



PRESS RELEASE

Canadian Youth Share Perspectives on Cannabis Legalization

CSSDP submits youth feedback based on consultation to the Task Force for Marijuana Legalization and Regulation, calling for low age restrictions, decriminalization of youth offences, and better drug education.

Toronto, Canada (September 20, 2016) - Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy (CSSDP) has released a report highlighting ten recommendations for cannabis legalization and regulation in Canada, based on consultations with a diverse range of youth in Toronto.

The submission to the Task Force on Marijuana Legalization and Regulation is based on input from attendees at “Youth Speak: Cannabis Policy in the 21st Century,” a roundtable held in Toronto on September 7, 2016, to gather feedback from youth on the legalization and regulation of cannabis in Canada. In an effort to unpack how to best protect youth under legalization, the recommendations cover several priority areas, including 1) age restrictions; 2) criminalization of youth; 3) prevention and education; and 4) production, distribution, and access restrictions.

“The Canadian government has framed protecting youth as a central focus of cannabis legalization,” said Jenna Valleriani, a Strategic Advisor at CSSDP and organizer of the roundtable. “Given this attention, and the high rates at which Canadian youth use cannabis, it’s important to hear youth voices in the design of cannabis policy. That’s the only way we’ll ensure Canadian youth are truly better off under legalization.”

The submission outlines concerns around the potential for an overly-restrictive system, stressing that this would harm and criminalize young people - particularly minority or at-risk youth - rather than protect them. Key recommendations from the consultation include setting age restrictions for cannabis access as low as possible, decriminalizing youth cannabis offences, and improving cannabis education to be evidence-based, free of judgment, and based on harm reduction principles.

“Restrictions as high as age 25 will only lead to more arrests and criminal records for young people,” explains Aidan Harold, a CSSDP board member. “Setting the purchasing age for cannabis above the legal drinking age would do more harm than good, as it would incentivize alcohol use while having little impact on lowering the prevalence of cannabis use among youth.”

The full report can be found [here](#).



About Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy

Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy (CSSDP) is a national grassroots network of student and youth chapters working on drug policy issues facing their communities. CSSDP works on local, national and international levels to promote sensible drug policy, increase harm reduction awareness, and disseminate evidence-based educational resources.

For more information or to arrange a media interview, please contact:

Jenna Valleriani
Strategic Advisor, CSSDP
+1 (647) 207-4771
jennav [at] cssdp.org

Nazlee Maghsoudi
Knowledge Translation Manager, International Centre for Science in Drug Policy
Strategic Advisor, CSSDP
+1 (647) 694-9199
nmaghsoudi [at] icsdp.org

Dessy Pavlova
Vice-Chair, CSSDP Board of Directors
+1 (647) 688-6189
dessy [at] cssdp.org