



Welcome to SMARTNews, part of the Start SMART NY campaign to reform New York's marijuana laws. Start SMART NY is supported by a coalition convened by the Drug Policy Alliance and comprised of various groups and organizations dedicated to ending marijuana prohibition. We will be your monthly source of news and events related to the campaign.

Marijuana Updates

- New York State's Democratic-led Assembly and the Senate Independent Democratic Conference (IDC) joined with the Governor to assert the need to close the marijuana "public view" loophole and seal past arrests for problematic enforcement in this year's budget legislation. However, the issues still fell short of making it into final budget agreement. See the Assembly statement [here](#), the Senate IDC statement [here](#), and the final budget language [here](#). The fight for fairness and equity continues, here's how [you can help!](#)
- [Long-awaited changes to New York's medical marijuana program are finally in effect.](#) New Yorkers who suffer from chronic have been granted access to the program and physician assistants can now certify patients, but too many people are still left out due to astronomical costs and limited access to dispensaries. Is New York's commitment to prohibition preventing the program's success? [Learn more here.](#)

[Learn More](#)

Marijuana Stat of the Month

1,000,000

The amount of police hours NYPD officers spent enforcing marijuana possession from 2002-2012.*

**Harry Levine, Loren Siegel, and Gabriel Sayegh, "One Million Police Hours: Making 440,000 Marijuana Possession Arrests in New York City," 2002-2012, Drug Policy Alliance and Marijuana Arrest Research Project, NYC, March 2013.*



Beyond the Numbers

Each month in this newsletter we will share the personal stories of the people who are being directly impacted by New York's marijuana policies. Their full names will not be shared.



The Bronx, New York - While celebrating a friend's birthday, Carlos decided to step outside to smoke a cigarette with two friends. He noticed that there were other people standing outside the building but paid no mind to their presence until the police rapidly approached the building. Upon seeing the police, the people ahead of Carlos ran. With no reason to flee, Carlos stayed where he was.

When the police reached the front of the building they began to question

him about the people that ran off. Carlos did not know the people, and made that fact clear to the police. The officers did not believe him and grew frustrated. Carlos tried for 20 minutes to prove his innocence. Unconvinced, the police officers frisked Carlos. They found nothing. They did, however, spot a clip of marijuana on the ground and asserted that it belonged to Carlos.

He was arrested on sight and spent 5 hours at the precinct. He was charged with possession of marijuana. While the judge granted Carlos an Adjournment in Contemplation of Dismissal (ACD) because it was his first arrest, Carlos ended up missing two days of work because of the arrest and his court appearance.



Why is marijuana legalization a SMART choice for New York?

“Ending marijuana prohibition is a SMART choice for New York because prohibition has come at a disproportionately high cost to our communities of color. Making marijuana legal and regulating it for adult use will save money that could provide resources necessary to rebuild these communities that have been devastated by mass incarceration and lack of access to opportunities. California and Colorado are using their marijuana tax revenue to rebuild schools and community centers while New York closes them down. Prohibition has to end.”

**Kristin Jordan, Co-Founder and Executive Director,
Cannabis Cultural Association**



Featured Event

Poetry Night: Verses Against the Drug War Sponsored by VOCAL-NY

Join VOCAL-NY for a poetry reading and meet and greet in Brooklyn featuring 15 NYC-based writers against the war on drugs and its destructive effects on our bodies, our minds, and our communities.

GAMBA Forest
231 Norman Ave #114
Brooklyn, NY 11222

Tickets are \$7 and all proceeds go to support the advocacy and organizing efforts of VOCAL-NY.

For more information, contact Andrea Bichan at andrea@vocal-ny.org

Learn about more upcoming events related to marijuana reform

Get Involved

**Marijuana Prohibition is coming to an end
- join the fight.**

For more information, contact us
at startsmart@drugpolicy.org





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