

There's still a stigma to pot | Sheneman cartoon

Updated Apr 6, 2018;
Posted Apr 6, 2018

SHENEMAN THE STAR-LEDGER



"THEY RAN A POLL ON YOUR PLAN TO LEGALIZE RECREATIONAL POT. 49% WERE IN FAVOR, 44% WERE OPPOSED AND 5% WERE PRETTY SURE THEY WERE TALKING TO A NARC."

114



2
shares

By Drew Sheneman

The Star-Ledger

Governor Phil Murphy campaigned on a multi-faceted platform of legalizing marijuana and not being Chris Christie. While the later aspect of his platform is proving to be quite popular, the former isn't as garnering the type of support one might have thought.



According to a new [Stockton University poll](#) only 49% of respondents supported the idea of legalizing marijuana for recreational use with 44% opposed. More interesting than the number of people opposed are the reasons they sighted for their opposition. It seems pot has yet to overcome the 'Refer Madness' era stigma of the devil's leaf.

In the poll folks sighted their fears of marijuana as a gateway to harsher drugs, a theory [debunked](#) by any number of studies and decades of anecdotal evidence. We're in the midst of a nationwide opioid epidemic linked directly to overprescription of pills that were hyped as a revolution in pain management and marketed directly to doctors. If you're looking for a gateway check with the pharmaceutical companies. They blasted that gateway open and drove an 18 wheeler full of fentanyl through it.

It's not surprising that people, like Jeff Sessions, still believe pot to be a societal ill. Most people have little contact with pot in their daily lives and are unmotivated to educate themselves on the subject during their nightly cocktail hour. All they know about weed is what countless stoner comedies have taught them.

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The problem is the continued criminalization of marijuana has a number of problematic real world effects, like the over burdening of the criminal justice system with non violent drug offenders, especially from communities of color. Legalizing pot could help to ameliorate that burden and raise some much needed tax revenue.



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