

From: Data for Progress and The Justice Collaborative Institute  
Re: Voter Support for Federal Marijuana Reform Remains Strong  
Date: 09/18/2020

In 1970, President Richard Nixon signed the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) and classified marijuana under Schedule I, a designation reserved for drugs considered to be highly addictive and that have no accepted medical use. But the decision to classify marijuana alongside heroin and PCP (fentanyl and cocaine, for comparison, are classified under Schedule II) was wholly unrelated to the drug's scientific and addictive properties.

In the decades since, the War on Drugs—and the war on marijuana in particular—has been a long and costly campaign of injustice waged by Democrats and Republicans alike. It has inflicted misery upon millions of Black Americans whose lives have been destroyed by selective enforcement. The devastation came not just from arrests, jail time, and lengthy prison sentences (some people have been sentenced to life without parole for marijuana offenses), but also sweeping collateral consequences: the loss of voting rights, housing, employment, and federal benefits; separation from families and communities; and lost custody of children. Marijuana enforcement, and drug enforcement at large, does not promote public safety, but it does enforce and exacerbate systemic racism within the nation's criminal legal system.

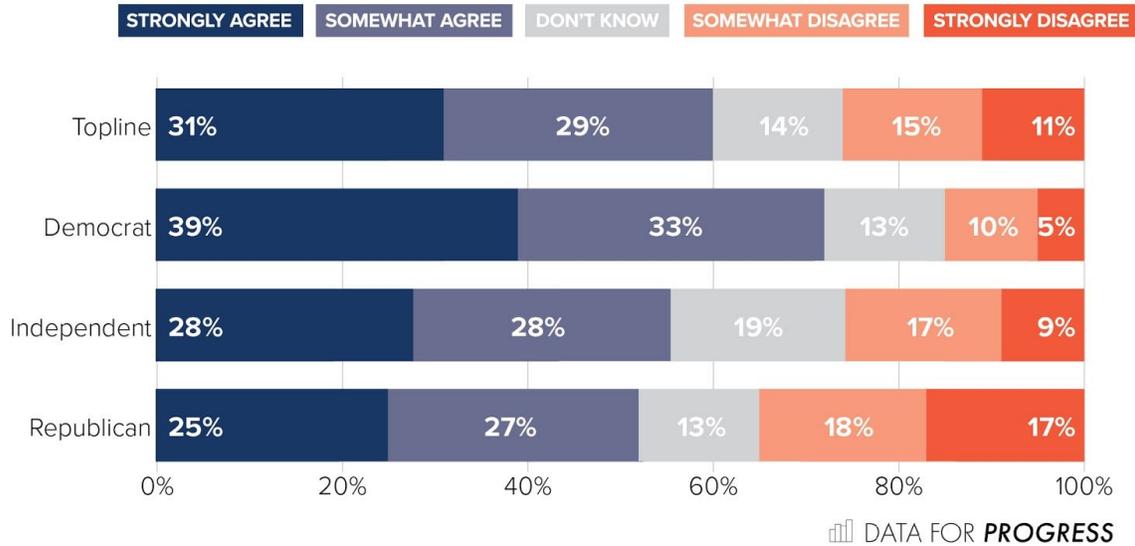
These policies have especially deadly consequences amid the ongoing pandemic and economic crisis. Arresting and incarcerating people for drug use risks spreading the coronavirus behind bars and throughout the broader community.

New polling from Data for Progress and The Justice Collaborative Institute shows popular support for moving away from enforcement and toward legalization: Our research found that **60% of likely voters, including 52% of Republicans, agree with treating drug use as a public health issue rather than a criminal justice issue**, and **56% of voters, including 53% of Republicans, agree that the federal government should legalize the use and sale of marijuana for adults**. Voters also support police stopping arrests of people for merely possessing or selling small quantities of marijuana.

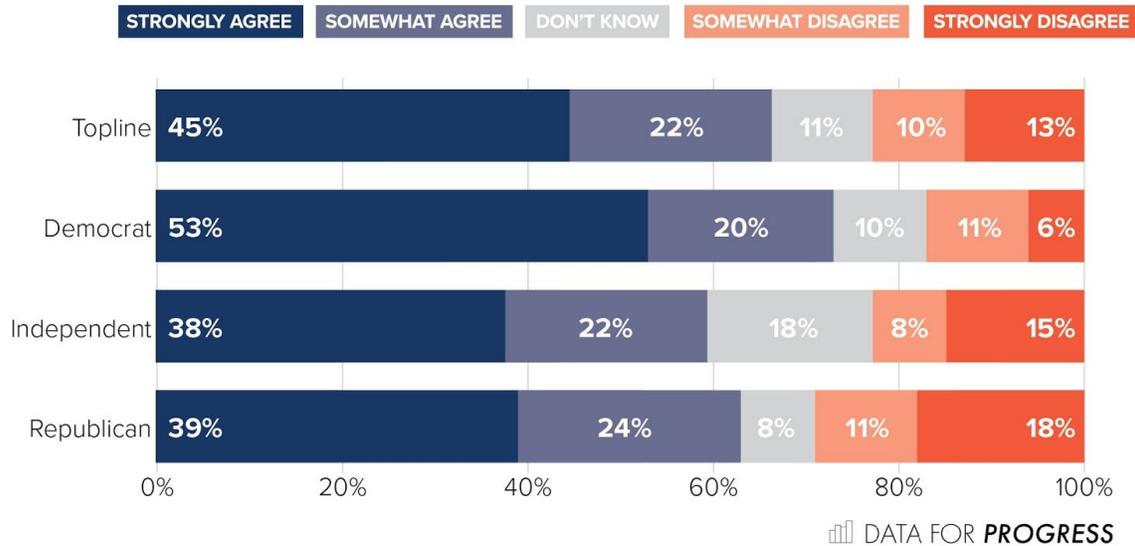
In addition, voters continue to overwhelmingly support passage of the Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement (MORE) Act, comprehensive federal reform legislation that would, among other things, completely decriminalize marijuana at the federal level, invest tax revenue from marijuana sales in communities most harmed by drug enforcement, and provide for resentencing and the expungement of criminal records for those with marijuana convictions: **59% of voters, including 53% of Republicans, support passing the MORE Act**.

**Polling Results:**

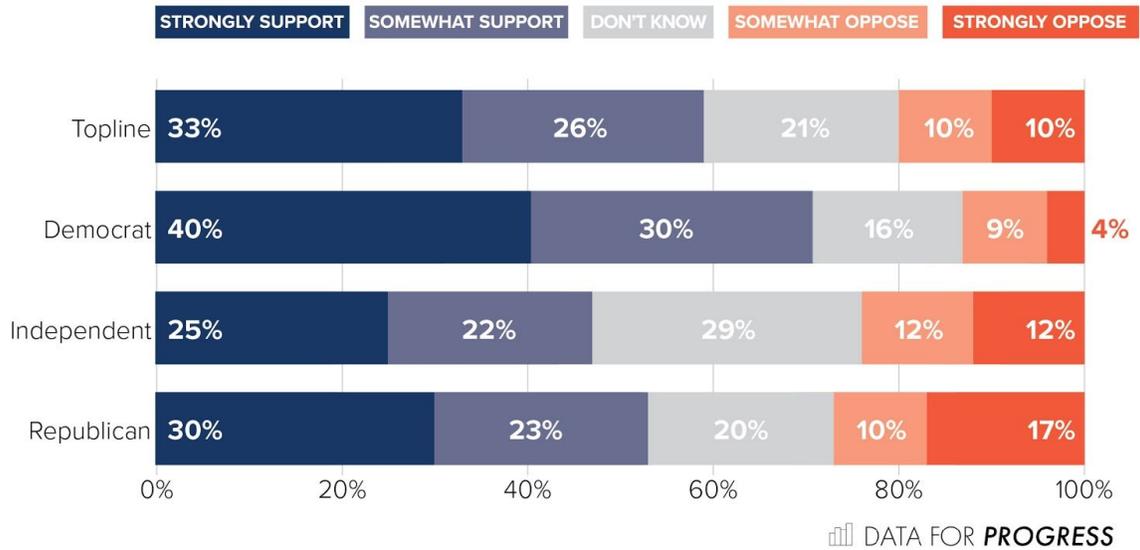
**Do you agree or disagree that we should treat drug use as a public health issue and not a criminal justice issue?**



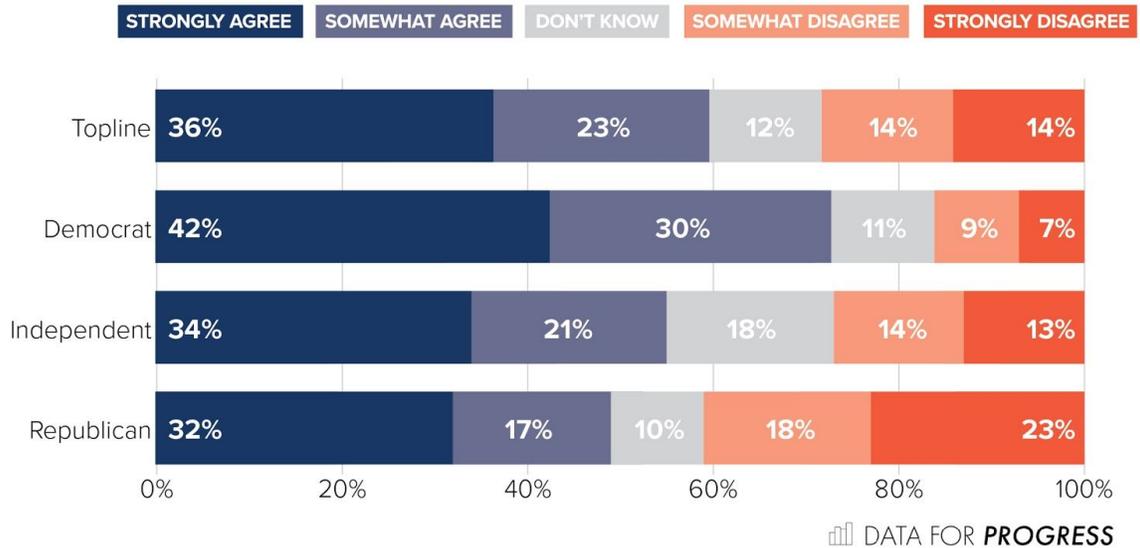
**Do you agree that the federal government should respect the rights of individual states that have already legalized marijuana sales and not pursue legal action against them?**



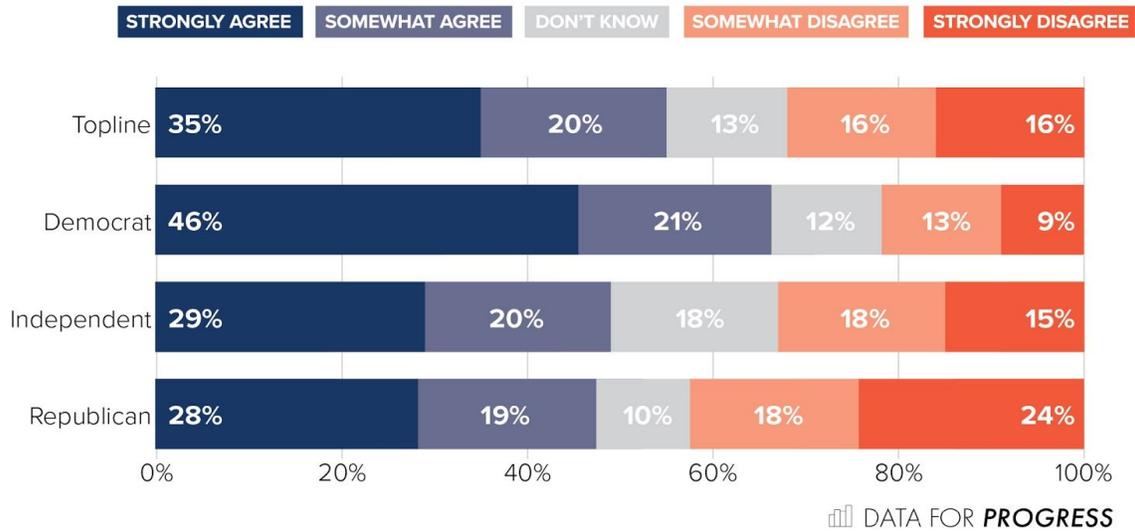
## Do you support or oppose passage of the MORE Act?



## Do you agree that police should stop arresting people for the possession of marijuana intended for personal use?

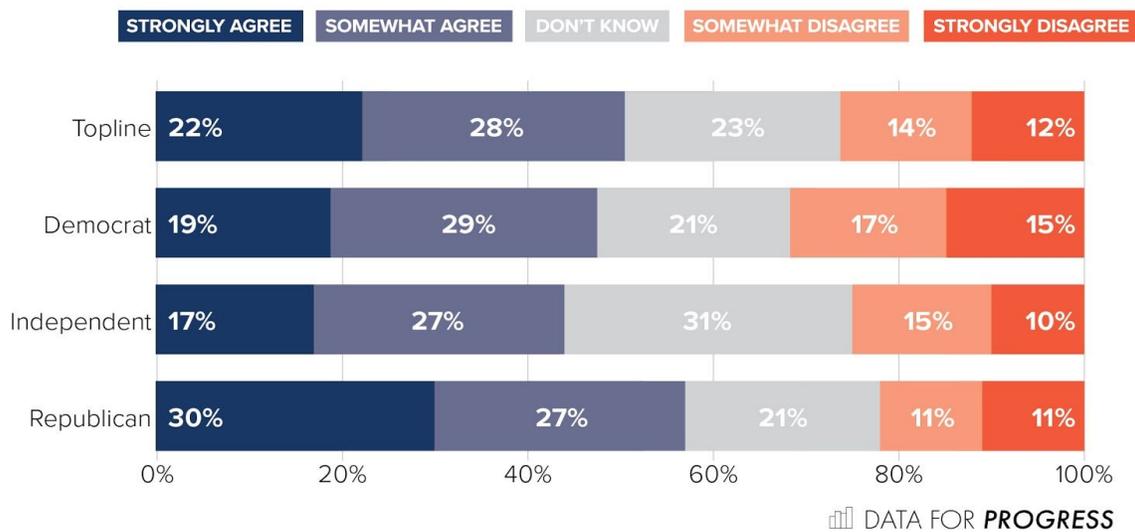


**Do you agree that police should stop arresting people for the sale of small quantities of marijuana?**



As more states legalize marijuana, corporations, wealthy entrepreneurs, politicians, and governments are increasingly reaping profits from a fledgling marijuana industry, while Black and Brown people languish in prison for merely possessing the same drug.

**Do you agree or disagree that legalized marijuana has become too corporate and it is only benefiting wealthy investors?**



## **Polling Methodology**

From 9/11/2020 to 9/14/2020, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,212 likely voters nationally using web panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is +/- 2.8 percentage points.