

# Public Support for Marijuana Law Reform in Georgia

PPP Survey Results



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## **62% of Georgia Voters Support Ending Criminal Penalties for Pot** **Over Half Support Legalizing It For Adults**

Atlanta, GA- A new statewide poll shows that 62% of Georgia voters endorse eliminating criminal penalties for possession by adults of less than one ounce of pot, and replace it with a \$100 civil fine, without the possibility of jail time. Further, more than half of all Georgia voters now support regulating the legal consumption and retail sale of marijuana for those age 21 and over. In 2012, voters in Colorado and Washington approved similar regulations in their states.

The poll, conducted by Public Policy Polling (PPP) was commissioned by state affiliates of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, Georgia NORML, and Peachtree NORML. “The citizens of Georgia agree, marijuana prohibition is a wasteful and destructive policy. It is time for our state to catch up with public opinion and find a more sensible solution to the status quo,” said Sharon Ravert, the organization’s Executive Director.

Peachtree NORML and other advocacy groups are working with lawmakers and various state coalition groups to amend Georgia’s criminal marijuana laws. In 2010, some 32,500 Georgians were arrested for violating marijuana laws, according to the FBI. That is the sixth highest total of any state in America.

Fifty-seven percent of voters supported legalizing the use of marijuana for medical purposes. State lawmakers have indicated interest in studying this legal option. Ravert welcomes the discussion but believes that “this issue [medical marijuana] is complex,” and that the process could take years. “Decriminalization, which received the highest level of support among those polled is a policy that could be enacted immediately and would provide legal protection to not only patients but those unfairly targeted by the current policy. This is not about getting high, this is about protecting sick people and everyone else from arrest using a harm reduction strategy with public safety as a top priority.” The organization has found support for medical cannabis as well as regulations models from several elected officials.

In order to continue raising awareness for this issue, NORML affiliates around the state have teamed up with the state chapter of the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) to host a lobby day at the state capitol on January 21st 2014. A press conference will begin at 1:00 pm, on the Washington Street side of the capitol. Immediately following the press conference, the coalition plans to deliver 5000 signature and their recent poll results to the Governor.

Sharon Ravert can be reached for comment at [sharon@peachtreenorml.org](mailto:sharon@peachtreenorml.org) or 706-525-9970

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Public Policy Polling  
Georgia NORML/Peachtree NORML  
Poll: January 6th-7th, 2014

## Summary of Results

While the majority of Georgia voters support a marijuana legalization policy similar to that of Colorado and Washington (54%), however a larger majority supports decriminalization. 62% of respondents believe that the state should remove criminal penalties for possession of less than one ounce of pot, and replace it with a \$100 civil fine, without the possibility of jail time. Only 32% were opposed. Significantly, 56% of seniors, and republicans respectively, were among that nearly two-thirds majority.

Women, who made up 53% of all respondents, were far more likely to support decriminalization (60%), over outright legalization (48%); while 59% of males support full legalization, indicating an 11 point gender gap in the support for a Colorado/Washington model in the state of Georgia. However, there is only a 3-point difference when it comes to replacing the current penalties with a civil infraction (64% men to 61% women).

As for electability, 56% of those questioned will either be more likely to vote in favor of a pro-reform candidate, or be unaffected by a candidate's pro-reform position. Further, over a quarter of those polled stated that they would be more likely to vote for a pro-reform candidate. This suggests that taking such a position could positively affect the turnout, and outcome of a close election, especially on a local level.

Peachtree NORML and Georgia NORML, both are Georgia state affiliate of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, commissioned Public Policy Polling (PPP) to run the survey, which was conducted on January 6th and 7th 2014.

**\*\*Only 9% of respondents were millennials. This demographic is known to be overwhelmingly supportive of this issue, but the limited pool show great support among other age groups. 71% of those questioned were between the ages of 30 and 65 which shows that older generations, who are more likely to vote, are also strongly in favor of marijuana law reform - particularly decriminalization.\*\***



## Georgia Survey Results

**Q1** If you or a loved one suffered from a serious illness and your physician suggested that the medical use of marijuana could alleviate suffering, would you want it to be legally available for your or your loved one's use, or not?

*Would*.....57% *Not sure* .....10%  
*Would not*.....33%

**Q2** Under current Georgia law, it is a criminal offense to possess a small amount of marijuana, and it comes with a sentence of one year in jail and a fine of up to \$1,000. Would you support or oppose a change in the law to make it a civil, not criminal, offense to possess an ounce or less for personal use, punishable by a fine up to \$100, but without jail time?

*Strongly support*.....49% *Strongly oppose* .....16%  
*Somewhat support*..13% *Not sure* ..... 5%  
*Somewhat oppose* ..16%

**Q3** Under current Georgia law, possession of more than one ounce of marijuana is a felony punishable by up to 10 years in state prison and a \$10,000 fine. Would you support or oppose lowering the punishment for possession of more than one ounce?

*Strongly support*.....41% *Strongly oppose*.....17%  
*Somewhat support*..19% *Not sure* ..... 7%  
*Somewhat oppose* ..15%

**Q4** The voters in Colorado and Washington changed their laws to allow marijuana to be regulated similarly to alcohol for adults 21 and older. Would you support or oppose changing Georgia law to regulate and tax marijuana similarly to alcohol, where stores would be licensed to sell marijuana to adults 21 and older?

*Strongly support*.....42% *Strongly oppose*.....29%  
*Somewhat support*..12% *Not sure* ..... 5%  
*Somewhat oppose* ..12%

**Q5** If a candidate supported marijuana law reform, would that make you more or less likely to vote for that candidate in the next election, or would it not make a difference?

*More likely*.....29% *Wouldn't make a difference* .....29%  
*Less likely* .....34% *Not sure* ..... 8%

**Q6** Hemp, a type of marijuana plant, is grown around the world, and is imported into America from other countries. Would you support or oppose allowing Georgia farmers to legally grow hemp as a cash crop to make fuel, paper, oils, and numerous other industrial products?

*Strongly support*.....50% *Strongly oppose*.....16%  
*Somewhat support*..17% *Not sure* ..... 8%  
*Somewhat oppose* .. 9%





**Q7** If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

*Woman* ..... 53%

*Man*..... 47%

**Q8** If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If you are an independent or identify with another party, press 3.

*Democrat* ..... 37%

*Republican*..... 43%

*Independent/Other*..... 20%

**Q9** If you are Hispanic, press 1. If white, press 2. If African-American, press 3. If other, press 4.

*Hispanic* ..... 3%

*White* ..... 65%

*African-American* ..... 27%

*Other*..... 5%

**Q10** If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1. If 30 to 45, press 2. If 46 to 65, press 3. If you are older than 65, press 4.

*18 to 29*..... 9%

*30 to 45*..... 24%

*46 to 65*..... 47%

*Older than 65*..... 20%





	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Want Med. Marijuana Legally Available?</b>			
<b>Would</b>	<b>57%</b>	56%	58%
<b>Would not</b>	<b>33%</b>	32%	34%
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>10%</b>	12%	8%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Support/Oppose Civil Offense for 1 oz. Possession</b>			
<b>Strongly support</b>	<b>49%</b>	47%	52%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	<b>13%</b>	14%	12%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	<b>16%</b>	17%	16%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	<b>16%</b>	14%	18%
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>5%</b>	8%	2%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Support/Oppose Lowering Punishment for &gt; 1 oz. Possession</b>			
<b>Strongly support</b>	<b>41%</b>	39%	44%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	<b>19%</b>	22%	16%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	<b>15%</b>	14%	16%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	<b>17%</b>	17%	18%
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>7%</b>	9%	5%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Support/Oppose Making GA Law Like CO/WA</b>			
<b>Strongly support</b>	<b>42%</b>	36%	48%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	<b>12%</b>	12%	11%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	<b>12%</b>	13%	12%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	<b>29%</b>	31%	26%
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>5%</b>	7%	3%





	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>More/Less Likely to Support Pro-Reform Candidate</b>			
<b>More likely</b>	29%	25%	34%
<b>Less likely</b>	34%	36%	32%
<b>Wouldn't make a difference</b>	29%	29%	29%
<b>Not sure</b>	8%	10%	5%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
<b>Support/Oppose Legal Hemp Growth</b>			
<b>Strongly support</b>	50%	44%	57%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	17%	17%	17%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	9%	12%	6%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	16%	16%	16%
<b>Not sure</b>	8%	10%	4%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Want Med. Marijuana Legally Available?</b>				
<b>Would</b>	57%	66%	48%	61%
<b>Would not</b>	33%	24%	42%	28%
<b>Not sure</b>	10%	10%	10%	11%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Support/Oppose Civil Offense for 1 oz. Possession</b>				
<b>Strongly support</b>	49%	55%	43%	52%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	13%	13%	13%	16%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	16%	17%	19%	10%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	16%	9%	20%	18%
<b>Not sure</b>	5%	7%	5%	3%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Support/Oppose Lowering Punishment for &gt; 1 oz. Possession</b>				
<b>Strongly support</b>	41%	51%	34%	40%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	19%	20%	18%	19%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	15%	13%	18%	13%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	17%	9%	23%	20%
<b>Not sure</b>	7%	7%	7%	8%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Support/Oppose Making GA Law Like CO/WA</b>				
<b>Strongly support</b>	42%	49%	37%	40%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	12%	14%	11%	10%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	12%	14%	12%	12%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	29%	15%	38%	35%
<b>Not sure</b>	5%	8%	3%	3%





	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>More/Less Likely to Support Pro-Reform Candidate</b>				
<b>More likely</b>	29%	38%	23%	26%
<b>Less likely</b>	34%	21%	44%	37%
<b>Wouldn't make a difference</b>	29%	32%	26%	29%
<b>Not sure</b>	8%	8%	7%	9%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
<b>Support/Oppose Legal Hemp Growth</b>				
<b>Strongly support</b>	50%	57%	46%	47%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	17%	17%	15%	21%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	9%	8%	9%	12%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	16%	11%	22%	14%
<b>Not sure</b>	8%	7%	9%	7%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African-American	Other
<b>Want Med. Marijuana Legally Available?</b>					
<b>Would</b>	57%	67%	55%	62%	54%
<b>Would not</b>	33%	26%	36%	25%	37%
<b>Not sure</b>	10%	7%	9%	14%	9%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African-American	Other
<b>Support/Oppose Civil Offense for 1 oz. Possession</b>					
<b>Strongly support</b>	49%	40%	48%	55%	47%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	13%	24%	13%	13%	18%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	16%	12%	16%	17%	11%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	16%	19%	19%	8%	19%
<b>Not sure</b>	5%	5%	5%	7%	6%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African-American	Other
<b>Support/Oppose Lowering Punishment for &gt; 1 oz. Possession</b>					
<b>Strongly support</b>	41%	50%	38%	48%	42%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	19%	28%	19%	20%	14%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	15%	5%	18%	11%	13%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	17%	9%	20%	11%	24%
<b>Not sure</b>	7%	8%	5%	10%	7%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African-American	Other
<b>Support/Oppose Making GA Law Like CO/WA</b>					
<b>Strongly support</b>	42%	55%	40%	46%	33%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	12%	8%	12%	11%	14%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	12%	9%	11%	13%	24%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	29%	24%	34%	18%	27%
<b>Not sure</b>	5%	5%	3%	11%	2%







	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African-American	Other
<b>More/Less Likely to Support Pro-Reform Candidate</b>					
<b>More likely</b>	29%	42%	28%	31%	27%
<b>Less likely</b>	34%	20%	40%	23%	35%
<b>Wouldn't make a difference</b>	29%	28%	25%	36%	34%
<b>Not sure</b>	8%	9%	7%	10%	5%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African-American	Other
<b>Support/Oppose Legal Hemp Growth</b>					
<b>Strongly support</b>	50%	53%	48%	54%	52%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	17%	19%	16%	20%	12%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	9%	9%	10%	8%	5%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	16%	12%	17%	13%	24%
<b>Not sure</b>	8%	7%	8%	6%	7%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Want Med. Marijuana Legally Available?</b>					
<b>Would</b>	57%	57%	61%	63%	41%
<b>Would not</b>	33%	36%	30%	28%	45%
<b>Not sure</b>	10%	8%	9%	9%	14%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Support/Oppose Civil Offense for 1 oz. Possession</b>					
<b>Strongly support</b>	49%	64%	50%	51%	38%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	13%	5%	16%	12%	18%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	16%	31%	9%	14%	25%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	16%	-	20%	18%	13%
<b>Not sure</b>	5%	-	6%	6%	7%





	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Support/Oppose Lowering Punishment for &gt; 1 oz. Possession</b>					
<b>Strongly support</b>	<b>41%</b>	61%	37%	44%	32%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	<b>19%</b>	8%	26%	17%	20%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	<b>15%</b>	26%	12%	13%	20%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	<b>17%</b>	5%	20%	18%	18%
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>7%</b>	-	4%	9%	9%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Support/Oppose Making GA Law Like CO/WA</b>					
<b>Strongly support</b>	<b>42%</b>	64%	47%	43%	23%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	<b>12%</b>	5%	13%	11%	14%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	<b>12%</b>	10%	6%	12%	23%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	<b>29%</b>	13%	28%	29%	37%
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>5%</b>	8%	5%	5%	3%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>More/Less Likely to Support Pro-Reform Candidate</b>					
<b>More likely</b>	<b>29%</b>	33%	37%	28%	20%
<b>Less likely</b>	<b>34%</b>	33%	32%	32%	42%
<b>Wouldn't make a difference</b>	<b>29%</b>	26%	25%	31%	28%
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>8%</b>	8%	5%	8%	9%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
<b>Support/Oppose Legal Hemp Growth</b>					
<b>Strongly support</b>	<b>50%</b>	77%	53%	51%	32%
<b>Somewhat support</b>	<b>17%</b>	-	21%	17%	21%
<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	<b>9%</b>	5%	8%	8%	16%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	<b>16%</b>	8%	13%	16%	24%
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>8%</b>	10%	6%	8%	8%

