

# Editorial: Time for feds to repeal pot ban

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It took 13 years for the United States to come to its senses and end Prohibition, 13 years in which people kept drinking, otherwise law-abiding citizens became criminals and crime syndicates arose and flourished. It has been more than 40 years since Congress passed the current ban on marijuana, inflicting great harm on society just to prohibit a substance far less dangerous than alcohol.

The federal government should repeal the ban on marijuana.

We reached that conclusion after a great deal of discussion among the members of the *Times's* editorial board, inspired by a rapidly growing movement among the states to reform marijuana laws.

There are no perfect answers to people's legitimate concerns about marijuana use. But neither are there such answers about tobacco or alcohol, and we believe that on every level – health effects, the impact on society and law-and-order issues – the balance falls squarely on the side of national legalization. That will put decisions on whether to allow recreational or medicinal production and use where it belongs – at the state level.

We considered whether it would be best for Washington to hold back while the states continued experimenting with legalizing medicinal uses of marijuana, reducing penalties, or even simply legalizing all use. Nearly three-quarters of the states have done one of these.

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