



A Better Way Foundation is a Connecticut non-profit organization that is dedicated to a sensible shift in drug policy from one of incarceration to substance abuse treatment and public health.

## **Decriminalization Makes Sense/Cents**

**Marijuana decriminalization is not marijuana legalization.  
Here is the difference:**

<b>Marijuana Decriminalization</b>	<b>Marijuana Legalization</b>
Remains illegal but the punishment is reduced	Would be taxed and sold like tobacco
Keeps law enforcement and judicial in the loop	Use/sell becomes legal and is regulated like alcohol
Reduces the penalty from jail to a fine for possession	Abolishes the penalty selling and conspiracy to sell

### Why should Connecticut decriminalize marijuana?

Since 1973, twenty 22 states and cities have passed some form of marijuana decriminalization, some statewide like Massachusetts' in 2008 and some on the city level Chicago Heights and Denver. The states are

- |              |                 |               |                  |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| • Alaska     | • Kansas        | • Mississippi | • North Carolina |
| • Arkansas   | • Maine         | • Montana     | • Ohio           |
| • California | • Massachusetts | • Nebraska    | • Oregon         |
| • Colorado   | • Michigan      | • Nevada      | • Washington     |
| • Hawaii     | • Minnesota     | • New York    | • Wisconsin      |
| • Illinois   | • Missouri      |               |                  |

Massachusetts' passed a decriminalization initiative in 2008; the savings to taxpayers are estimated at a minimum of \$30 million a year.

Connecticut is looking at an \$800 million deficit in 2009. Connecticut's:

- Office of Fiscal Analysis reports it cost \$44,165 to lock up 1 person for 1 year. (2008)
- Office of Legislative Research reports 20% of people incarcerated are there for drug offenses (2008)
- Average cost for incarcerating one adult for one year is more than \$40,000.

If we pass decriminalization and reduce the penalty for marijuana possession to a fine it could:

- Reduce incarceration costs by lowering the prison population,
- Lower caseloads in superior and community court thus reducing judicial costs,
- Create new money for the state by fining people for marijuana possession,
- Save money and limit the need to cut social services, public health and education,
- Keep resources in place to support youth programs and public transportation, and
- Free up resources for local police to investigate unsolved and violent crimes.

**Marijuana decriminalization will generate savings, reduce prison population, and protect resources for important programs and services in our communities.**

For more information on marijuana decriminalization and to join A Better Way Foundation's campaign contact LaResse Harvey at 860-293-0626 or abwf1991@yahoo.com.