



## Study: Passage of Medical Marijuana Laws Associated With Reduced Incidences Of Alcohol-Related Traffic Fatalities



**Bozeman, MT:** The passage of medical cannabis laws is associated with a reduction in the public's overall consumption of alcohol and with [fewer incidences](#) of alcohol-related traffic fatalities, according to [data](#) published in the *Journal of Law and Economics*.

Investigators at Montana State University, the University of Oregon, and the University of Colorado assessed data regarding both alcohol consumption and traffic fatality rates for the years 1990 to 2010.

Authors wrote: "Using individual-level data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

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### Marijuana Sales Finally Underway In Nation's Capital

**Washington, DC:** Qualified District residents this week began [legally purchasing](#) cannabis for therapeutic purposes. So far, fewer than a dozen patients are registered participants in the nascent municipal program, which allows qualified persons with a doctor's recommendation and authorization from the DC Department of Health to obtain cannabis from DC-licensed dispensaries.

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### Comptroller's Office: Legalizing Marijuana In NYC Would Yield \$431 Million Annually In Savings And Revenue

**New York, NY:** Regulating and taxing marijuana for New York City residents age 21 and over would yield an estimated \$431 million in annual savings and revenue, according to a [report](#) released last week by the New York City Comptroller's Office. The mission of the Comptroller's Office is to ensure

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### Justice Department Says It Won't Challenge State Laws Permitting Marijuana Legalization And Sales

**Washington, DC:** Federal justice officials [will not challenge](#) the implementation of laws in Colorado and Washington that allow for the production, consumption, and sale of marijuana to those over 21 years of age. Voters in both states approved initiatives in November allowing for the licensed production and retail

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### Canada: Nation's Police Chiefs Endorse Plan To Cite, But Not Arrest, Minor Marijuana Offenders

**Winnipeg, Canada:** Canada's police chiefs have [endorsed](#) the notion of citing, rather than arresting, those persons found with personal use amounts of marijuana. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police voted overwhelmingly in support of the proposed policy

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## The Willamette Valley NORML News Report

is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit project to record and broadcast news, announcements and information about cannabis law reform.

The W-V-NORML News Report is produced by the Eugene, OREGON chapter of NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

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**WillametteValleyNORML.org**

## A Voice for Responsible Marijuana Smokers

Since its founding in 1970, NORML has provided a voice in the public policy debate for those Americans who oppose marijuana prohibition and favor an end to the practice of arresting marijuana smokers. A nonprofit public-interest advocacy group, NORML represents the interests of the tens of millions of Americans who smoke marijuana responsibly. During the 1970s, NORML led the successful efforts to decriminalize minor marijuana offenses in 11 states and significantly lower marijuana penalties in all others.

The oldest and largest marijuana legalization organization in the country, NORML maintains a professional staff in Washington, DC, and a network of volunteer state and local [NORML Chapters](#) across the country. Check 'em out, and find the one nearest you!

**The NORML mission is to move public opinion sufficiently to achieve the repeal of marijuana prohibition so that the responsible use of cannabis by adults is no longer subject to penalty.**

When marijuana is enjoyed responsibly, subjecting users to harsh criminal and civil penalties provides no public benefit and causes terrible injustices. For reasons of public safety, public health, economics and justice, the prohibition laws should be repealed to the extent that they criminalize responsible marijuana use. **NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws – is located at 1600 K Street, NW, Suite 501, Washington, DC 20006-2832. Phone (202) 483-5500, Fax: (202) 483-0057 or visit: [www.norml.org](http://www.norml.org)**

Willamette Valley NORML is your local network in the fight to reform state and federal marijuana laws, whether by voter initiative or through the elected legislatures. W-V-NORML will serve as an informational resource to media on marijuana-related stories, providing a perspective to offset the [anti-marijuana propaganda](#) from the government; lobby state and federal legislators in support of reform legislation; publish a regular [newsletter](#); host an informative web site; and serve as the umbrella group for a regional network of citizen-activists committed to ending marijuana prohibition and legalizing marijuana.

Along with their parent organization, W-V-NORML will sponsor public advertising campaigns to better educate the public about marijuana and alternatives to current marijuana policy; provide legal assistance and support to victims of the current laws; and promote relevant research.

W-V-NORML supports the right of adults to use marijuana responsibly, whether for [medical](#) or [personal](#) purposes. All penalties, both civil and criminal, should be eliminated for responsible use. W-V-NORML also advocates the legalization of [hemp](#) (non-psychoactive marijuana) for industrial use. **To find out more, like how you can help, call, write or visit our website. You'll be glad you did!**

<continued from STUDY: PASSAGE OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA LAWS ASSOCIATED WITH REDUCED INCIDENCES OF ALCOHOL-RELATED TRAFFIC FATALITIES, page 1 > ..., we find that MMLs (medical marijuana laws) are associated with decreases in the probability of [an individual] having consumed alcohol in the past month, binge drinking, and the number of drinks consumed."

Researchers further acknowledged that this general decline in the public's use of alcohol was likely responsible for a parallel decline in the number of alcohol-related traffic fatalities.

They wrote: "Using data from FARS (federal Fatality Analysis Reporting System) for the period 1990-2010, we find that traffic fatalities fall by 8-11 percent the first full year after legalization. ... Why does legalizing medical marijuana reduce traffic fatalities? Alcohol consumption appears to play a key role. The legalization of medical marijuana is associated with a 7.2 percent decrease in traffic fatalities in which there was no reported alcohol involvement, but this estimate is not statistically significant at conventional levels.

In comparison, the legalization of medical marijuana is associated with a 13.2 percent decrease in fatalities in which at least one driver involved had a positive BAC level. The negative relationship between the legalization of medical marijuana and traffic fatalities involving alcohol lends support to the hypothesis that marijuana and alcohol are substitutes."

Authors concluded, "We conclude that alcohol is the likely mechanism through which the legalization of medical marijuana reduces traffic fatalities. However, this conclusion does not necessarily imply that driving under the influence of marijuana is safer than driving under the influence of alcohol.

Alcohol is often consumed in restaurants and bars, while many states prohibit the use of medical marijuana in public. If marijuana consumption typically takes place at home or other private locations, then legalization could reduce traffic fatalities simply because marijuana users are less likely to drive while impaired."

*For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: [paul@norml.org](mailto:paul@norml.org). Full text of the study, "Medical marijuana laws, traffic fatalities, and alcohol consumption," appears in the Journal of Law and Economics.*

## Study: Cannabis Associated With Less Risk Of Traffic Accident Compared To Alcohol, Various Medicinal Drugs

**Lyngby, Denmark:** A driver's risk of being severely injured in an accident is highest after having either consumed alcohol alone, resulting in a blood/alcohol level above .08, or in combination with other psychoactive substances, according to the findings of a population-based case-controlled [study](#) published online in the journal *Accident Analysis and Prevention*.

Danish researchers assessed the overall risk of a driver being severely injured in an accident after having consumed alcohol, illicit substances, or various types of pharmaceutical drugs, including opioids, benzodiazepenes, or so-called 'Z-drugs' (sedatives/sleep aids) such as Ambien. Case samples (N = 2490) were collected from severely injured drivers in selected hospitals in six European countries. Cases were matched against nearly 16,000 randomly stopped controls. Odds ratios were adjusted for age, gender and country.



Investigators reported: "The highest risk of the driver being severely injured was associated with driving positive for high concentrations of alcohol ( $\geq 0.8$  g/L), alone or in combination with other psychoactive substances. ...The second most risky category contained various drug-drug combinations, amphetamines and medicinal opioids. Medium increased risk was associated with medium sized BACs (at or above 0.5 g/L, below 0.8 g/L) and benzoylcegonine. The least risky drug seemed to be cannabis and benzodiazepines and Z-drugs."

They concluded, "[A]mong psychoactive substances alcohol still poses the largest problem in terms of driver risk of getting injured." *For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: [paul@norml.org](mailto:paul@norml.org). Full text of the study, "Risk of severe driver injury by driving with psychoactive substances," appears online in Accident Analysis and Prevention.*

<continued from MARIJUANA SALES FINALLY UNDERWAY IN NATION'S CAPITAL, page 1 > The District of Columbia joins [20 states](#) that have enacted legislation allowing for the physician-authorized consumption of cannabis, [including Illinois](#) - which enacted legislation on Thursday,

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**<continued from previous page>** August 1 to establish a medical marijuana pilot program. More than ten states now license (or are in the process of licensing) producers to legally grow and dispense the plant.

Some 70 percent of District residents initially approved a municipal initiative in 1998 authorizing qualified patients to possess and consume the plant. However, Congress blocked city officials from implementing the voter-approved [law](#) until 2009. In 2010, members of the DC City Council amended the 1998 initiative to permit the tightly regulated production and sales of cannabis by licensed facilities. Members of Congress allowed the amended measure to become law without federal inference in July of 2010.

After numerous delays, DC regulators have finally begun authorizing physicians, patients, and dispensaries to begin participating in the city's medical marijuana program. The first District-authorized marijuana sales took place on Tuesday.

Under the DC law, qualified patients must obtain cannabis at a licensed dispensary. They are not permitted to cultivate their own cannabis or possess cannabis from some other supply source. Permitted dispensaries must acquire the cannabis they sell through licensed producers of the plant.



In addition to the District of Columbia, Arizona, Colorado, New Jersey, Maine, New Mexico, Rhode Island, and Vermont have licensed medical cannabis dispensaries up and running. (California dispensaries are not licensed by the state.) Similar dispensary outlets are in the process of opening in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Nevada and New Hampshire. [Legislation](#) to establish state-licensed dispensaries in Oregon is awaiting action from the Governor. *For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, or Erik Altieri, NORML Communications Director, at (202) 483-5500.*

**<continued from LEGALIZING MARIJUANA IN NYC WOULD YIELD \$431 MILLION ANNUALLY IN SAVINGS AND REVENUE, page 1 >** the financial health of New York City by advising the Mayor, the City Council, and the public of the City's financial condition. The report, entitled "Regulating and Taxing Marijuana: The Fiscal Impact on NYC," estimates that regulating and taxing the commercial production and retail sale of

cannabis to adults would yield an estimated \$400 million annually. This figure is based on existing estimates regarding cannabis' present market price and demand in New York City, as well as by calculating the imposition of an excise tax (on commercial production) and a sales tax (on retail sales).



Authors further estimate that \$31 million dollars would be saved annually by eliminating citywide misdemeanor marijuana possession arrests [NY State Penal Law 221.10 - possession of any amount of cannabis in public view], which in recent years have totaled [approximately 50,000 arrests per year](#) - largely as a result of law enforcement's aggressive use of ['stop-and-frisk'](#) tactics.

Persons arrested are often under age 25 and [disproportionately](#) are people of color. Combined, blacks and Hispanics make up 45 percent of marijuana users in New York City, but account for 86 percent of possession arrests, the Comptroller's report found.

The Office did not quantify the broader economic impacts of legalization, including the costs of lost time, work, and other opportunities currently imposed on those arrested. The report's authors also acknowledged that they did not quantify the costs of incarceration, which are largely borne by the state, or other secondary fiscal impacts of legalization, such as the positive or negative effects on public health spending.

Following the Office's analysis, City Comptroller and Mayoral candidate John Liu [spoke out in favor](#) of legalizing the consumption of cannabis by adults, stating: "New York City's misguided war on marijuana has failed, and its enforcement has damaged far too many lives, especially in minority communities. It's time for us to implement a responsible alternative.

Regulating marijuana would keep thousands of New Yorkers out of the criminal justice system, offer relief to those suffering from a wide range of painful medical conditions, and make our streets safer by sapping the dangerous underground market that targets our children." *For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500. Full text of the study is available online at: [https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/NYC\\_RegulateMarijRep.ort.pdf](https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/NYC_RegulateMarijRep.ort.pdf).*

<continued from JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SAYS IT WON'T CHALLENGE STATE LAWS PERMITTING MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION AND SALES, page 1 > sales of the plant, both of which are anticipated to begin early next year. A Justice Department [memorandum](#), authored by US Deputy Attorney General James Cole on Thursday, to US attorneys in all 50 states [directs](#) prosecutors not to interfere with state legalization efforts and those licensed to engage in the plant's production and sale, provided that such persons do not engage in marijuana sales to minors or divert the product to states that have not legalized its use, among other guidelines.

"This is a historic step forward," stated NORML Communications Director Erik Altieri. "Assuming the Department of Justice stays true to their word, these states and others will no doubt move forward with the state-licensed regulation of cannabis for adults. The public has evolved beyond the simplistic, failed policies of cannabis prohibition and are seeking pragmatic, regulatory alternatives. It is encouraging to see that the federal government no longer intends to stand in their way."

United States Attorneys will individually be responsible for interpreting the new federal guidelines and how they apply to any cases that they intend to prosecute. However, according to [sources](#) cited by the Huffington Post, "prosecutors would no longer be allowed to use the sheer volume of sales or the for-profit status of an operation as triggers for prosecution, though these factors could still affect their prosecutorial decisions." The memo affirms that cannabis still remains a [Schedule I](#) controlled substance under federal law.

To date, [20 states](#) and the District of Columbia have enacted legislation to allow for the physician-authorized consumption of cannabis. Seven of those states, as well as Washington, DC, also allow for the state-licensed cultivation and sale of marijuana to qualified patients. Two states - Colorado and Washington - allow for the licensed commercial production and retail sale of cannabis for non-medical purposes.

Earlier this week, United States Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, [scheduled](#) a Congressional hearing to discuss the present conflicts between state and federal marijuana laws. The hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, September 10, at 10am Eastern Standard Time. Both US Attorney General Holder and Deputy Attorney General James Cole are invited to testify at the hearing. *For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, or Erik Altieri, NORML Communications Director, at (202) 483-5500.*

<continued from CANADA: NATION'S POLICE CHIEFS ENDORSE PLAN TO CITE, BUT NOT ARREST, MINOR MARIJUANA OFFENDERS, page 1 > change at its annual meeting last week in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

"The current process of sending all simple possession of cannabis cases under the Controlled Drug and Substances Act to criminal court is placing a significant burden on the entire Justice system from an economic and resource utilization perspective," stated CACP President Chief Constable Jim Chu in a [press release](#).

The Association proposed allowing police the discretion to issue tickets for minor marijuana violators in lieu of making a criminal arrest. Allowing police to utilize this option would prevent offenders from "receiving a criminal record, which can place significant barriers on travel, obtaining employment, bonding and citizenship," the agency stated.

Variations of this policy, commonly referred to as 'decriminalization,' are presently imposed in [16 US states](#), including California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Mississippi, and Nebraska.

The Association's endorsement came just days after Justin Trudeau [admitted](#) to having used cannabis while serving as a member of Parliament. Public support for Trudeau, who is campaigning to become Prime Minister, has [increased](#) since his admission. *For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500.*

## Gallup: Self-Reported Marijuana Use Falling Dramatically Among Young Adults

**Princeton, NJ:** Self-reported use of marijuana by young adults has fallen dramatically in recent decades despite the liberalization of state marijuana laws, according to [survey data](#) published this week by Gallup.



According to the survey, 36 percent of Americans between the age of 18 and 29 have tried cannabis. That percentage is a marked decline from previous decades. In 1977, 56 percent of those between the ages of 18 to 29 reported consuming cannabis. A similar percentage reported using the plant in 1985, during the height of the Nancy Reagan '[Just Say No](#)' era. In 1999, 46 percent of Americans between 18 and 29 reported

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<continued from previous page> using pot. Since 1996, [20 states](#) have enacted laws allowing for the physician-authorized use of medical marijuana. [Two states](#) have legalized the plant's broader use by adults. Several other states, including California, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, have [decriminalized](#) marijuana possession offenses in recent years.

While self-reported marijuana use by young adults has declined, consumption by older Americans has increased. Among those Americans age 65 and older, self-reported use of cannabis rose from three percent in 1999 to 17 percent today. Among those aged 50 to 64, self-reported cannabis use doubled from 22 percent in 1999 to 44 percent today.

Overall, Gallup reports that 38 percent of Americans 18 and older have now used marijuana, up from 34 percent in 1999.

*For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: [paul@norml.org](mailto:paul@norml.org) or Erik Altieri, NORML Communications Director, at (202) 483-5500.*

## New Jersey: Governor Agrees To Amend Aspects Of State's Medical Cannabis Program

**Trenton, NJ:** Republican Gov. Chris Christie on Friday agreed to provisions modifying some of the rules governing the state's medical marijuana production and distribution program.



Governor Christie [expressed conditional support](#) for [Senate Bill 2842](#).

Specifically, he agreed to provisions amending the requirement that state-licensed medical cannabis producers and distributors be limited to providing patients with only three strains of the plant - a regulatory rule that has been in place since the program's inception some three years ago. Proponents of the rule change have argued that lifting the three-strain cap will foster the production and distribution of varieties of cannabis high in CBD ([cannabidiol](#)) content. Cannabidiol is a non-psychoactive cannabinoid that possesses a variety of therapeutic properties.

However, it is typically present only at [low levels](#) in conventional strains of marijuana, which typically are bred to possess higher quantities of THC - the primary psychoactive ingredient in cannabis. The

Governor [rejected](#) language in the bill that sought to simplify access to medicinal cannabis for qualified patients under age 18. Present regulations require an adolescent to receive approval from as many as three health care professionals - a pediatrician, a psychiatrist, and a physician registered with the state's medical marijuana program - before he or she may be legally able to access cannabis therapy. Adults only need a single recommendation by a physician registered in the state's program in order to qualify for a recommendation. To date, only two pediatricians and only 18 psychiatrists participate in the state's medical cannabis program.

The Governor also rejected language allowing for the distribution of cannabis-infused edible products, instead arguing that such products ought to be limited only to those under the age of 18.

Governor Christie's conditional vetoes send the bill back to lawmakers for further action. On Monday, members of the state Senate [voted 34-1](#) in favor of an amended version of SB 2842. Members of the Assembly have yet to take up the measure.

*For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, or Erik Altieri, NORML Communications Director, at (202) 483-5500.*

## Study: Cannabis Use Associated With 'Significant Improvement' In Palliative Oncology Care

**Haifa, Israel:** The consumption of cannabis is effective in treating symptoms associated with cancer and conventional anti-cancer therapies, such as nausea, weight loss, pain, and fatigue, according to observational study [data](#) published in the journal *Evidence-Based Complimentary and Alternative Medicine*.



Israeli investigators surveyed the use of cannabis on various cancer-related symptoms in 131 patients over the course of multiple interviews. Cancer symptoms as well as cannabis side effects were documented on numerical scales from zero to 4.

"All cancer or anti-cancer treatment-related symptoms, including nausea, vomiting, mood disorders, fatigue, weight loss, anorexia,

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<continued from previous page> constipation, sexual function, sleep disorders, itching, and pain had significant improvement," authors reported. "No significant difference was found in the level of infections, mouth dryness, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, and leukocyte count or albumin level during the time between the two interviews."

Researchers concluded: "The population of the prolonged users in the current study reported significant improvement in all aspects of supportive and palliative oncology care. ... A slight reduction in the need for opioids and antidepressant drugs was seen in the study group. ... [T]he improvement in symptoms should push the use of cannabis in the practice of oncology palliative treatment."

*For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: [paul@norml.org](mailto:paul@norml.org). Full text of the study, "The medical necessity for medicinal cannabis: prospective, observational study evaluating the treatment in cancer patients on supportive or palliative care," appears in Evidence-Based Complimentary and Alternative Medicine.*

## California: Law Change Leads To Dramatic Decline In Misdemeanor Marijuana Arrests

**Sacramento, CA:** The annual number of misdemeanor drug arrests has [fallen by nearly 50 percent](#) in California in five years, largely due to the imposition of a [2010 law](#) reducing minor marijuana possession offenses to a civil infraction.



According to figures released this week in the [2012 California Crime Report](#), statewide misdemeanor drug arrests fell from an estimated 133,000 in 2007 to some 72,000 in 2012. The

greatest decline was reported in marijuana misdemeanor arrests, which dropped from a near-record high of [61,000 prosecutions](#) in 2009, the year prior to the infraction law's passage, to [fewer than 8,000](#) in 2012. Stated Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director: "Rather than continuing to spend tens of thousands of dollars in police time and in judicial costs arresting and prosecuting tens of thousands of minor marijuana offenders, these state resources are now being reprioritized toward other, more important public safety activities."

In October 2010, Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation, Senate Bill 1449, into law reclassifying the adult possession of up to 28.5 grams of marijuana from a criminal misdemeanor to an infraction, punishable by a \$100 fine - no court appearance, no court costs, and no criminal record. Possession offenses involving quantities greater than 28.5 grams remain classified as misdemeanors. The [law](#) took effect on January 1, 2011.

Several other [states](#) - including Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and Rhode Island - similarly classify minor marijuana possession as a noncriminal offense.

Felony drug arrests in California also fell some 15 percent over the past five years, the 2012 report found. [Felony marijuana arrests](#) totaled 13,434 in 2012, down from 14,082 reported felonies in 2011.

*For more information, please visit California NORML at: <http://www.canorml.org>.*

## Study: Marijuana Consumers More Knowledgeable About Substance's Health Effects Than Non-Users

**Zurich, Switzerland:** People who consume cannabis are more likely to be knowledgeable about the substance's health effects than are those who abstain from it, according to survey [data](#) reported online in the *International Journal of Public Health Policy*.



Researchers at the University of Zurich in Switzerland assessed the health literacy of some 12,000 male subjects. Investigators reported that those subjects who consumed cannabis, alcohol, and tobacco "searched for information about substances significantly more often via the Internet than abstainers."

These subjects also "reported better knowledge of risks associated with substance use and a marginally better ability to understand health information than abstainers," the authors found. In particular, subjects who reported consuming cannabis at least once per week were [four times more likely](#) to search for health-related information as compared those who abstained, the study found.

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**News From your local affiliate of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws**

<continued from **STUDY: MARIJUANA CONSUMERS MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT SUBSTANCE'S HEALTH EFFECTS THAN NON-USERS** previous page> Researchers concluded, "Substance users appear to be more informed and knowledgeable about the risks of substance use than non-users." For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: [paul@norml.org](mailto:paul@norml.org). Full text of the study, "Health literacy and substance use in young Swiss men," appears in the International Journal of Public Health Policy.

Similar dispensary outlets are in the process of opening in Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nevada and New Hampshire.

Oregon is the fourth state this year to enact legislation allowing for the state-sponsored production and distribution of medical cannabis.

For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, or Erik Altieri, NORML Communications Director, at (202) 483-5500.

### **Oregon: Governor Signs Law Authorizing Medical Marijuana Dispensaries**

**Salem, OR:** Democratic Gov. John Kitzhaber has signed legislation, [House Bill 3460](#), into law establishing regulations for the creation of state-licensed medical cannabis facilities.



The law tasks the Oregon Health Authority with crafting rules and regulations over the following months to govern the new statewide distribution system.

Oregon voters initially [approved](#) a statewide initiative in 1998 mandating state lawmakers to allow for physicians to authorize qualified patients to consume and grow cannabis. However, that law did not explicitly provide legal protections for outlets that wished to dispense the substance to authorized patients. Presently, an estimated 200 unlicensed cannabis dispensing facilities are operating throughout the state. An estimated [57,000](#) Oregonians are registered with the state to consume cannabis for therapeutic purposes.

Arizona, Colorado, New Jersey, Maine, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington, DC now have licensed medical cannabis dispensaries up and running. (California dispensaries are not licensed by the state.)

### **Seattle: World's Largest Annual Marijuana Law Reform Festival Takes Place**

**Seattle, WA:** Event organizers are expecting to break attendance records this weekend for the 22nd annual [Seattle Hempfest](#), taking place this Friday through Sunday at Myrtle Edwards & Centennial Parks along the downtown Seattle waterfront.



This year's event will feature six stages of musical acts and speakers, including NORML [Board Members](#) Rick Cusick, Dale Gieringer, Madeline Martinez, Kevin Oliver, William Panzer, Keith Saunders, Jeffery Steinborn, and Keith Stroup. A complete schedule of speakers and performers is online here: <http://www.hempfest.org/festival/schedule/>.

In November, a majority of Washington state voters approved [I-502](#), a statewide initiative allowing for the licensed production and retail distribution of marijuana to those persons age 21 and over. State regulators are still [in the process](#) of finalizing rules overseeing the substance's cultivation and sale. For more information, please visit: <http://www.hempfest.org/>.