



Canadian Drug
Policy Coalition

Coalition canadienne
des politiques
sur les drogues

Toward the Legalization, Regulation and Restriction of Access to Cannabis

Canada's Approach

Latin American Drug Policy Conference
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
October 5, 2016

Cannabis Policy in Canada

- Criminalized in 1923
- Royal Commission in 1972 on the non-medical use of drugs.
 - Recommendation to decriminalize possession and growing for personal use
- War on Drugs ramped up in 1972. Canada acts with the international community
- 2001 - Supreme Court of Canada instructs government to create access to medical cannabis program
- 2002 - Senate of Canada recommends legalizing and regulating cannabis

Cannabis Policy in Canada

- 68% of Canadians support a regulated market approach
- Rates of cannabis use are significant
 - 2012 – 12.2% of Canadians 15 years of age or older used cannabis in the past year
 - 33% of youth aged 15 – 24 used in the past year
 - 3.2% of Canadians 15 and over reported weekly use = approximately 1 million Canadians use weekly
- Size of market estimated at \$10 billion
- 2009 – WHO study - Canadian youth have the highest rates of cannabis use of the 29 countries studied.
- 61,000 police incidents involving possession per year

Government Objectives

1. Protect young Canadians by keeping cannabis out of the hands of children and youth.
2. Keep profits out of the hands of criminals, particularly organized crime.
3. Reduce the burdens on police and the justice system associated with simple possession of cannabis offences.
4. Prevent Canadians from entering the criminal justice system and receiving criminal records for simple cannabis possession offences.

Objectives

5. Protect public health and safety by strengthening, where appropriate, laws and enforcement measures that deter and punish more serious cannabis offences.
6. Ensure Canadians are well-informed through sustained and appropriate public health campaigns, and for youth in particular, ensure that risks are understood.

Objectives

7. Establish and enforce a system of strict production, distribution and sales, taking a public health approach, with regulation of quality and safety (e.g., child-proofing packaging, warning labels), restriction of access, and application of taxes, with programmatic support for addiction treatment, mental health support and education programs.
8. Continue to provide access to quality-controlled cannabis for medical purposes consistent with federal policy and Court decisions.
9. Conduct ongoing data collection, including gathering baseline data, to monitor the impact of the new framework.

Challenges

- A robust Cannabis industry has existed since the 70's
- Now government wishes to regulate pre-existing market place activity
- What will federal government regulate at national level vs provinces and territories?
- International treaties?
- Model of distribution system?
- Age of access to legal access?
- Home grow?
- How restrictive a system?

Timeline

- June 2016 - National Task Force Announced
- Consultation - June – September 2016
- Task Force Report – November 30th 2016
- Legislation introduced spring of 2017
- Legislation passed end of 2017
- Regulatory framework created – 2018
- Implementation end of 2018?
- Next federal election fall 2019

Gracias

Canadian Drug Policy Coalition
drugpolicy.ca