

## CALIFORNIANS' ATTITUDES TOWARD MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION

Mark Baldassare, Dean Bonner, and Lunna Lopes

### ► California has been a leader on marijuana policy in the past.

In 1996, California became the first state to establish a medical marijuana program after voters passed Proposition 215 (56% yes). Since then, 22 other states have passed medical marijuana laws. In September 2010, Governor Schwarzenegger signed SB 1449 into law, which made the sanction for possessing small amounts of marijuana (less than an ounce) equivalent to a parking ticket. That November, voters narrowly defeated Proposition 19 (53% no), which would have made California the first state to legalize recreational marijuana. Other states have since passed legalization measures: Colorado and Washington in 2012, and Alaska, Oregon, and the District of Columbia in 2014. Californians will probably vote again on legalization in 2016.

### ► A slight majority of Californians think that marijuana should be legal.

Although Californians remain divided on legalization (53% legal, 45% not legal), there are signs of increased support. Since 2010, support has increased by 5 points among adults and 6 points among likely voters—today, 55% of likely voters think that marijuana should be legal. Californians' opinions on marijuana legalization are similar to those expressed by adults nationwide in a March 2015 Pew Research Center poll (53% legal, 44% not legal).

### ► Since 2010, support for legalization has increased by double digits among Republicans.

While support for legalization is much higher among Democrats (63%, up 7 points since 2010) and independents (57%, up 2 points since 2010), Republican support for legalization has increased by 10 points since 2010 (to 44%).

### ► A majority of older and younger Californians favor marijuana legalization.

For the first time, a majority of Californians age 55 and older think that marijuana should be made legal (52% legal, 45% not legal). This marks an increase of 10 points since May 2010. Californians age 18 to 34 continue to support legalization (61%, up 5 points since 2010). However, among Californians age 35 to 45, support for legalization has not changed since 2010 (47%). Support among parents of children 18 and under is unchanged since 2010 and remains below 50% (44%, up 1 point).

### ► There is solid support for legalization among college graduates and men.

Since 2010, support has increased at least slightly across education groups. More than half of college graduates (60%, up 9 points) and those with at least some college (55%, up 5 points) think marijuana should be legal; slightly less than half of those with high school degrees or less support legalization (47%, up 3 points). Though support has risen by 5 points among both men and women, men are still more likely to be in favor (59%, vs. 47% women).

### ► A record share of Latinos think marijuana should be legal, though a majority are still opposed.

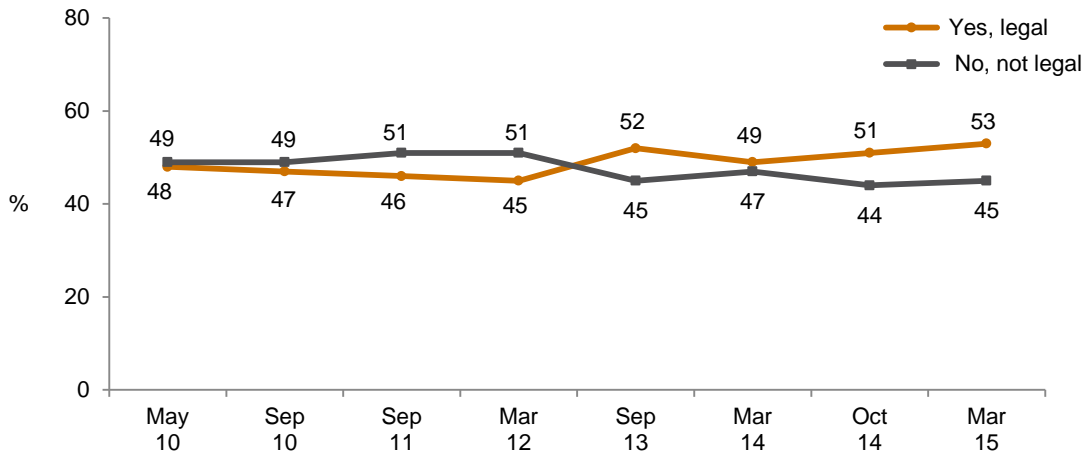
For the first time, more than four in 10 Latinos (42%) think that marijuana should be legal, while a majority (56%) say it should not. Among Latinos, support for legalization has increased by 5 points since May 2010 when only 37% said marijuana should be legal and 65% said that it should not be legalized. Whites (64%, up 8 points since May 2010) continue to be far more likely than Latinos (42%) to favor marijuana legalization.

### ► Support for legalization has increased in all parts of the state—except in the Central Valley.

Californians in the San Francisco Bay Area continue to be the most likely to think marijuana should be legal (64%, up 8 points since 2010). Since 2010, support for marijuana legalization has increased somewhat in Los Angeles (52%, up 3 points), the Inland Empire (47%, up 5 points) and Orange/San Diego (47%, up 6 points). However, support has declined slightly in the Central Valley (45%, down 2 points).



Californians' support for marijuana legalization has risen slightly since 2010



Source: PPIC Statewide Surveys, May 2010–March 2015.

Support for legalization has changed among most demographic and regional groups

% who think use of marijuana should be legal		May 2010	March 2015	Change
<b>All adults</b>		48%	53%	+5
<b>Likely voters</b>		49	55	+6
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	56	63	+7
	<b>Republicans</b>	34	44	+10
	<b>Independents</b>	55	57	+2
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	54	59	+5
	<b>Women</b>	42	47	+5
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Latinos</b>	37	42	+5
	<b>Whites</b>	56	64	+8
<b>Parents with children 18 or younger</b>	<b>Yes</b>	43	44	+1
	<b>No</b>	52	59	+7
<b>Age</b>	<b>18–34</b>	56	61	+5
	<b>35–54</b>	47	47	–
	<b>55 and older</b>	42	52	+10
<b>Region</b>	<b>Central Valley</b>	47	45	-2
	<b>San Francisco Bay Area</b>	56	64	+8
	<b>Los Angeles</b>	49	52	+3
	<b>Orange/San Diego</b>	41	47	+6
	<b>Inland Empire</b>	42	47	+5

Source: PPIC Statewide Surveys, May 2010 and March 2015. Margin of error for all adults is ±2% in May 2010 and ±3.7% in March 2015; the margins of error for subgroups are larger.

Contact: surveys@ppic.org