

# Legalizing weed unlikely to turn kids into potheads

By Christopher Ingraham, Washington Post

A central idea of the war on drugs has always been that loosening restrictions on drug use – by decriminalizing it, or allowing medical use, or legalizing some drugs completely, or even simply discussing legalization – will “send the wrong message” to kids and lead to increased teen drug use and all the problems associated therewith.

But particularly in the realm of marijuana policy, the evidence has repeatedly shown this notion to be inaccurate. After all, 20 states have passed decriminalization measures. And since 1996, 34 states have passed some sort of medical marijuana bill. But, according to two studies published in the past month, teen use of marijuana has fallen over that same period.

“Despite considerable changes in state marijuana policies over the past 15 years, marijuana use among high school students has largely declined,” concludes one of the papers, published in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*.

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