

OHIO PATIENT NETWORK

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THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN Medical Marijuana Polling 1996-2002

Key Findings

To illustrate that the medical use of marijuana, also known as cannabis, is overwhelmingly supported by the public and that, consequently, policy toward it should change, the Ohio Patient Network has identified and reviewed over sixty scientific surveys of the American public conducted from December 1996 through April 2002. Called *The People Have Spoken: Medical Marijuana Polling 1996-2002*, the key findings of this review include:

- Since the passage of California Proposition 215 in 1996, **sixty-six** separate scientific polls and studies have been conducted about medical marijuana both nationwide and in more than thirty states, representing the opinions of more than **50,000** respondents.
- Of those respondents, more than **two-thirds** (68%) aggregately support the medical use of cannabis. Those who oppose medicinal cannabis represent only one quarter of the populace.
- Favorable public opinion toward medical marijuana has **increased significantly** over the past six years.
- Polls taken prior to medicinal cannabis ballot initiatives successfully predict their passage every time.
- When the news covers medical marijuana, the public tracks it more closely than most other health issues.
- An estimated **nine million** people in the United States use cannabis medicinally.
- Over the last ten years, nearly **one-quarter of a million** people in the United States have been arrested on medical-marijuana-related offenses.
- The public believes the reports of patients and health professionals regarding the therapeutic value of cannabis; this widespread support should compel lawmakers to shift the policy on the issue.
- Democrats who “strongly favor” candidates who endorse medical cannabis outnumber those who “strongly oppose” it by **seven to one**. Republicans who “strongly favor” such candidates outnumber those “strongly opposed” by **two to one**.
- As many as **two thirds** of the voting populace will reward candidates who support medicinal cannabis. Fewer than one in four voters would more likely cast their ballot for a candidate that supports its prohibition.
- The depth and breadth of support for medical marijuana represents a major opportunity for the political party that chooses to seize it. By supporting this issue, the party can solidify its own base while assuming leadership on an issue that also enjoys substantial cross-party and general public support.

The People Have Spoken: Medical Marijuana Polling 1996-2002 can be found on the Ohio Patient Network Web site at <http://www.ohiopatient.net/>. Presentation-quality Portable Document Files (PDFs) of the report, its sources, and its data tables are also available.
