

Stockton Poll: N.J. Split on Legalizing Marijuana; One in Four Would Try or Use it

Majority support ‘millionaire’s tax’ and free community college, but many still undecided about the new governor

For immediate release

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Galloway, N.J. _ Adults in New Jersey are split over whether marijuana should be made legal in the state for recreational use, but one in four say they would try it or use it if it were legal, according to Stockton University poll results released today.

According to the poll of 728 adult New Jersey residents, 49 percent support legalizing marijuana for recreational purposes in New Jersey, where marijuana use is allowed only for medical purposes. Forty-four percent oppose legalization, with 5 percent unsure. One percent volunteered that they would decriminalize marijuana. Gov. Phil Murphy supported legalizing marijuana for people ages 21 and older during his gubernatorial campaign as a social justice issue and as a way to raise an estimated \$300 million in sales tax revenues.

Seventy-five percent say they do not currently use marijuana and would not even if it were legal. But nearly one in four respondents say either that although they do not use marijuana they would try it if it were legal (15 percent) or that they currently use marijuana and would continue to use legal marijuana (9 percent).

“These poll results suggest there is not a consensus in New Jersey on whether marijuana should be made legal,” said Michael W. Klein, interim executive director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton.

Younger adults and men are more likely to support legalization of marijuana than older respondents and women. Sixty-four percent of respondents younger than age 50 support legalization, compared to 41 percent age 50 and older. Among men, 56 percent support legalizing marijuana, while only 44 percent of women do. There is no significant difference in responses based on education levels or household income.

The Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy interviewed 728 New Jersey adults from March 22-29, 2018. Interviewers working from the Stockton University campus called landline and cell telephones. The statewide poll’s margin of error is +/- 3.65 percentage points.

Pro-legalization poll respondents were asked to identify the main reason for their support. Twenty-four percent say tax revenues are their main reason, while a combined 22 percent say marijuana is safer than alcohol or tobacco (11 percent) or other illegal drugs (11 percent). Fifteen percent identify medical or health benefits of marijuana as their main reason. Another 11 percent say legalizing marijuana would reduce law enforcement or prison costs.

More than half of opponents of legalization cite health problems or addiction as the reason they are against the proposal, with 24 percent saying it could lead to harder drugs, 20 percent saying marijuana is harmful to good health and 11 percent saying it is addictive. Ten percent cite difficulties in government regulating the drug.

The Stockton Poll finds that less than three months into his first term, the new governor remains an unknown to a sizable part of the population. He is viewed favorably by 40 percent, compared to 27 percent who have unfavorable impressions of Murphy. But one in three respondents say they are not familiar with Murphy (10 percent) or are unsure what to think (23 percent). Among those who know who Murphy is, 39 percent give him good or excellent job performance ratings while 45 percent rate it as fair or poor, with 19 percent unsure. The results break down along party lines, with a majority of Democrats giving the Democratic governor positive ratings.

Overall, 36 percent say New Jersey is going in the right direction, but 45 percent say it is on the wrong track and 19 percent are not sure. Those numbers are more positive than feelings about the nation as a whole. In Stockton poll results released Tuesday, only 27 percent say the country is going in the right direction and 63 percent feel it is on the wrong track, with 10 percent unsure.

Majorities in the poll strongly support other policy initiatives advocated by the governor, according to the poll results released today. Sixty-eight percent support raising state taxes on households with annual income of more than \$1 million, while 29 percent oppose a so-called “millionaire’s tax” with 3 percent unsure. And 73 percent support state government providing tuition-free community college in New Jersey, with 24 percent opposed and 3 percent unsure.

Stockton Poll results released Tuesday found 75 percent supporting stricter gun control laws and a federal law banning semi-automatic rifles, positions supported by Governor Murphy.

For complete full poll results click [Poll Results](#).

For YouTube video of Michael Klein discussing the results click [Stockton Poll Video](#)

Methodology

The poll was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy. Live interviewers on the Stockton University campus called both landlines and cell phones from March 22-29, 2018. The poll was conducted with 728 adults who are residents of New Jersey. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.65 percentage

points at a 95 percent confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets. Data are weighted based on United States Census Bureau demographics for the State of New Jersey population.

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter) at Stockton University serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey, and promotes the civic life of New Jersey through engagement, education and research. The center is named for William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career includes service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama and as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton. The Hughes Center can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/StocktonHughesCenter> and can be followed on Twitter @hughescenter.

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