

WWW.LEARNABOUTSAM.ORG

# The Impact of Marijuana Legalization

Kevin Sabet, PhD  
President & CEO

**SAM** Smart  
Approaches to  
Marijuana  
preventing another big tobacco

# What is SAM?

A 501(c)(3) non-profit, educational organization funded by volunteers and private organizations

## Our Mission:

**EDUCATE CITIZENS** on the science of marijuana

Promote **HEALTH-FIRST, SMART POLICIES** and attitudes that decrease marijuana use and its consequences



**SAM promotes  
an evidence-  
based  
approach to  
marijuana  
policy that  
prioritizes  
public health**

**NON-PARTISAN BUT HIGH-PROFILE**

founded by former Democratic Congressman Patrick Kennedy and leading Republican pundit David Frum

**SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD**

composed of more than 12 leading researchers, professors, and public health/legal experts

**HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PRESS MENTIONS**

including major media outlets such as The New York Times, NBC News, Slate, BBC News, and FoxNews

# Two Organizations, One Mission



**SAM Action is dedicated to promoting healthy marijuana policies that do not legalize drugs**

**Active at all levels of national, state, and local policy-making**

**Invests in and starts organizations to promote smart marijuana policies**

**SAM's mission is to educate citizens on the science of marijuana and to promote health-first, smart policies and attitudes that decrease marijuana use and its consequences**

**Brings light to and conducts research into marijuana's negative effects**

# Collaboration

SAM has collaborated with credentialed and reputable groups across the country



American Medical Association



American Academy of Pediatrics



National Business Group on Health®

National Business Group on Health

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
CHILD & ADOLESCENT  
PSYCHIATRY

WWW.AACAP.ORG

American Academy of  
Child and Adolescent  
Psychiatry

Other leading public health authorities

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# Collaboration

**SAM has also collaborated with over 30 state affiliates, including:**

**Treatment centers**  
**Recovery groups**  
**Prevention organizations**  
**Law enforcement**  
**Leading medical authorities**  
**Volunteer citizens**  
**Business groups**

**In 2022,  
President Biden  
signed SAM-  
Drafted  
Marijuana  
Research Bill  
into Law**

**Medical Marijuana and Cannabidiol Research  
Expansion Act was the first marijuana reform bill made  
into law in the history of the United States**



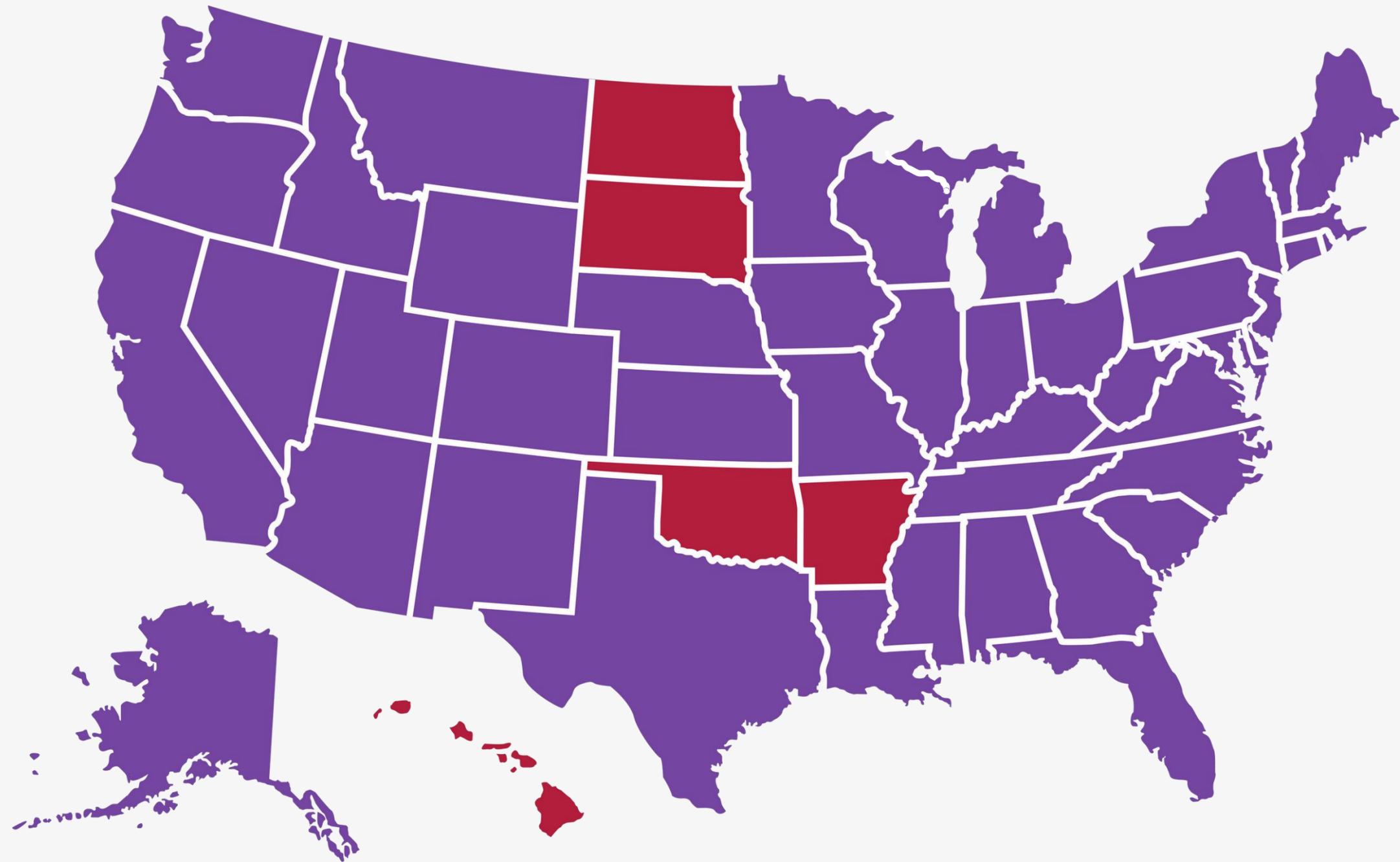
**Streamlines the application process for  
marijuana research**

**Encourages the FDA to develop  
marijuana-derived medicines**



**Requires the Department of Health and Human  
Services to report on the potential benefits and  
harms of marijuana use to Congress**

**SAM recently  
defeated  
marijuana  
legalization bills  
in: Arkansas,  
Hawaii, North  
Dakota, South  
Dakota, and  
Oklahoma**



# Dangers of Delta-8

Delta 8 can cause hallucinations, dizziness, and loss of consciousness.

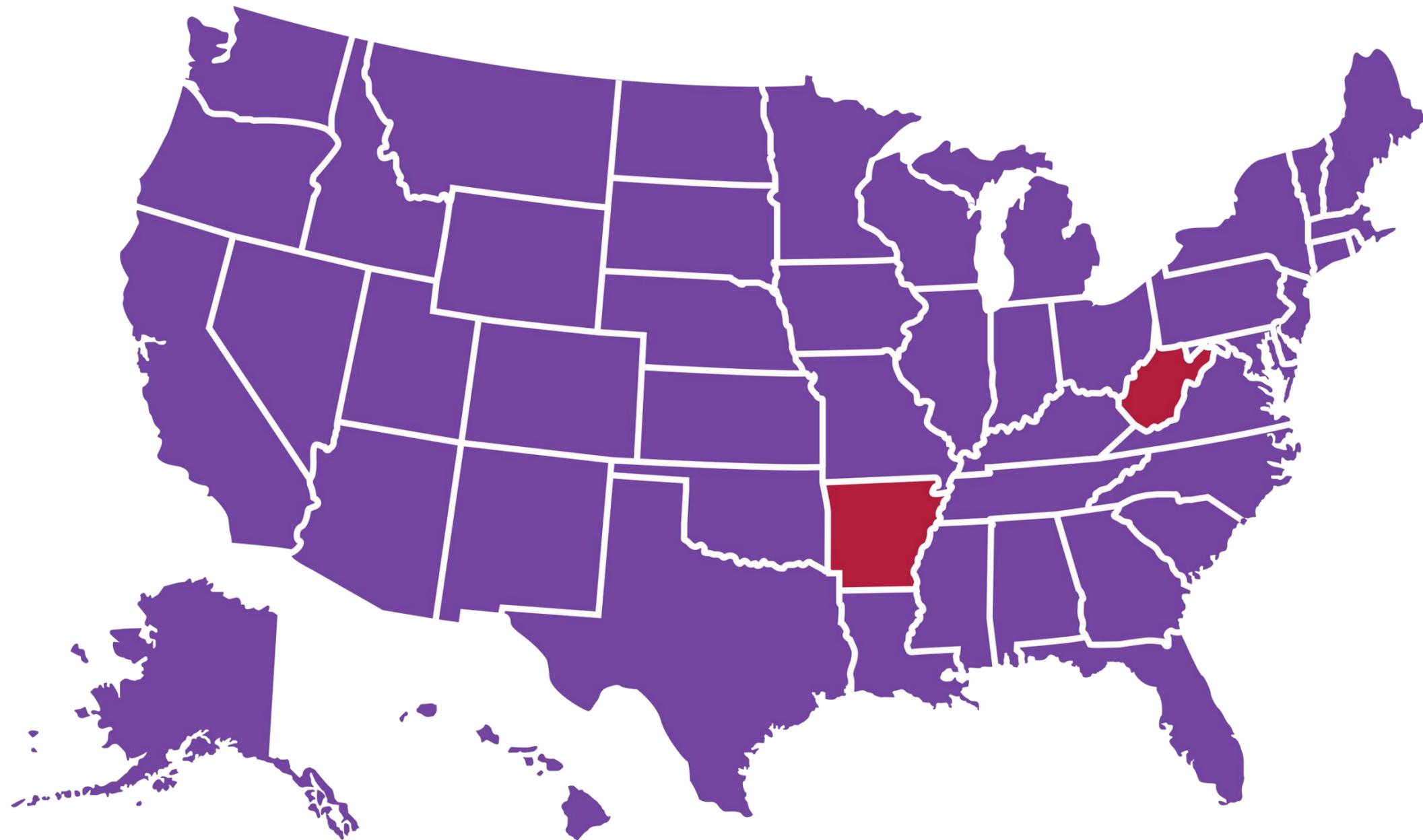


**“Delta-8 and related products are harmful, unregulated, and parents should be vigilant to ensure they aren’t accessible to children”**

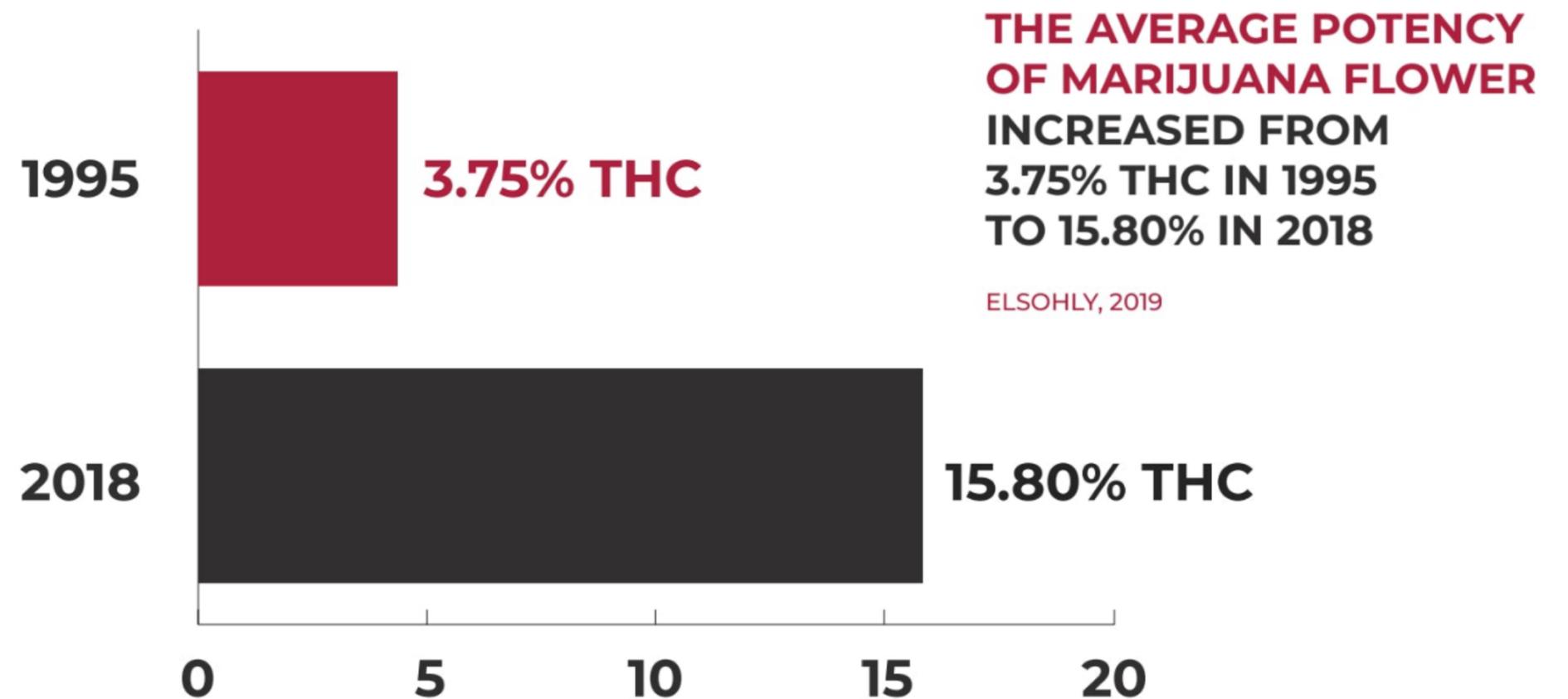
Tim Griffin  
Arkansas Attorney General

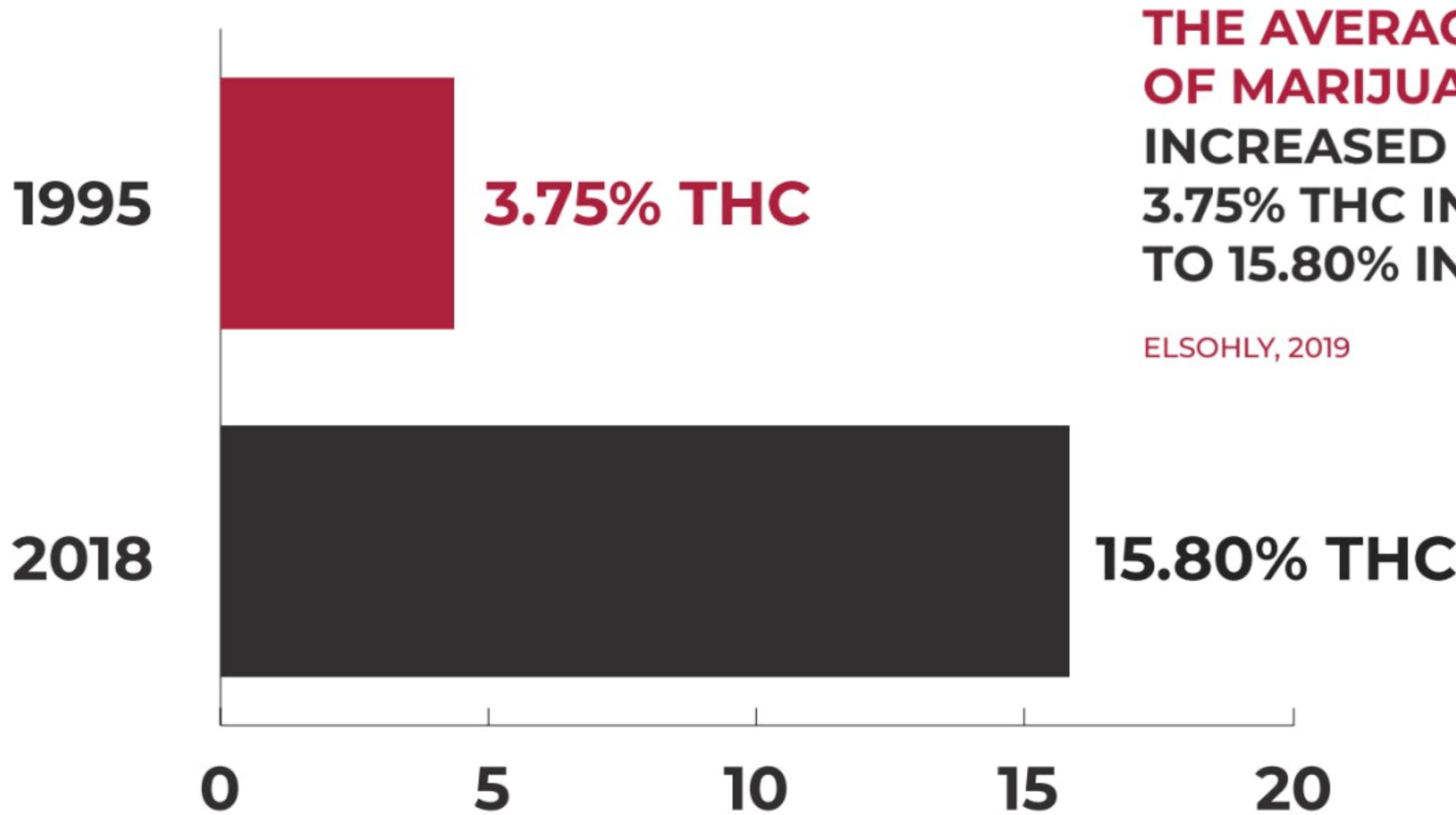


**SAM helped get  
delta-8 banned  
in Arkansas and  
West Virginia**



# Rapidly increasing potency





**THE AVERAGE POTENCY  
OF MARIJUANA FLOWER  
INCREASED FROM  
3.75% THC IN 1995  
TO 15.80% IN 2018**

ELSOHLY, 2019

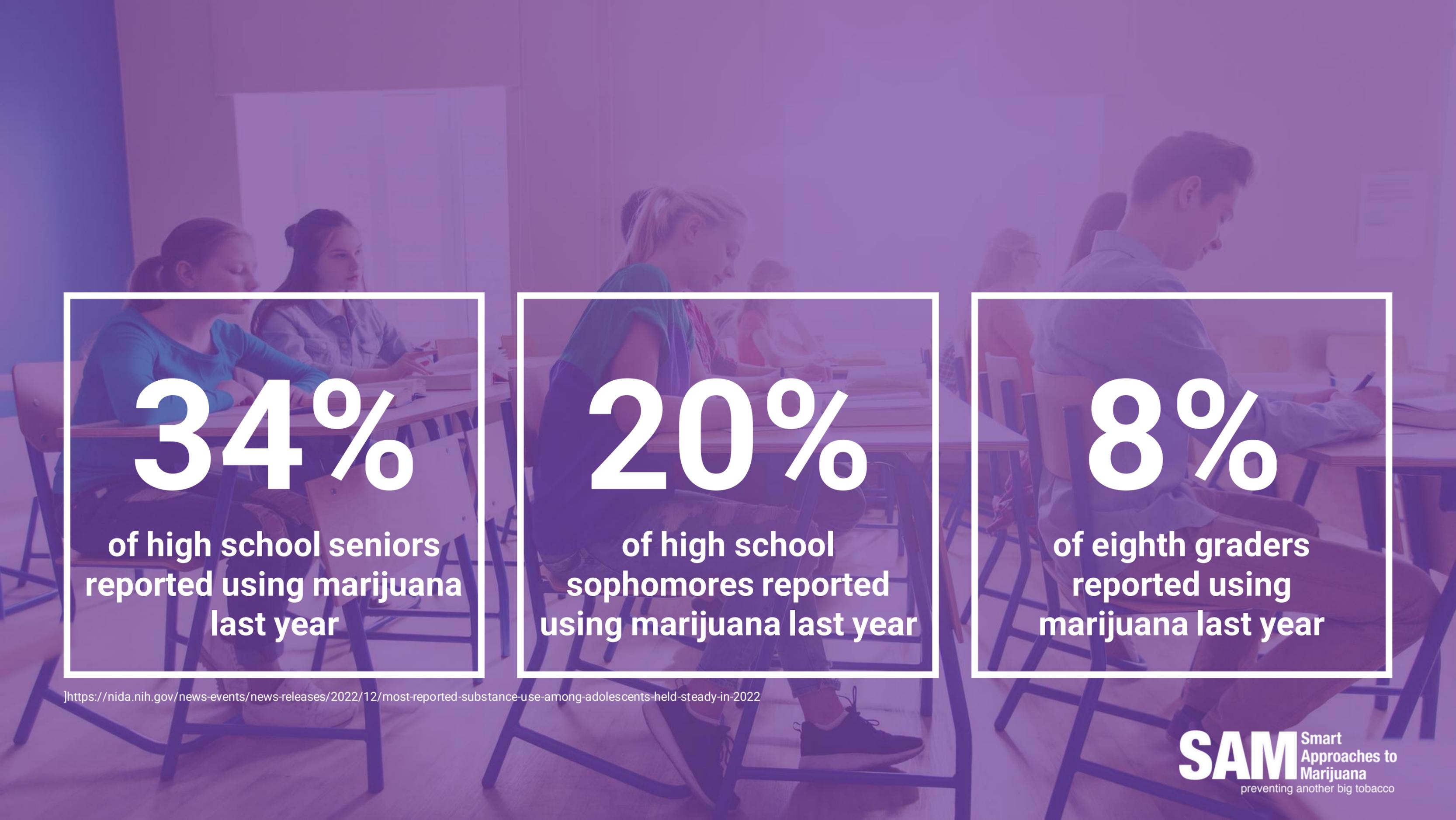


# 52.5 MILLION AMERICANS

## used marijuana in 2021

### twice as many Americans as who used marijuana in 2003 (25.2 million)

NSDUH 2021; 2003



**34%**

of high school seniors  
reported using marijuana  
last year

**20%**

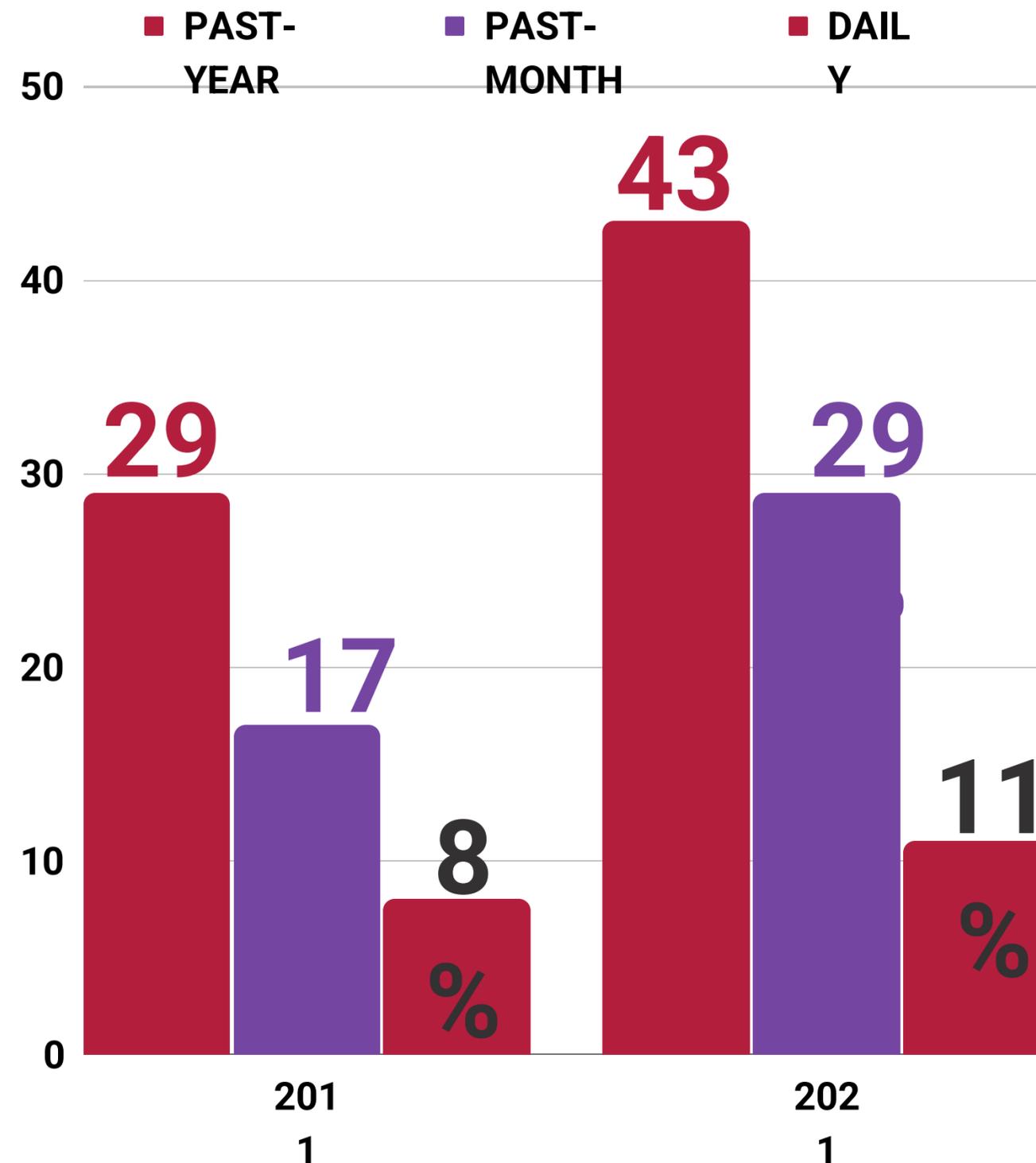
of high school  
sophomores reported  
using marijuana last year

**8%**

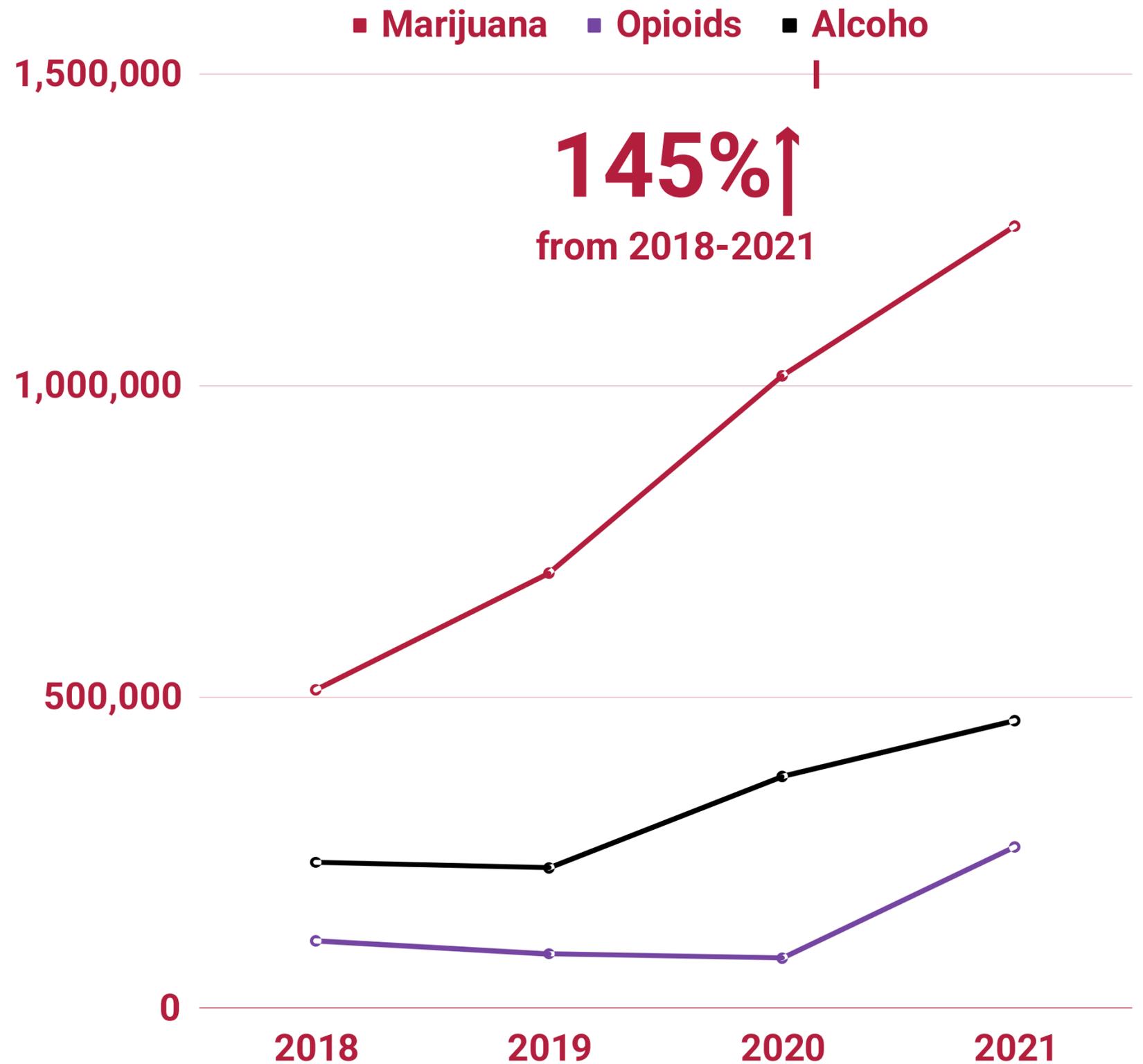
of eighth graders  
reported using  
marijuana last year

[\]https://nida.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/2022/12/most-reported-substance-use-among-adolescents-held-steady-in-2022](https://nida.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/2022/12/most-reported-substance-use-among-adolescents-held-steady-in-2022)

Use is increasing across the board, but especially in young adults aged 19-30:

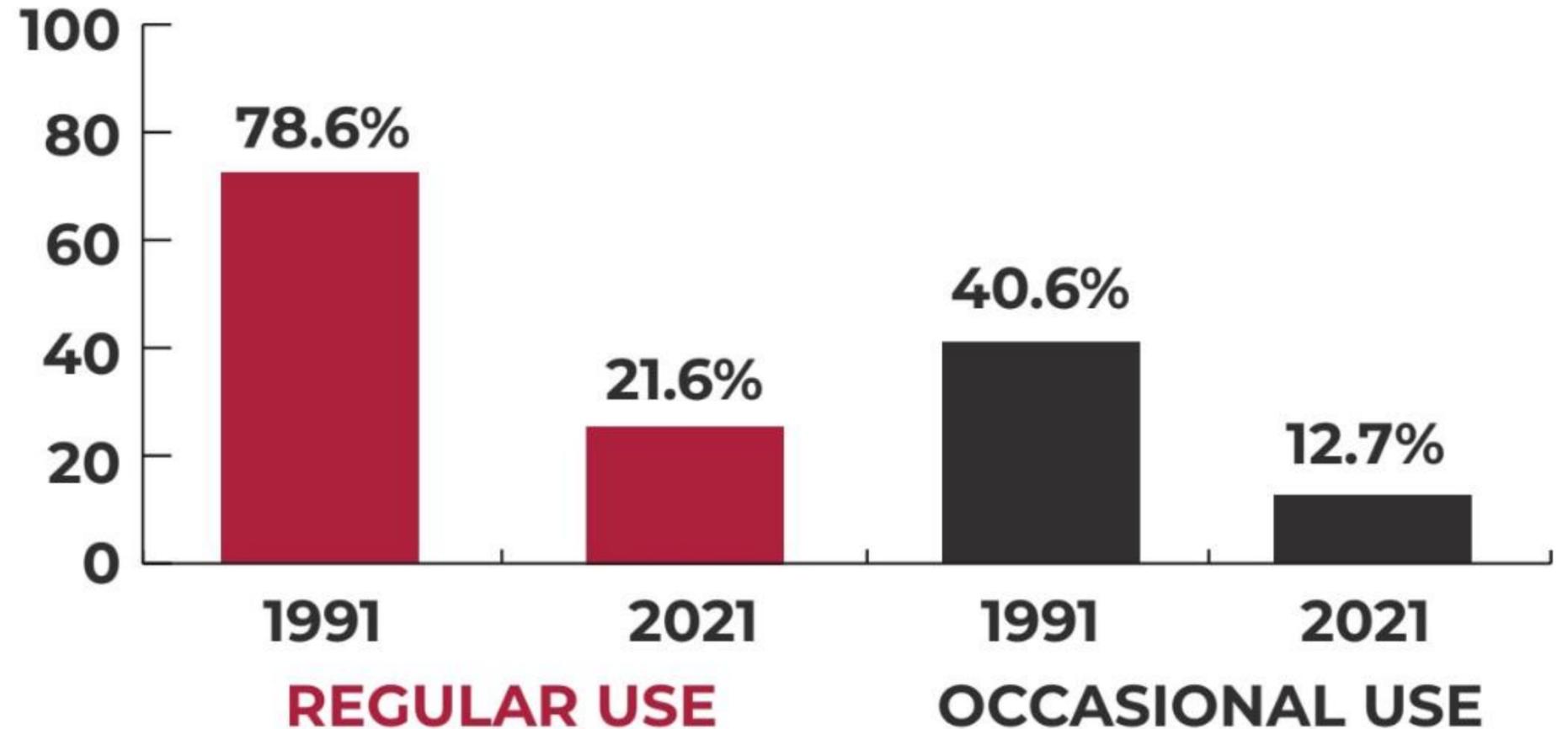


# Exponential rise in Cannabis Use Disorder among 12-17 year olds



NSDUH 2021 table 5.1A; 2020 table 5.1A; 2019 table 5.1A

While use of marijuana is steadily increasing, the perception of harm from using marijuana is decreasing, especially among high schoolers



12TH GRADERS PERCEPTION OF MARIJUANA'S HARM

MONITORING THE FUTURE, 2022B

**30%**

of marijuana users have some form of marijuana use disorder

**7X**

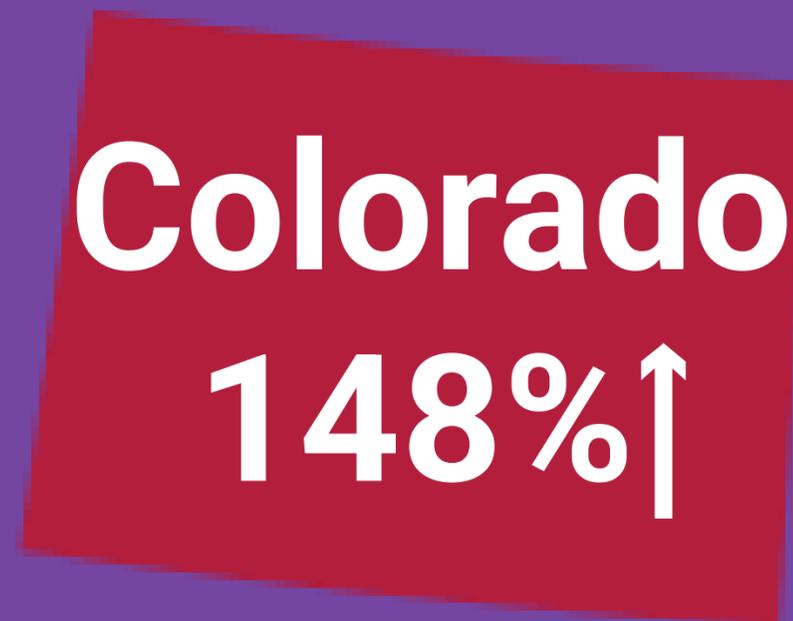
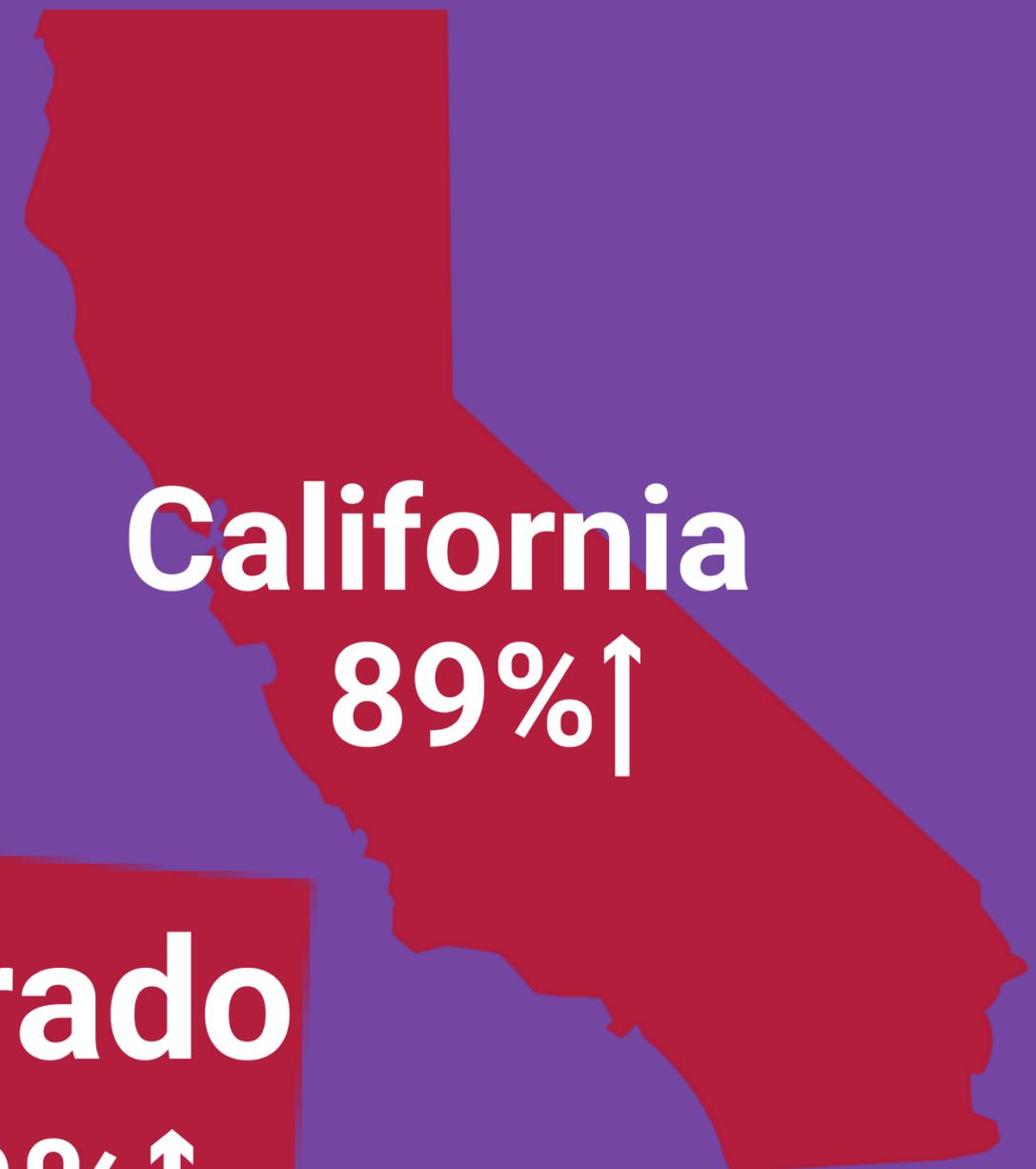
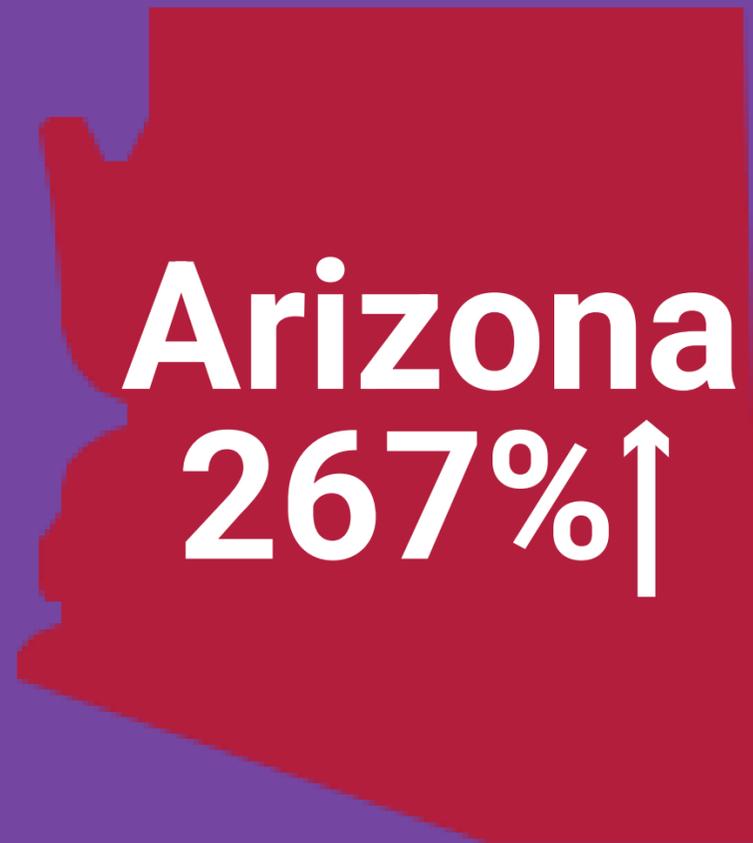
use before the age of 18 increases the likelihood of CUD seven times

**25%**

legalization is associated with a 25% increase in cannabis use disorder among 12-17 year olds

National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2021

**Marijuana  
related  
hospitalizations  
and ER visits  
have increased  
since  
legalization**

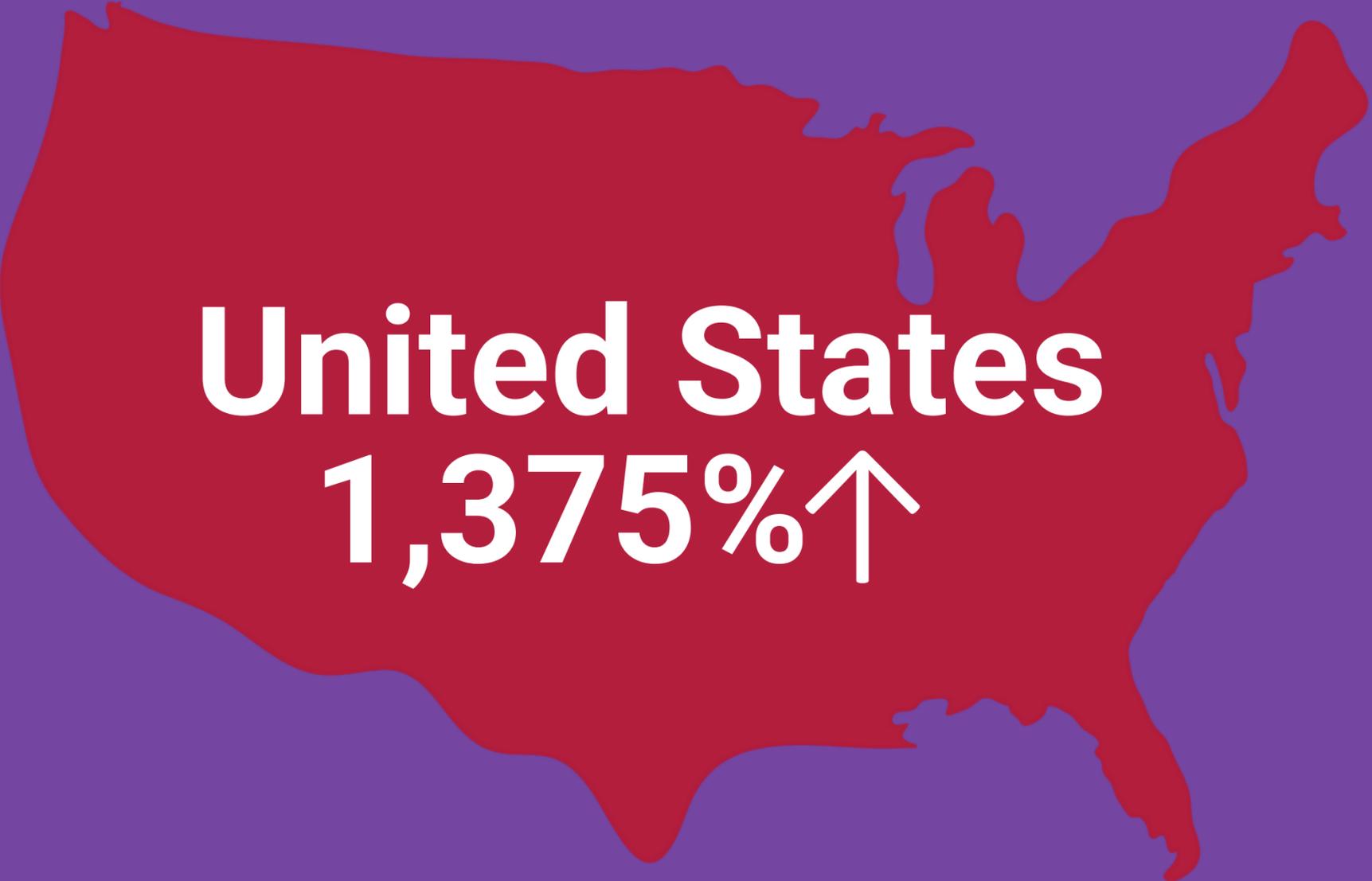


**Marijuana  
users are**

**25%**

**more likely to need  
emergency care and  
hospitalization**

Vozoris et al., 2022



**United States**  
**1,375%↑**

**Calls to poison control for edible marijuana exposures in children under 6 rose 1,375% from 2017-2021**

**Calls to poison control for edible marijuana exposures in legal states continues to rise**



A photograph of a car crash at night. The scene is illuminated by blue and red emergency lights. A dark-colored car is heavily damaged, with its front end crumpled and debris scattered on the road. In the background, other vehicles and streetlights are visible, creating a blurred city street scene.

**1 in 4**

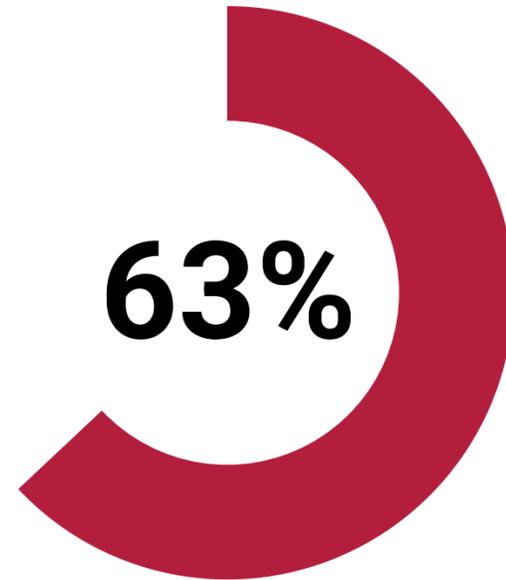
**road deaths in  
Colorado involve  
marijuana**

Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, 2020.

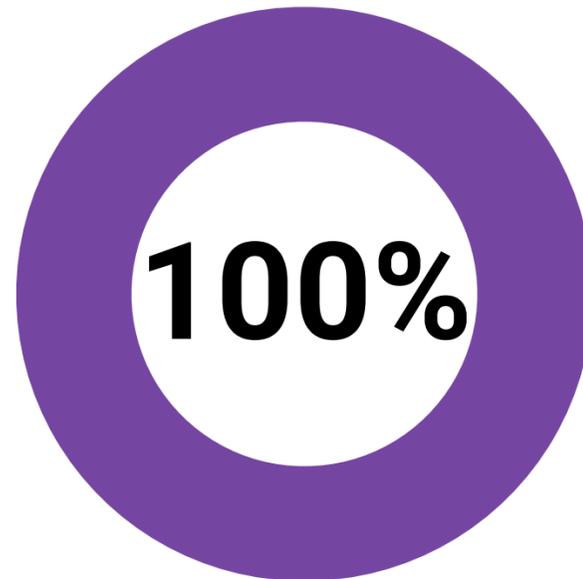
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# Drivers 19-24

Perception of the dangers of driving while high is misaligned with reality and misaligned with perceptions on drinking and driving



**believed that driving under the influence of marijuana was extremely or very dangerous**



**believed that driving under the influence of alcohol was extremely or very dangerous**



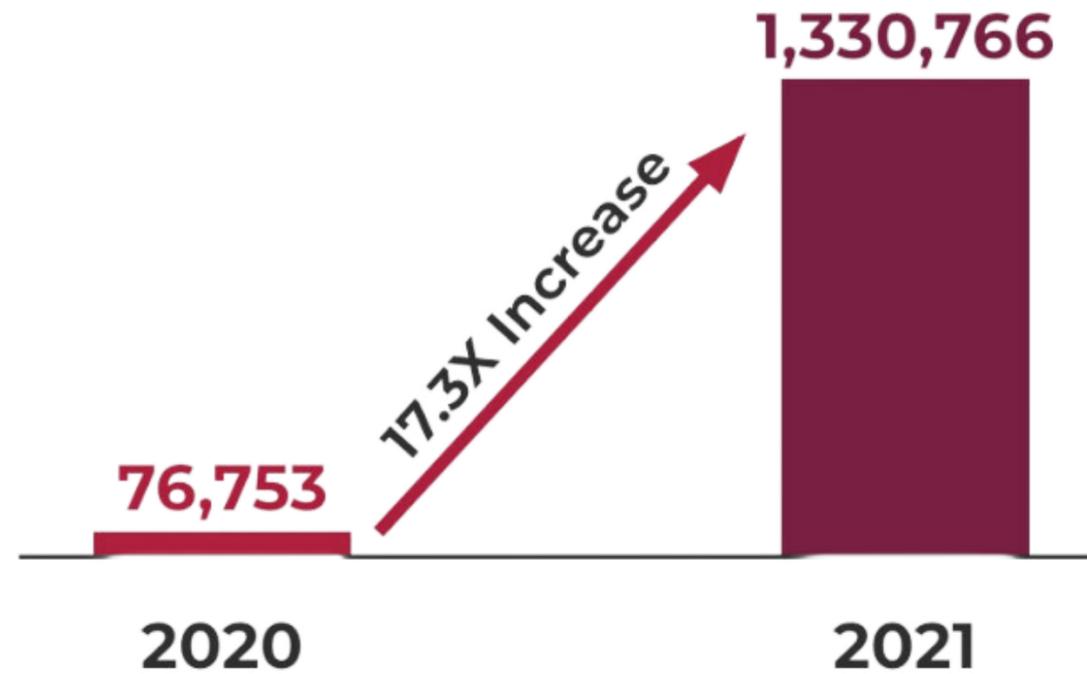
**49%**

**of teen drivers who  
use marijuana report  
driving under the  
influence**

ColoradoLi et al., 2020 Division of Criminal Justice,  
2020.

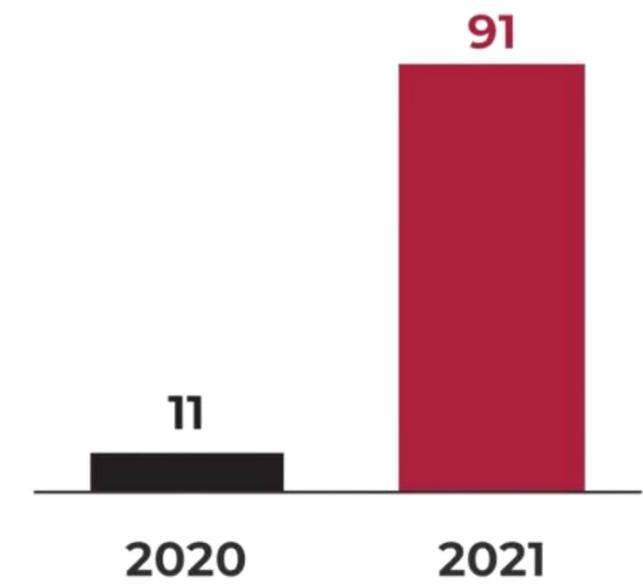
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# Legalization has far from eliminated the black market



**THE OREGON-IDAHO HIDTA SEIZED 1,330,766 ILLICIT MARIJUANA PLANTS IN 2021. THAT'S COMPARED TO 76,753 IN 2020 (17.3X INCREASE) AND 5,260 IN 2018 (253.0X INCREASE).**

OREGON-IDAHO HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA, 2022B, P. 17



**THE NUMBER OF CLANDESTINE LABORATORIES SEIZED IN THE HIDTA REGION INCREASED FROM 11 IN 2020 TO 91 IN 2021, WITH THE MAJORITY (90) RELATED TO CANNABIS EXTRACTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PRODUCING 'BHO/HONEY OIL'.**

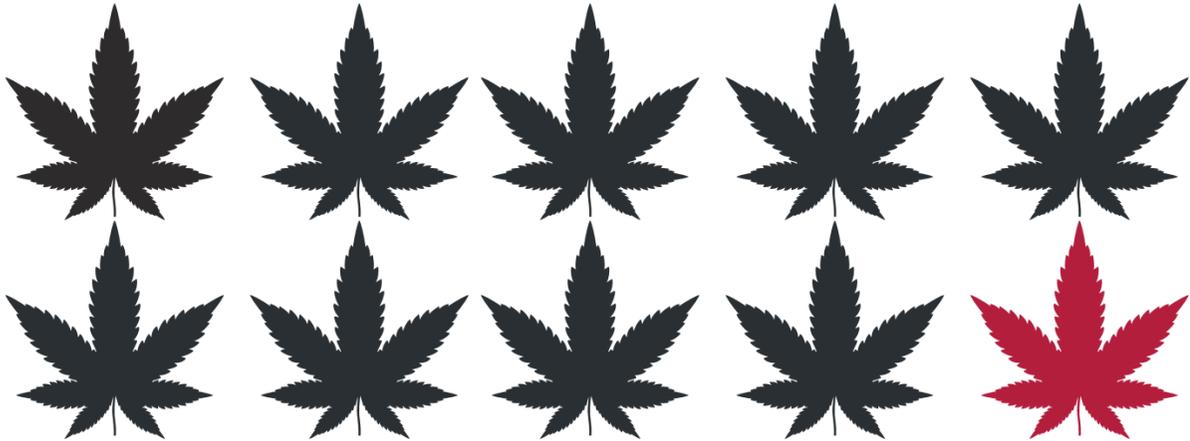
OREGON-IDAHO HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA, 2022A, P. 11

Legalization  
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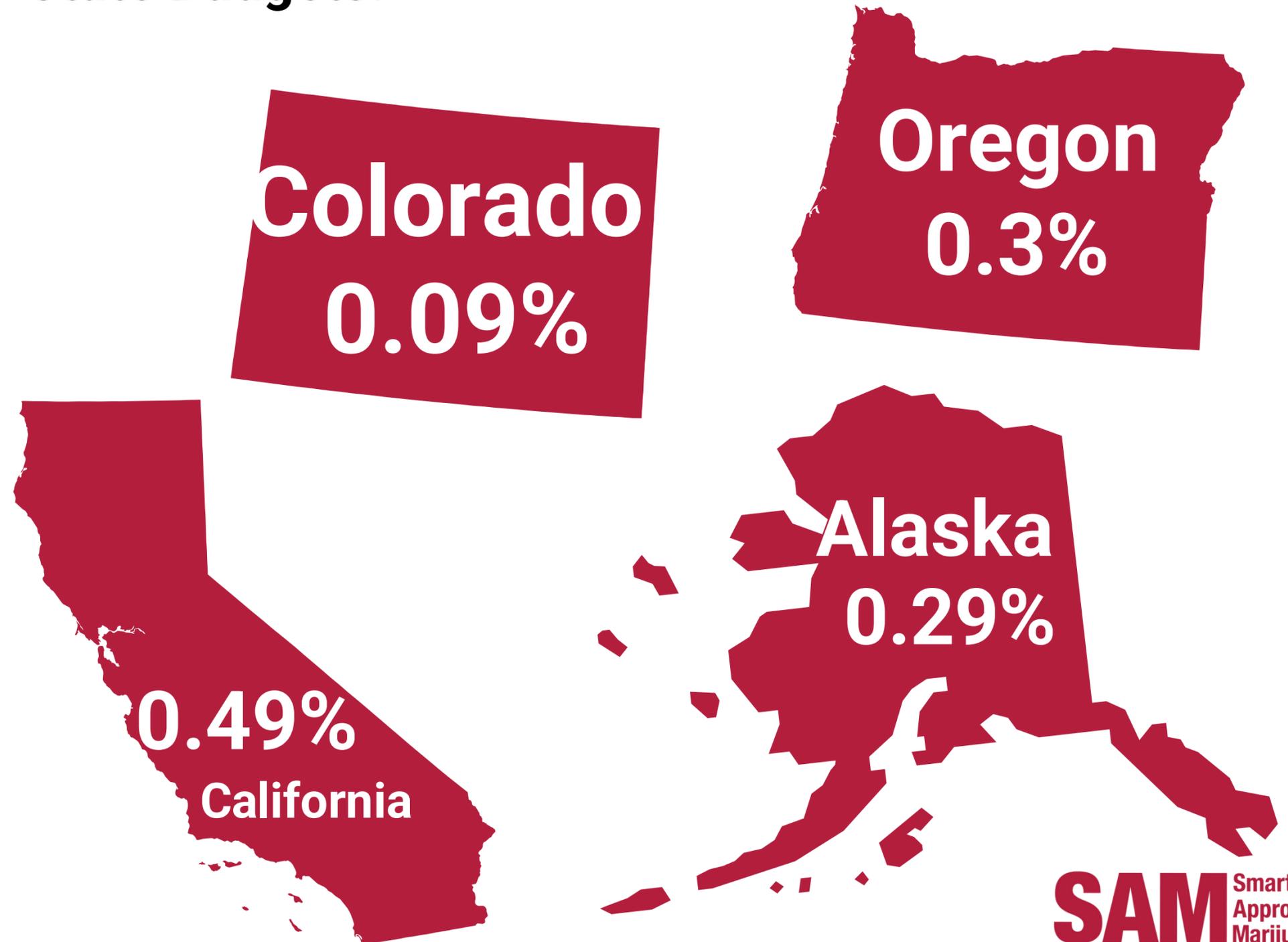
**70-**  
**80%**  
of marijuana sold in state-legal  
dispensaries in California was  
produced and grown illegally  
NBC News, 2022

**85-**  
of California-produced  
marijuana is exported  
**90%**  
Fuller,  
2019

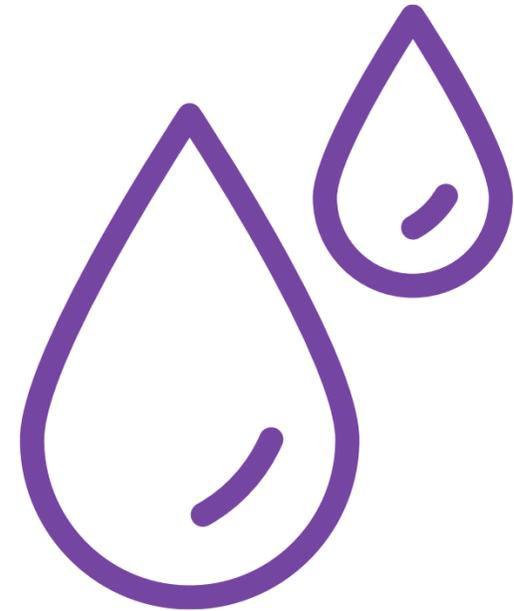


## Marijuana Taxes as a Percent of FY21-22 State Budgets:

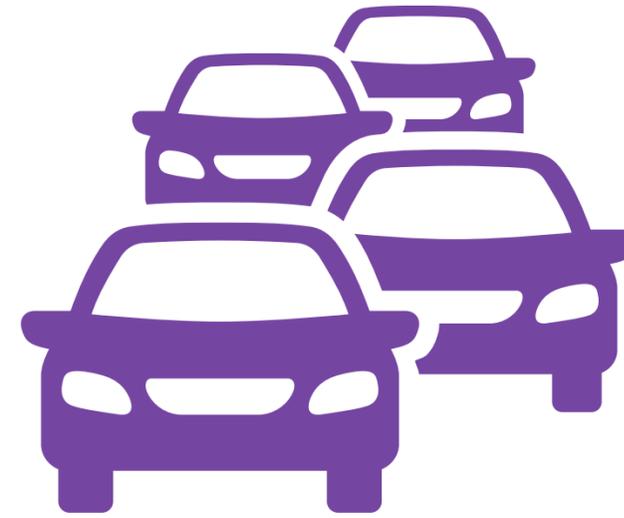
Marijuana tax  
revenue  
projections are  
still massively  
over-estimating  
net marijuana  
taxes



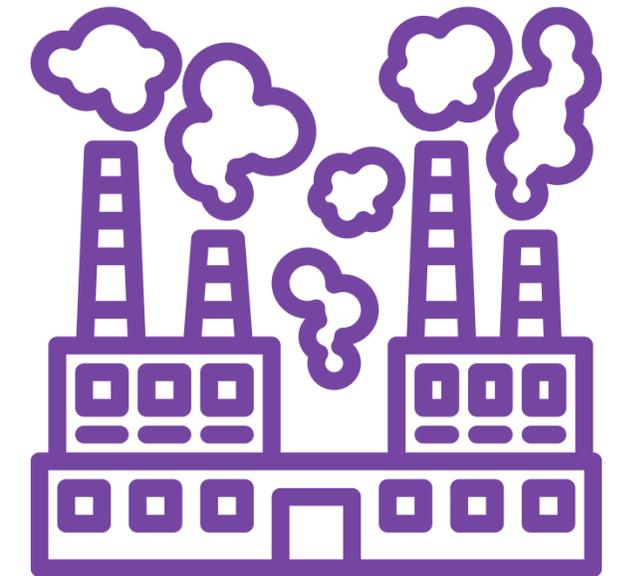
# Marijuana is also harmful for the environment



**Outdoor marijuana grow sites consume an estimated 29.4 million gallons of water per year in California**



**Indoor marijuana grows emit as much CO2 as 3.3 million cars**



**Marijuana production is nearly four times more energy intensive than coal or oil production**

More and more localities are opting-out of legalization



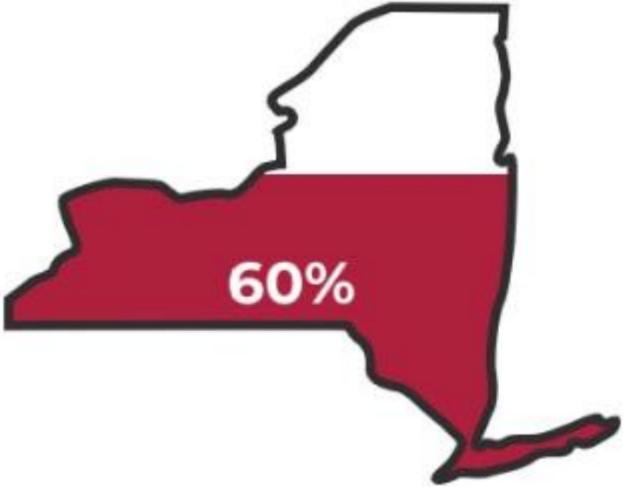
**CALIFORNIA**

NIEVES, 2021



**COLORADO**

FUEGO, 2019



**NEW YORK**

ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT, 2022



**NEW JERSEY**

MJBIZDAILY, 2021

Post-accident  
workforce drug  
positivity for  
marijuana  
reached a 25-  
year high in 2022



From 2012 to 2022, post-accidental marijuana positivity increased **204.2%**

Positivity for marijuana in the general U.S. workforce increased **10.3%**

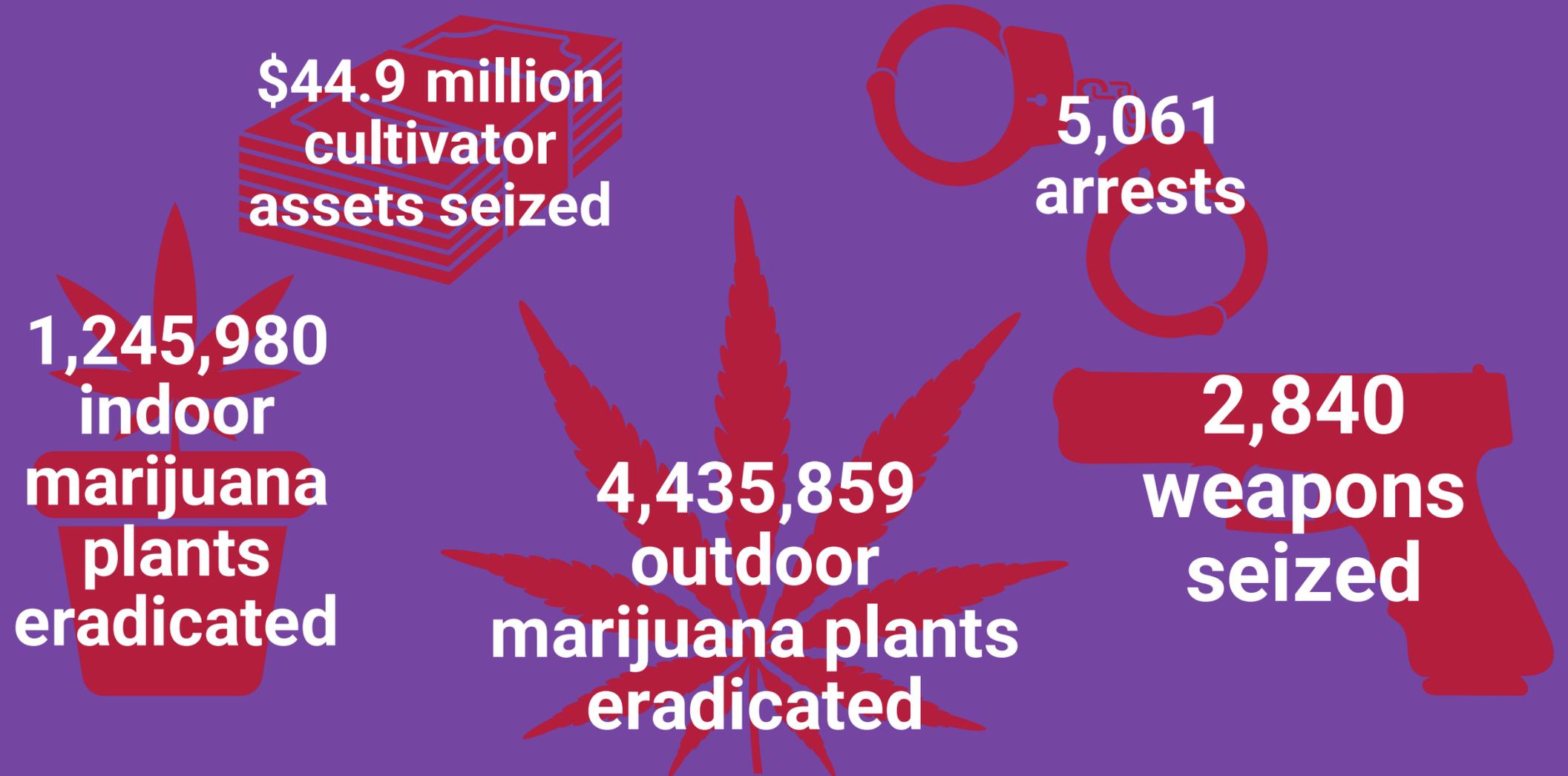
In the safety-sensitive workforce, marijuana positivity increased:



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In 2022, DEA provided resources to support the 115 state and local law enforcement agencies that actively participate in the program

# 2022 DEA Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program



87% of marijuana seized was in California



# 30%

of cases of schizophrenia  
among men aged 21-30  
might have been  
prevented by averting  
cannabis use disorder

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/psychological-medicine/article/association-between-cannabis-use-disorder-and-schizophrenia-stronger-in-young-males-than-in-females/E1F8F0E09C6541CB8529A326C3641A68>

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**Although several states legalized medical marijuana as an "alternative" to opioids, research shows:**

**Marijuana is not a substitute for opioids**

**Marijuana users need more anesthesia during surgery and 58% more opioids following surgery**

**Legal medical marijuana sold through dispensaries is associated with higher opioid mortality**

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S016762962300005X?via=ihub#sec0013>

<https://www.asahq.org/about-asa/newsroom/news-releases/2020/10/cannabis-and-postoperative-pain>

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Compared with non-users, adolescents (12-17) who used marijuana but did not meet the criteria for Cannabis Use Disorder had:

**2-4X**

greater odds of adverse psychosocial events, including major depression, suicidal ideation, slower thoughts, difficulty concentrating, truancy, low grade point average, arrest, fighting, and aggression.

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2804450?>



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**An increased availability of legal marijuana was linked to:**

**Increased use**

**Worse health-related outcomes, including vomiting, psychosis, or cannabis-involved pregnancies**

**This was true regardless of the indicator employed to measure availability (proximity or density of dispensaries) among both adults and adolescents**

**More availability through dispensaries means higher rates of use and worse health outcomes for adults and teens**

A close-up photograph of several cannabis leaves, showing their characteristic serrated edges and intricate vein patterns. The leaves are a vibrant green color and are set against a dark, almost black background, which makes the green stand out. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the leaves.

# Legislation to Watch

SAFE Banking Act • Cannabis Administration  
and Opportunity Act

# SAFE Banking Act

Provides a “safe harbor” from banking regulators for banks who choose to accept federally illegal proceeds from production & sale of marijuana. However, banks would still be vulnerable to prosecution under CSA for talking illegal funds.



**Sets a dangerous precedent to allow banking access for a Schedule I drug, giving money laundering access to international drug cartels already using legalization as cover for illicit drug trafficking.**

**Access to banks would radically increase institutional investment into the industry, rapidly accelerating its transformation into the next Big Tobacco.**



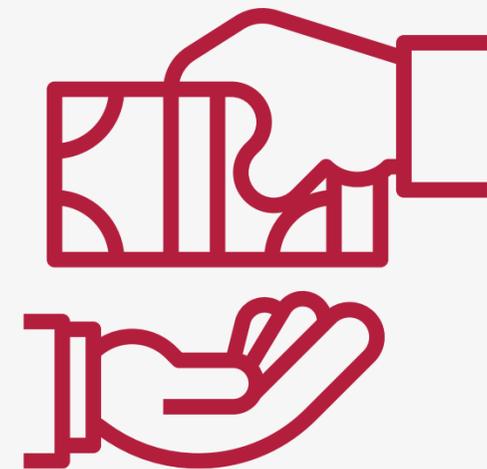
**Debate over legalization should come first, bill provides no guardrails for public health & safety.**



# Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act (CAOA)

Fully legalizes marijuana products at the federal level by removing marijuana from the Controlled Substances Act.

Gives marijuana businesses and corporate holding companies full access to Institutional Investors and capital markets, including Altria (Phillip Morris).



Allows marijuana businesses to access loans from the Small Business Administration.

Contrary to the recommendations of public health experts, allows marijuana businesses to deduct the cost of advertising, by exempting them from 280E of the IRS Code (CBO has scored this as a revenue loss of \$5 billion over 10 years).

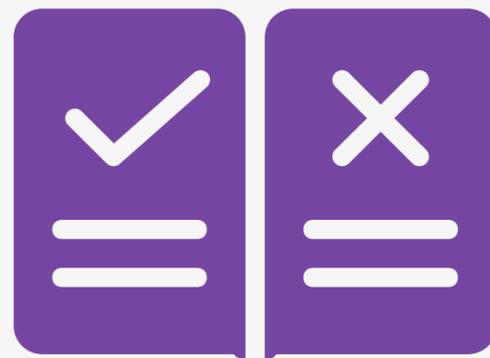




# Policy Solutions

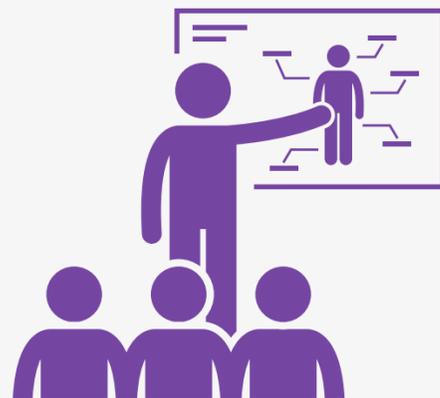
# In States That Have Legalized

**Edibles and high THC concentrates should be outlawed or severely restricted.**



**The marijuana industry should not serve on rule-making bodies to determine regulations.**

**Pot advertising and promotions should be prohibited.**



**A science-based public awareness campaign should be implemented across multiple media.**

**Drugged driving prevention should be a priority, with tough laws imposed on those who drive stoned.**

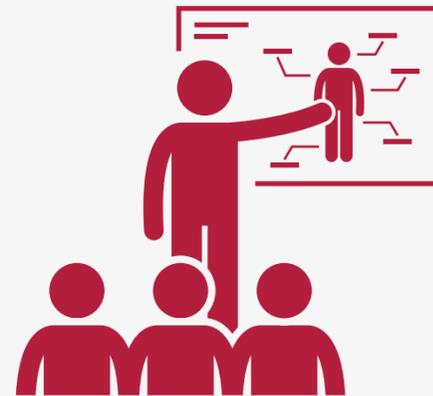


# In States That Have Not Legalized:



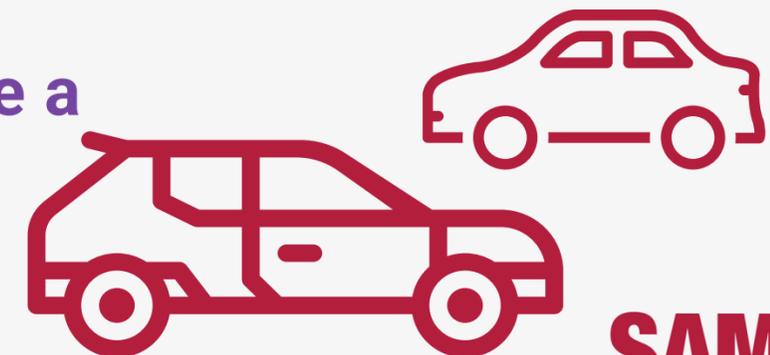
Remove criminal penalties and arrest records for personal possession of pot.

Pot use should be discouraged, and people caught repeatedly with marijuana should be directed to early interventions and/or treatment.



A science-based public awareness campaign should be implemented across multiple media.

Drugged driving prevention should be a priority, with tough laws imposed on those who drive stoned.





**Contact: [Brendan@LearnAboutSAM.org](mailto:Brendan@LearnAboutSAM.org)**

[learnaboutsam.org](http://learnaboutsam.org)



Training Events

SAM State Affiliate Program

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Volunteer Opportunities

**Thank  
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joining us  
today!**

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*Your Voice on Marijuana Issues  
in the United States*