

The Next Ten Years

“Study the past if you would define the future.” *Confucius*

20

20. 2028, The benefits of ending prohibition begin to be realized. After 10 years of legalization in Ohio:

- 10,000 Ohioans did not die from opioid overdoses. (States that legalize have 25% fewer overdose deaths.)
- ~14,000 Ohioans who did not face arrest or prosecution. (Arrests in Colorado dropped 80% after legalization.)
- \$4 billion in sales earned from the Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program alone. (~\$400 million in annual sales.)
- \$230 million in taxes on sales under the medical marijuana program alone. (Ohio sales tax rate is 5.75%.)

19

19. 2021, All 50 states have passed legislation related to industrial hemp. Upon cannabis' descheduling, the Ohio General Assembly authorizes commercial production of hemp, in this quintessential agricultural state.

18

18. 2021, Federal prohibition of marijuana ends. With Ohio along with all other states legalizing medical marijuana and one third of states, including Ohio, permitting adult use, Congress removes herbal cannabis from all federal drug scheduling, permits research, eases banking regulations and allows business deductions. Moves oversight from the DEA to the ATF. Leaves regulation to the states, similar to alcohol and tobacco.

17

17. 2018, Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol Amendment easily by passed voters in fall general election. Establishes a free market system that regulates marijuana like alcohol, but leaves the Ohio Medical Marijuana Program in place to serve qualified patients.

The Last Twenty Years

Twenty Significant Steps in Ohio Marijuana Reform

The illustration of the Cannabis Sativa plant to the left appeared in the January 1998 edition of the Columbus Free Press. The numbers on this graphic and their corresponding descriptions illustrate twenty significant steps on Ohio's path toward legalizing medical cannabis, adult marijuana use and industrial hemp. The closer to stem, the more the step supported upward growth.

16

16. 2017, HB 523 implementation. State of Ohio established administrative rules on time until selection of the Level I (largest) cultivators. Process appears to be tainted by conflicts of interest.

15

15. 2016, House Bill 523 created the Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program. Evolved through three public town hall meetings and seven Medical Marijuana Task Force hearings. Passed by both the Ohio House (67-29) and Ohio Senate (18-15) in less than one month. Signed into law by Governor Kasich on 6/8/16.

14

14. 2016, Ohioans for Medical Marijuana (OMM) fielded the Medical Use of Marijuana Amendment sponsored by MPP. Would have placed a regulatory framework in the Ohio Constitution. Pulled after passage of HB 523.

13

13. 2015, Issue 2. To defeat Issue 3 (RO), the Ohio General Assembly quickly passed Issue 2 that added an extra “monopoly” question to the ballot issue process. Approved by voters 51-49%.

12

12. 2015, ResponsibleOhio (Issue 3 or RO) spent \$20 million to place the Marijuana Legalization Amendment on the fall ballot. The famed “monopoly” would have enshrined into the Ohio Constitution 10 preselected cultivation sites owned by the investors who funded the amendment. Issue 3 rejected by voters 35-65%.

11

11. 2013, Ohio Rights Group formed. Fielded the Ohio Cannabis Rights Amendment that would have codified cannabis as a right aligned with the Bill of Rights in the Ohio Constitution. Collected 150,000+ all-volunteer signatures. The ORG is said to have brought “meaningful cannabis policy closer to the ballot than any other grassroots group in the state history.” Lacked funding to make the ballot.

10

10. 2010-2016, twenty proposed citizen-led ballot initiatives concerning medical marijuana submitted to Ohio Attorney General's office for certification to gather 300,000+ valid signatures of registered Ohio voters for ballot placement. The eight certified amendments were (date order): Ohio Alternative Treatment Amendment (11/2011), Ohio Medical Cannabis Amendment #2 (1/2012), Ohio Cannabis Rights Amendment, (5/2013), Marijuana Legalization Amendment (3/2015), Legalize Marijuana and Hemp in Ohio (4/2015), Cannabis Control Amendment (6/2015), Medical Use of Marijuana (3/2016), and Medical Cannabis and Industrial Hemp Amendment (3/2016).

9

9. 2010, medical marijuana ballot issue frenzy begins. Frustrated by years of legislative intransience, Medical Cannabis of Ohio (MedCann-2010) formed to incubate medical marijuana ballot initiatives in Ohio. Transformed into the Ohio Medical Cannabis Association (OMCA-2011) and then the Ohio Rights Group (ORG-2013).

8

8. 2002, Treatment in Lieu of Incarceration (Issue 1). Sponsored in part by Peter Lewis, Ohio's first drug policy focused constitutional amendment to make the ballot. Defeated 33-67%.

7

7. 2002, with funding from Ohio billionaire Peter Lewis, the Marijuana Policy Project (MPP) began a grants program to intensify state-level advocacy. Funds also provided by the Drug Policy Alliance.

6

6. 2002, Ohio's first medical marijuana patient advocacy group, Ohio Patient Network, is formed.

5

5. 1998-2015, eight medical marijuana bills introduced in the Ohio General Assembly; none passed committee.

4

4. 1997, Repeal of the Affirmative Defense. As its first act of the year, the Ohio General Assembly passed SB2, which repealed the defense of medical necessity.

3

3. 1996, For A Better Ohio (FABO) formed as the first statewide marijuana advocacy organization. Had chapters in Columbus, Cincinnati, Toledo and three other Ohio cities. Collected over 50,000 signatures for the MMIH.

2

2. 1995, Industrial Hemp and Medical Marijuana Initiative (MMIH). First and only initiated statute (ballot issue) for marijuana to receive approval for signature gathering by the Ohio Attorney General.

1

1. 1975, Decriminalization. In response to the Controlled Substances Act of 1970, Ohio joined six other states to decriminalize small amounts of marijuana.