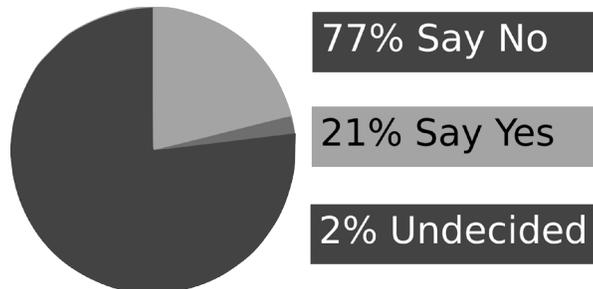


Decriminalization is a common sense approach to reducing the harms from marijuana laws, by treating possession of small amounts of marijuana as a civil violation. This entails a small fine like a parking or jaywalking ticket. Decriminalization will not affect penalties for people selling marijuana or consuming it in public. **Decriminalization lets police spend more time and resources on serious, violent crimes!**

A 2014 Survey asked if possession should be punished with jail time:^[1]



Q: Will decriminalization of marijuana increase use of marijuana?

A: No. Decriminalization **has not been** associated with increases in rates of use elsewhere. ^[3]

Q: Will decriminalization encourage kids to use marijuana?

A: No. Studies consistently show that use rates among young people are not affected by decriminalization, and that criminalization has no deterrent effect for young people. ^[4]

Q: What do people in Hawai'i think about the decriminalization of marijuana?

A: They support it! In 2014, 77% of Hawai'i voters said that people should not be sent to jail for simple possession of marijuana. ^[1]

Q: Does Federal law stand in the way?

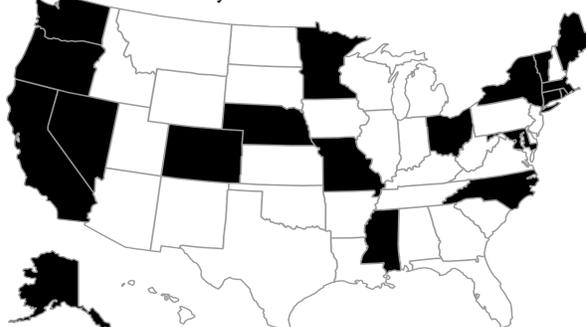
A: Not at all!

Nothing in the Constitution or federal law prohibits states from having penalties that differ from federal law. In *Gonzales v. Oregon*, the US Supreme Court explained, "the Controlled Substances Act explicitly contemplates a role for the States in regulating controlled substances."

Hawai'i is *rapidly* falling behind the times on this issue. **20 other states**, including Ohio, Nebraska, and even North Carolina and Mississippi have already successfully adopted these policies.

This is urgent because criminal penalties for possession **are unfairly imposed on the poor and on people of color.** In Hawai'i, that especially means native Hawaiians and Filipinos^[2] Possession of small amounts of marijuana can mean a \$1,000 fine and a year in jail, but that's just the beginning! Arrest records are public and can create barriers to education and to obtaining housing or jobs. ***The damage of a criminal record can last a lifetime!***

States that have Decriminalized
Marijuana as of 2014



- [1.] QMark Research, *Marijuana Opinion Study* (2014) <http://medicalcannabiscoalitionhi.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/marijuanajan2014.pdf>
- [2.] David C. Nixon, *Budgetary Implications of Marijuana Decriminalization & Legalization for Hawai'i* (2013) Full version: http://acluhawaii.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/econreptmarijuana1_2013.pdf
- [3.] Ammerman S. Marijuana. *Adolesc Med State Art Rev.* 2014 Apr;25(1) 70-88. PubMed PMID: 25022187.
- [4.] Mike Vuolo. 2013. "National-Level Drug Policy and Young People's Illicit Drug Use: A Multilevel Analysis of the European Union." *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 131(1-2):149-56.