

To: Interested Parties
From: Celinda Lake, Daniel Gotoff, and McCauley Pugh, *Lake Research Partners*
RE: Kep Points on Public Support for Cannabis Rescheduling
Date: December 19th, 2023

The following memo outlines the key findings from a recently conducted nationwide survey of likely voters, including oversamples of younger voters and of voters in presidential battleground states.

- **The data reveal solid majority support for rescheduling cannabis to Schedule III (58% support to just 19% oppose), crossing most demographic lines and reaching nearly two-thirds among younger voters.** No more than one-third of voters in any major subgroup opposes rescheduling.
 - **Voters ages 18-25 register some of the strongest levels of support for rescheduling, with 65% favoring rescheduling, including nearly half who feel that way strongly.** Even so, majorities of every age cohort support rescheduling, save seniors—though a plurality of seniors also supports rescheduling and by a double-digit margin.
 - **Majorities of Democrats (74% to 7%) and independents (55% to 15%) support rescheduling cannabis.** Republicans overall are more divided (41% to 31%), though net supportive, and younger Republicans and Republican women are disproportionately supportive. In Battleground states, 57% of voters support rescheduling and 19% oppose.
- **When the question of rescheduling cannabis is framed around whether President Biden should accept the Department of Health and Human Services' recommendation or try to block it, support grows even higher.** Two-thirds of voters (66%) believe the President should accept the recommendation to “reclassify cannabis” compared to just 13% who say he should try to block it.
 - Among voters 18-25, a whopping 84% believe President Biden should accept the recommendation, including 77% who feel that way strongly.
- **Attacking rescheduling fails to dent support—or even increase opposition.** Moreover, no punches were pulled in this exercise when articulating the opposition’s mischaracterizations of rescheduling, which casts the proposal as “a half measure,” compares marijuana regulation unfavorably to that of alcohol, and contends it “provides massive profits to pharmaceutical companies,” while “still result[ing] in hundreds of thousands of Americans behind bars for marijuana-related offenses” (the full text of the opposing arguments is included on the following page of this memo). After simulating an engaged debate, 58% of voters continue to support rescheduling cannabis, while opposition is mired at just 18%.
 - Among younger voters, two-thirds continue to support rescheduling and with noteworthy intensity (66% support, including 50% strong support).

- **By the end of the poll, impressions of Biden improve by a net double-digits—an 11-point swing overall, including a double-digit (+11-point) swing among younger voters.**
- **These survey findings fall in line with a recently conducted Gallup Poll showing support for legalizing marijuana having hit a record high of 70% among all adults nationwide, with majority support across all major demographic and partisan subgroups.¹**
 - While the age breakouts provided by Gallup are slightly different, they too find the highest levels of support among the youngest age cohort. Among voters ages 18-34, nearly 8-in-10 (79%) support legalization.
- Indeed, at the same time the Gallup Poll was being conducted, voters in Ohio came out in strong numbers to make the Buckeye State the 24th in the nation to ratify legalization of cannabis, passing Issue 2 by 57% to 43%. **Exit polls show the measure having enjoyed the most robust levels of support among Ohioans under 30, with more than 8-in-10 voting for legalization (84% Yes to 16% No).**
- In conclusion, rescheduling cannabis is not only the right move from a policy perspective, it is also politically helpful. Nowhere is this more true than for younger voters—one of the most cross-pressured groups of voters, and also the most sanguine about rescheduling.

METHODOLOGY: Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey, which was conducted mixed mode, via phone (cell and landlines) and text-to-online. This survey reached a total of n=900 likely voters across the United States, including oversamples of n=100 18-25-year-olds and n=200 voters in battleground states (AZ, GA MI, NC, NV, PA and WI). The survey was conducted October 2-9, 2023. The margin of error for the base sample is +/-4% and larger for subgroups.

TEXT OF ENGAGED DEBATE

[SUPPORTERS] People who support reclassifying marijuana, including teachers and medical and law enforcement professionals, say it moves our country in the right direction, but with guardrails in place to protect people and reduce the power of drug cartels. This action would set the stage for a stronger and safer industry, provide struggling farmers with a source of legitimate income, create jobs, and bring in significant tax revenue, which could be invested in public health and safety. It would also usher in long overdue criminal justice reforms. Reclassifying marijuana puts us on the path to legalization and regulation and is the right thing to do for America.

[OPPONENTS] People who oppose Joe Biden’s reclassifying of marijuana say this is another example of Biden being a weak president. This is just a half measure and another example of Biden refusing to do what he campaigned on, like when he said he’d forgive student loan debt, but did it in a way that he knew would not be successful. Marijuana should be regulated like alcohol, yet, after Biden’s action, alcohol is still considered so much less dangerous than marijuana. Joe Biden’s action provides massive profits to pharmaceutical companies and still results in hundreds of thousands of Americans behind bars for marijuana-related offenses.

**After Hearing Both Statements:
58% Support vs. 18% Oppose**

¹ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/514007/grassroots-support-legalizing-marijuana-hits-record.aspx>