

NEWS - CURRENT EVENTS

April 20, 2011

# (4.20) Weed in the US: Legal, illegal & both

by Laura McPhee



Make no mistake—according to the United States government, marijuana is illegal for all purposes in all 50 states and remains classified as a Schedule I drug, on par with heroin, LSD and Ecstasy under the federal Controlled Substances Act. As recently as 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the federal government's right to ban the use of cannabis, including for medical use, under the Commerce Clause; and, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, marijuana has no medical use and a high risk of abuse.

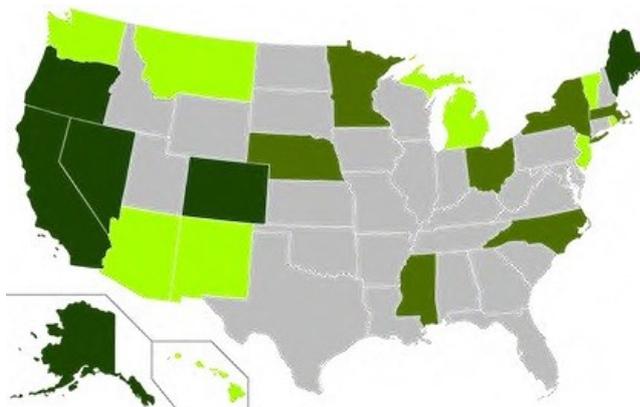
That said, individual states across the country have long taken their own approach to legalizing weed, many in direct contradiction and/or violation of federal law. Since the 1970s, states like Alaska, Colorado, and Oregon

have reduced the penalties for adults found in possession of small amounts for personal use. Pennsylvania decriminalized the possession of less than one ounce of weed in 2010, as did California. Fourteen states now treat small amounts (typically one ounce or less) of marijuana possession as a low law enforcement priority or a minor infraction with small fines and no associated prison time or criminal record.

Medical use of marijuana is now legal in 15 states, allowing doctors to prescribe and patients to buy and possess pot as treatment for a variety of illnesses and conditions. This year, another six states are considering medical marijuana legislation including Illinois, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

And while the Obama administration has not made any moves to legalize or decriminalize marijuana for any purpose, the U.S. attorney general's office issued a Department of Justice memorandum in 2009 urging prosecutors and federal agents to consider the state laws concerning medical marijuana use and not prosecute legitimate patients, as it would be "an inefficient use of limited federal resources."

Here in Indiana, possession of 30 grams (a little more than one ounce) or less of marijuana is a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail and a fine of up to \$5,000. For possession of more than 30 grams, the penalties range from six months to three years in prison and a fines up to \$10,000. Knowingly visiting a place where drugs are used is also a misdemeanor, punishable by up to six months in jail and a fine of up to \$1,000.



States where small amounts of marijuana for personal use is decriminalized  
 States where medical marijuana is legal by prescription  
 States where medical marijuana is legal and personal possession is decriminalized

**States where small amounts of marijuana for personal use is decriminalized**

- Alaska
- California
- Colorado
- Hawaii
- Maine
- Oregon
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Nebraska
- New York
- North Carolina

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Ohio  
Pennsylvania

#### States where medical marijuana is legal for treatment of certain illnesses and conditions

Alaska (1998)  
Arizona (2010)  
\*California (1996)  
\*Colorado (2000)  
Hawaii (2000)  
\*Maine (1998)  
\*Michigan (2008)  
\*Montana (2004)  
Nevada (2000)  
New Jersey (2010)  
\*New Mexico (2007)  
Oregon (1998)  
\*Rhode Island (2006)  
Vermont (2004)  
Washington (1998)  
\*States where medical marijuana is sold in storefront 'dispensaries'

#### States considering medical marijuana legislation in 2011

Illinois  
Massachusetts  
New York  
North Carolina  
Ohio  
Pennsylvania

Sources: npr.org, norml.org, medicalmarijuana.procon.org

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### (4.20) Indiana Cannabis Awards

ReLegalize Indiana handed out their first cannabis awards at the Vogue on Tuesday, honoring those advancing marijuana research and reform.

by NUVO Editors

### (4.20) Indy's best buzz spots

NUVO editors suggest the city's best getaways for those days and nights when you feel like leaving the couch and having yourself an adventure.

by NUVO Editors

### (4.20) Cinema for Stoners

Whether you're in the mood to groove on aliens, philosophy or The Beatles, we've got recommendations for 10 great films to watch while celebrating the 420 holiday.

by Ed Johnson-Ott

### (4.20) Brookinz and Granite's 'Gateway2'

It took a 48-hour, locked-door recording session, but producer J. Brookinz finished his sequel to last year's pot-inspired "The Gateway Drug" just in time for four-twenty.

by Scott Shoger

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### NUVO Cycling: 2011 season starts big

Riders for the NUVO team took to various parts of the Midwest to log impressive wins and miles this past weekend.

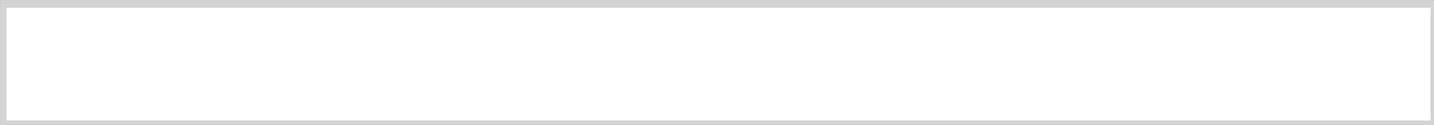
by Laura McPhee

### (Bike Indy) NUVO's elite riders

This weekend, Indianapolis hosts the Tri Klassic Omnium, and the riders of NUVO Cycling team are ready for victory in all three races.

by Laura McPhee

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