	6%	4%	5%	9%	5%	8%	6%	7%
UWGHT N=	358	67	221	99	593	64	116	157	181	285

*Attitudes toward Marijuana, Nov 2011  
Rutgers-Eagleton Poll*

	Income				Gender		Religion			Born Again
	<50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	Jewish	
Agree	36%	42%	33%	35%	36%	33%	33%	29%	41%	24%
Disagree	57%	54%	62%	57%	57%	60%	62%	64%	54%	69%
DK	7%	4%	5%	8%	7%	6%	5%	7%	6%	7%
UWGHT N=	163	212	139	102	351	399	314	216	54	109

**Q. Recently New Jersey legalized the use of marijuana for medical purposes. Do you support or oppose making marijuana available for medical use by prescription?**

Support	86%
Oppose	11%
DK	3%
UWGHT N=	749

	Party ID			Ideology			Education			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lib	Middle	Conserv	HS or less	Some Coll	Coll Grad	Grad Work
Support	92%	85%	77%	96%	88%	70%	79%	85%	87%	92%
Oppose	5%	12%	20%	4%	9%	27%	19%	11%	10%	6%
DK	3%	3%	3%	0%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	1%
UWGHT N=	316	216	217	154	410	166	173	183	209	182

	Employment				Race		Age			
	FT	PT	Retired	Not Empl	White	Black	18-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Support	87%	89%	85%	81%	86%	78%	87%	86%	87%	83%
Oppose	11%	10%	10%	15%	11%	19%	11%	10%	9%	13%
DK	2%	2%	5%	4%	3%	3%	2%	4%	4%	4%
UWGHT N=	359	67	221	98	593	64	115	158	181	285

	Income				Gender		Religion			Born Again
	<50K	50K- <100K	100K- <150K	150K+	Male	Female	Catholic	Protestant	Jewish	
Support	84%	89%	88%	87%	86%	85%	87%	82%	98%	83%
Oppose	12%	9%	9%	10%	12%	11%	10%	14%	0%	16%
DK	4%	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	2%
UWGHT N=	162	213	139	102	349	400	314	215	54	109

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**Rutgers-Eagleton Poll November 9-12, 2011**

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone from November 9-12, 2011 with a scientifically selected random sample of 753 New Jersey registered voters drawn from a list of all NJ registered voters. Data are weighted to represent known parameters in the New Jersey registered voter population, using gender, age, race, and Hispanic ethnicity matching to US Census Bureau data. All results are reported with these weighted data.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error for 753

registered voters is +/-3.6 percentage points, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey registered voters favored a particular position, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 53.6 and 46.3 percent (50 +/-3.6) had all New Jersey registered voters been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by Braun Research Incorporated. The questionnaire was developed and all data analysis was completed in house. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, a non-partisan academic center focused on the study and teaching of politics and the political process.

<b>Weighted Sample Characteristics 753 New Jersey Registered Voters</b>			
<i>Based on Registration Status</i>			
34% Democrat	47% Male	15% 18-29	72% White
46% Independent	53% Female	35% 30-49	10% Black
21% Republican		28% 50-64	9% Hispanic
		21% 65+	