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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

- Start SMART NY campaign launched in Albany. The campaign to reform New York's marijuana laws held a press conference and visited with state legislators to talk about the need for New York to end marijuana prohibition. [See some of the coverage here](#) and [here](#).
- New York's marijuana legalization bill was reintroduced with a new focus on repairing the harms of prohibition and centering diversity and inclusion. We've [summed up the bill](#) for you and answered some of the most [frequently asked questions](#).
- Reverend Al Sharpton endorsed the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act and the Start SMART NY campaign in a rousing keynote address to the Cannabis World Congress & Business Expo - and issued a call to action for the marijuana industry to center diversity. [Read the story here](#).

[Learn More](#)

Marijuana Stat of the Month

60

The number of people arrested everyday for low-level marijuana possession in New York State.

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.



While driving his father's car, David was pulled over and asked if he was driving under the influence. He told the officers that he hadn't been drinking and that he was fully sober. The officers did not believe him. "They claimed the car was drifting," he said. The police officer then began to ask David about the vehicle's owner. David answered the officers' questions regarding the car, explaining that it was his father's car before the officers grew agitated with the conversation.

"They told me to get out the car," David said. He complied, but while he was standing outside the car, the officers seemed to stop paying attention to any perceived impairment and began instead to search the car. Finding nothing, they began to search David.

David was searched without being given a reason and a small amount of marijuana was found in his pocket. David was arrested for simple possession.



Why is marijuana legalization a SMART choice for New York?

"Marijuana legalization is a SMART choice for New York because the war on drugs has had a devastating effect on communities of color even though the white population uses drugs and marijuana at equal or higher rates than people of color. The Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act would also generate revenues for New York State and would fund job training and youth development in communities that have been targeted by racialized law enforcement practices. Marijuana is not as harmful as either cigarettes or alcohol and can safely be placed in the same category as these other regulated adult products. The WESPAC Community supports this campaign wholeheartedly."

Nada Khader, Executive Director, WESPAC Foundation

Featured Event

Press Conference: Unjust and Unconstitutional: The NYPD's 30 Years of Jim Crow Enforcement of Marijuana Possession Continues under Mayor

de Blasio: The Marijuana Arrest Research Project and the Drug Policy Alliance

The Marijuana Arrest Research Project has been documenting the marijuana arrest crusade in NYC for years. On July 11th, they will be releasing a new report, *Unjust and Unconstitutional: The NYPD's 30 Years of Jim Crow Enforcement of Marijuana Possession Continues under Mayor de Blasio*.

The new report shows that people of color are being targeted by the NYPD for marijuana misdemeanor enforcement regardless of where they are in the city – whether they are in predominantly Black or Latino neighborhoods or in neighborhoods that are predominantly white. The report will further show that despite a change in mayoral administrations and police commissioners, the NYPD continues its practice of making wasteful, racially biased, and costly marijuana arrests.

This report was commissioned by the Drug Policy Alliance

Press Conference:
City Hall Steps
New York City
July 11th @ 12pm

Learn about more upcoming events related to marijuana reform

Get Involved

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

For more information visit our [website](#) or contact us at startswithdrugpolicy.org





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