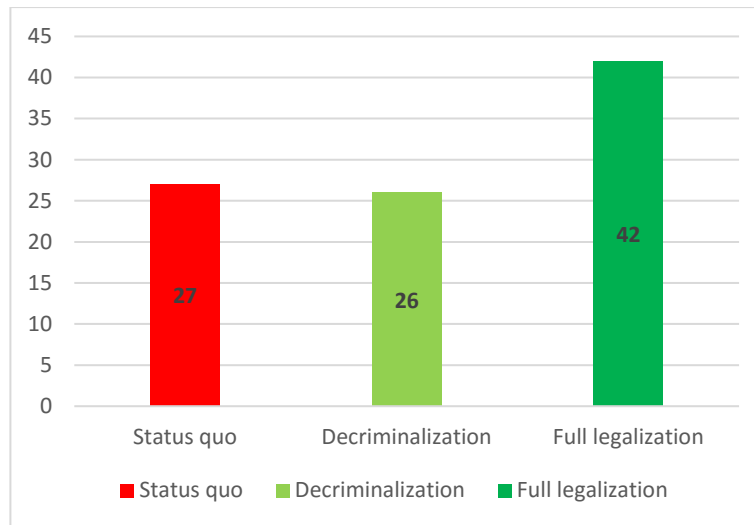# RECREATIONAL WEED NOT A SLAM DUNK AMONG GARDEN STATERS

Fairleigh Dickinson University, February 1, 2018 – With the prospect of legalized marijuana heating up in the Garden State, the Fairleigh Dickinson University Poll finds public preferences have important gradations. A majority support some degree of change to existing laws, with less than majority support for full legalization. If marijuana does become legal, a minority of New Jerseyans say they will become paying customers, while the majority favor revisiting the charges against those previously convicted of marijuana offenses.

When asked about a number of options for how the state should treat the use and sale of marijuana, 42 percent believe the state should make it legal for its sale and use. A quarter support keeping recreational marijuana illegal while maintaining the legality of medicinal marijuana (27%) and 26 percent favor decriminalization. In total, 53 percent provide support for something other than the legalized sale and use of the drug. However, two-thirds (68%) favor some degree of change to existing laws (26% decriminalization and 42% full legalization).

Democrats (53%), men (51%) and the under 35 crowd (65%) are the strongest proponents of recreational legalization. Republicans (24%), women (34%), and those aged 60 and older (29%) are the least supportive.

"When given choices, opinion is clearly divided. Anyone who expected legalization to happen quickly and easily might reconsider given these findings," said Krista Jenkins, professor of political science and director of the FDU Poll.

FDU has asked a similar question in years' past, although this is the first time the choice was not binary, with options other than the status quo versus full legalization being offered. In 2014, 41 percent said they favored the legalization of marijuana with 52 percent opposed. And in 2015, the same question yielded a favorability rating for legalization of 49 percent with 46 percent opposed.

Attitudes toward Governor Murphy are also helpful in distinguishing between those who support legalization versus other options. Murphy, as many will recall, campaigned heavily on a pledge to usher in recreational sale and use. A majority of those who approve of the governor's job performance also support full legalization (57%). Conversely, 70 percent of those who disapprove of the governor support the status quo (40%) or decriminalization (30%).

Although over half (57%) reportedly have tried marijuana in the past, few say they would pay for pot should its sale and use become legal. A fifth (22%) said yes to the question of an impending purchase, with 75 percent saying they would be unlikely to do the same.

Should legalized pot become the law, stores could begin popping up across the state. The FDU Poll asked adults how they would feel if a store selling marijuana opened close by their home. On this question, opinion is about evenly divided, with 49 percent saying they would favor a store like this opening, and 43 percent who would oppose it. As with the question concerning legalization versus other options, partisan leanings offer a clear dividing line in attitudes. More than half of Democrats (61%), men (58%), and those between the ages of 18 and 34 would welcome a pot dispensing store in their backyard, with Republicans (63%), women (52%), and the oldest cohort the most opposed (54%).

"One of the reasons proponents of legalized marijuana offer is increased tax revenue for the state. Although many across the state are supportive of that revenue coming from their neighborhoods, others approach the issue from a NIMBY – or not in my backyard - perspective," said Jenkins.

Policy discussions about what would happen if marijuana becomes legal in the Garden State also involve questions of criminal justice. The FDU Poll asked respondents what they think should happen to those serving time for marijuana violations and those with past convictions. It is here that opinion is decisive. Sixty-nine percent favor allowing low level marijuana offenders to have their records cleared, and 65 percent favor modifying sentences for all inmates who are currently in prison for marijuana violations. The only group who appears divided over these questions are Republicans, as half (52%) favor record modifications and 45 percent favor sentence modifications.

"If pot is legalized, the public thinks the fair thing to do is forgive those who have found themselves on the wrong side of the law. They would not enforce an old standard under a new law," said Jenkins.

Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: http://publicmind.fdu.edu

Radio actualities at 201.692.2846   For more information, please call 201.692.7032

Methodology - The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone January 24-28, 2018 among a random sample of 810 adults in New Jersey. Results have a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.8 percentage points, including the design effect.

Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers.

PublicMind interviews are conducted by Key Research of Provo, Utah with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a landline phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected.

The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, sex, and race. 426 interviews were conducted on landlines and 384 were conducted on cellular telephones.

The sample was purchased from Marketing Systems Group and the research was funded by Fairleigh Dickinson University.

The FDU Poll received an "A" rating from statistician Nate Silver's FiveThirtyEight blog. The ratings measure both accuracy and bias for all major polling services in the United States, providing an update to similar research the poll watchers conducted in 2014. The FDU Poll's "A" rating puts it in the top 14 of the more than 380 polling institutes reviewed and graded from A+ through F. The FDU Poll was found to have a 94 percent accuracy rate for predicting election results, and is one of only two A-rated polling institutes with zero bias to their rankings.

Tables

And what do YOU think is the best decision for New Jersey? Which of the following do you favor? [Rotate choices] Keep the sales and use of marijuana illegal while keeping medical marijuana legal; Decriminalize small amounts and treat possession like a traffic ticket while keeping medical marijuana legal; Make it legal for use and sales in stores

		PID			Gender		Race		Education		Age		
	All	**Dem**	**Ind**	**Repub**	**Male**	**Female**	**White**	**Non-white**	**HS/Some college**	**College+**	**18-34**	**35-59**	**60+**
Keep it illegal	**27**	18	27	42	19	34	30	21	26	27	8	30	38
Decriminalize	**26**	25	25	27	23	28	26	23	25	26	24	28	25
Make it legal	**42**	53	44	24	51	34	39	50	43	43	65	39	29
DK (vol)	**4**	3	2	5	5	3	4	6	6	3	3	3	7
Ref. (vol)	**1**	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	2

		Tried marijuana		Intends to purchase		Murphy approval	
	All	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Approve**	**Disapprove**
Keep it illegal	**27**	16	42	2	35	18	40
Decriminalize	**26**	25	26	18	28	23	30
Make it legal	**42**	56	24	78	31	57	21
DK (vol)	**4**	2	7	1	5	1	6
Ref. (vol)	**1**	0	2	0	1	0	2

If New Jersey legalizes marijuana, would you favor or oppose [rotate] having a store selling marijuana in your town?

		PID			Gender		Race		Education		Age		
	All	**Dem**	**Ind**	**Repub**	**Male**	**Female**	**White**	**Non-white**	**HS/Some college**	**College+**	**18-34**	**35-59**	**60+**
Favor	**49%**	61	47	31	58	39	50	48	51	48	69	45	38
Oppose	**43%**	31	41	63	35	52	43	44	45	42	24	48	54
DK (vol)	**6%**	7	10	4	5	7	5	8	4	8	5	7	7
Ref. (vol)	**2%**	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2

		Tried marijuana		Intends to purchase		Murphy approval	
	All	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Approve**	**Disapprove**
Favor	**49%**	63	30	91	35	67	27
Oppose	**43%**	31	60	6	55	29	69
DK (vol)	**6%**	5	8	2	8	3	3
Ref. (vol)	**2%**	1	2	1	2	1	1

If New Jersey legalizes marijuana, would you favor or oppose [rotate] allowing low level marijuana offenders to have their records cleared?

	All	PID			Gender		Race		Education		Age		
		Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	White	Non-white	HS/Some college	College+	18-34	35-59	60+
Favor	**69**	83	62	52	70	68	69	69	66	71	82	69	58
Oppose	**28**	14	36	44	27	29	28	29	31	26	18	28	35
DK (vol)	**2**	2	2	3	2	3	3	1	2	2	1	1	5
Ref. (vol)	**1**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1

	All	Tried marijuana		Intends to purchase		Murphy approval	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Approve	Disapprove
Favor	**69**	80	53	93	61	84	52
Oppose	**28**	17	43	7	34	14	44
DK (vol)	**2**	1	3	0	3	2	3
Ref. (vol)	**1**	1	1	0	1	1	2

If New Jersey legalizes marijuana, would you favor or oppose [rotate] modifying sentences for all inmates who are currently in prison for marijuana violations?

	All	PID			Gender		Race		Education		Age		
		Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	White	Non-white	HS/Some college	College+	18-34	35-59	60+
Favor	**65**	80	62	45	65	65	64	68	62	68	80	65	54
Oppose	**29**	16	32	47	28	31	29	29	30	28	18	30	36
DK (vol)	**5**	3	5	7	6	4	6	3	7	3	1	4	8
Ref. (vol)	**1**	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1

	All	Tried marijuana		Intends to purchase		Murphy approval	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Approve	Disapprove
Favor	**65**	77	49	89	58	79	45
Oppose	**29**	17	46	7	36	17	47
DK (vol)	**5**	5	4	2	6	2	7
Ref. (vol)	**1**	1	0	1	1	1	1

If New Jersey legalizes the sale of marijuana, would you purchase some?

	All	PID			Gender		Race		Education		Age		
		Dem	Ind	Repub	Male	Female	White	Non-white	HS/Some college	College+	18-34	35-59	60+
Favor	**22**	26	22	13	30	14	20	25	27	18	39	16	14
Oppose	**75**	69	75	86	66	83	76	72	70	78	55	81	83
DK (vol)	**3**	4	3	1	2	3	3	2	2	4	4	3	2
Ref. (vol)	**1**	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	0

	All	Tried marijuana		Murphy approval	
		Yes	No	Approve	Disapprove
Favor	**22**	35	3	33	12
Oppose	**75**	61	94	62	85
DK (vol)	**3**	3	2	4	3
Ref. (vol)	**1**	0	1	1	0

Tried marijuana in past													
		PID			**Gender**		**Race**		**Education**		**Age**		
	All	**Dem**	**Ind**	**Repub**	**Male**	**Female**	**White**	**Non-white**	**HS/Some college**	**College+**	**18-34**	**35-59**	**60+**
Yes	**57**	64	44	51	65	49	58	54	56	57	66	62	48
No	**42**	35	52	48	35	49	41	44	43	41	34	37	51
DK (vol)	**2**	1	4	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
Ref. (vol)	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

There is a proposal in the legislature to legalize marijuana in New Jersey. How much have you heard or read about this proposed legislation?													
		PID			**Gender**		**Race**		**Education**		**Age**		
	All	**Dem**	**Ind**	**Repub**	**Male**	**Female**	**White**	**Non-white**	**HS/Some college**	**College+**	**18-34**	**35-59**	**60+**
A lot	**34**	29	34	42	38	31	38	28	36	33	28	34	41
Some	**31**	33	33	28	30	33	32	30	32	31	37	30	29
Just a little	**24**	27	23	22	22	26	22	28	20	26	26	25	21
Nothing at all	**9**	10	10	7	9	9	7	14	11	8	10	10	7
DK (vol)	**1**	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
Ref. (vol)	**0**	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

		Tried marijuana		**Intends to purchase**		**Murphy approval**	
	All	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Approve**	**Disapprove**
A lot	**34**	37	32	44	32	33	50
Some	**31**	32	30	35	30	35	23
Just a little	**24**	25	23	16	27	25	21
Nothing at all	**9**	5	14	5	10	7	5
DK (vol)	**1**	0	1	1	1	0	1
Ref. (vol)	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	0

Question wording and order

US1 through NJ4 released January 30, 2017

MJ1   There is a proposal in the legislature to legalize marijuana in New Jersey. How much have you heard or read about this proposed legislation?
1   A lot
2   Some
3   Just a little
4   Nothing at all
8   Dk (vol)
9   Refused (vol)

MJ2   And what do YOU think is the best decision for New Jersey? Which of the following do you favor?[Rotate options]
1   Keep the use and sales of marijuana illegal while keeping medical marijuana legal
2   Decriminalize small amounts and treat possession like a traffic ticket while keeping medical marijuana legal
3   Make it legal for use and sales in stores
8   Dk (vol)
9   Refused (vol)

MJ3 withheld

MJ4   If New Jersey does legalize marijuana, would you favor or oppose [rotate] having a store selling marijuana in your town?
1   Favor
2   Oppose
8   DK (vol)
9   Refused (vol)

MJ5   If New Jersey legalizes marijuana, would you favor or oppose [rotate] allowing low level marijuana offenders to have their records cleared?
1   Favor
2   Oppose
8   DK (vol)
9   Refused (vol)

MJ6   If New Jersey legalizes marijuana, would you favor or oppose [rotate] modifying sentences for all inmates who are currently in prison for marijuana violations?
1   Favor
2   Oppose
8   DK (vol)
9   Refused (vol)

MJ7   If New Jersey legalizes the sale of marijuana, would you purchase some?
1   Yes
2   No
8   DK (vol)
9   Refused (vol)

Sample characteristics

Male	49%
Female	51%

Democrat (with leaners)	51%
Republican (with leaners)	30%
Independent	15%

18-34	27%
35-59	43%
60+	29%

White	64%
African-American	13%
Latino	15%
Asian	5%
Other/refused	3%