

## **Poll: 60% of Kansans Back Recreational Cannabis Legalization**

### **Three in Five Kansans Back Recreational Marijuana Legalization And Even More Support Medical Cannabis, New Statewide Poll Finds**

A new survey finds that Kansans overwhelmingly support cannabis reform, underscoring a widening gap between public opinion and legislative action in one of the few remaining U.S. states without legal medical or recreational marijuana.

According to the latest “Kansas Speaks Survey” conducted by the Fort Hays State University Docking Institute of Public Affairs, 59% of Kansas adults favor legalizing marijuana for recreational use, while 70% support medical cannabis legalization.

The findings continue a years-long trend showing strong voter appetite for change, even as lawmakers remain reluctant to advance cannabis legislation.

### **Kansas Poll Reveals Growing Support Across Party Lines for Marijuana Reform**

The Kansas Speaks Survey, conducted between September 26 and October 10, interviewed 488 adults statewide, covering a broad range of political and policy topics — including public attitudes toward marijuana.

When asked about legalizing recreational marijuana, 64% of Democrats and 64% of independents expressed support, compared to a 49% plurality of Republicans who said they favored legalization.

Support for medical cannabis legalization showed even greater consensus:

- 78% of independents backed the measure.
- 75% of Democrats agreed.
- 59% of Republicans were also in favor.

The bipartisan backing suggests that marijuana reform is no longer a fringe issue but a mainstream concern for Kansas voters across political divides.

### **Tax Revenue and Candidate Support: Why Kansans Say It’s Time for Legalization**

Beyond personal liberty or medical access, economic motivations appear to be driving much of the public's support.

Sixty-five percent of Kansans said they support legalizing adult-use cannabis to create a new source of tax revenue for the state.

Additionally, 65% of respondents said they are “highly likely” or “somewhat likely” to vote for political candidates who advocate for medical marijuana legalization: a clear sign that cannabis reform could play a role in upcoming election cycles, including the 2026 gubernatorial race.

## **Despite Strong Public Support, Kansas Lawmakers Continue to Resist Cannabis Reform**

Despite consistent polling in favor of reform, Kansas remains one of the last holdout states in the U.S. without legal medical or recreational marijuana.

The Kansas House of Representatives passed a medical marijuana bill in 2021, but the measure stalled in the Senate, where conservative leaders have repeatedly blocked cannabis-related proposals from advancing.

In March 2024, the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee voted to table a limited medical marijuana pilot program, halting momentum yet again. Later efforts to revive the measure on the Senate floor fell short.

Gov. Laura Kelly (D) has made repeated appeals to lawmakers to legalize medical cannabis, calling the issue one of compassion and modernization.

“It’s time for Kansas to catch up with the rest of the country,” Kelly said in an April 2025 statement, urging citizens to contact their representatives to demand legislative action.

## **Failed Amendments and Stalled Bills Show the Depth of Political Resistance**

Throughout 2023 and 2024, Democratic lawmakers introduced multiple attempts to advance marijuana reform, including amendments to broader drug and health bills.

One proposed amendment sought to add cannabis to a “right-to-try” bill, granting terminally ill patients access to medical marijuana. The measure failed to gain enough support.

Another proposal aimed to remove marijuana entirely from the state’s controlled substances list, effectively legalizing it — but the House rejected it before it reached the Senate floor.

These repeated failures reflect a deep partisan divide within the Kansas Legislature, where a small but powerful bloc of Republican leaders continues to prevent debate on cannabis reform.

## **Senate Leaders Cite Crime and Safety Concerns Despite Data Showing Public Approval**

Senate President Ty Masterson (R) has emerged as one of the most vocal opponents of cannabis reform.

In 2023, Masterson said he was open to discussions about limited medical legalization, but by early 2025, he reversed course — calling medical marijuana a “nonstarter.”

He warned that legalization could lead to increased gang activity, greater youth access, and unintended social harms.

“I think what people see when they think of medical [marijuana], they’re thinking of palliative care and things like that,” Masterson said, suggesting voters don’t fully understand what legalization entails.

Masterson also downplayed the significance of statewide polling, arguing that public support may not reflect awareness of the broader implications of cannabis reform.

## **Federal Uncertainty and State Hesitation Create Policy Paralysis**

A state Special Committee on Medical Marijuana, formed to explore reform pathways, voted last year against recommending legalization in 2025.

The committee said lawmakers should wait for federal rescheduling decisions or broader national policy shifts before moving forward — a cautious stance that effectively delays reform indefinitely.

Kansas’s reluctance stands in stark contrast to regional trends: Missouri, Colorado, and Oklahoma have all legalized some form of cannabis use, creating a patchwork of policies that leave Kansas economically and socially isolated.

## **The Takeaway: Public Patience Wears Thin as Kansas Falls Behind the National Cannabis Shift**

The Kansas Speaks Survey adds to a growing body of evidence that voters are ready for marijuana reform whether for economic growth, medical relief, or personal freedom.

Yet, year after year, the state legislature remains gridlocked, prioritizing caution over public sentiment.

With three in five Kansans backing recreational legalization and seven in ten supporting medical cannabis, the political pressure is mounting.

As Gov. Kelly and reform advocates renew their push, the coming legislative session could determine whether Kansas continues to stand as an island of prohibition or finally joins the national movement toward legal cannabis.

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