Cannabis Regulation. Facts for Hawai‘i Voters

Last updated January 2026

This document provides a factual overview of cannabis regulation in Hawai‘i.
It summarizes widely reported findings and points to primary sources where available.
The focus is public safety, enforcement outcomes, equity, and democratic process.

This document summarizes publicly available data and widely cited research.

MEDIA VERSION. QUICK REFERENCE

Hawai‘i already lives with cannabis.

Medical use is legal. Over 35,000 registered patients participate statewide.

Use exists across age groups and communities regardless of legal status.

Prohibition did not remove access.
It shifted sales into an unregulated market.
It consumed police, court, and corrections resources.

Hawai‘i enforcement data and national
patterns show disproportionate impact on Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander residents.

Regulation changes outcomes.

A regulated system requires lab testing for potency, pesticides, and contaminants.

Health risks exist and are addressed through regulation rather than prohibition.

Age limits mirror alcohol. 21 and over.

Impaired driving remains illegal and enforceable.

Alcohol comparison matters because outcomes matter.

Alcohol causes more than 140,000 deaths per year nationwide.

No fatal overdose from cannabis has been documented in standard public health reporting.

The process is democratic.

The Hawai‘i Constitution allows voter ratified policy decisions.

If voters oppose legalization, the ballot confirms it.

If voters support regulation, the state gains a clear public mandate.

Bottom line.

Prohibition failed to stop cannabis use.

Regulation improves safety, transparency, and accountability.

RAPID RESPONSE LINES

• Cannabis already exists in Hawai‘i. The question is regulated or unregulated.
• Regulation adds testing, age limits, and accountability. Prohibition adds none.
• Impaired driving stays illegal. Enforcement stays active.
• Street markets sell to kids. Regulated stores check ID.
• This debate is regulated versus unregulated. Not moral versus immoral.
• If most locals oppose legalization, the ballot confirms it.

Q AND A

Q. Why change the law now.
A. Cannabis already exists in Hawai‘i. Prohibition failed to control access or safety. Regulation adds oversight, testing, and accountability.

Q. Is this about promoting drug use.
A. No. It is about managing reality. Regulation improves safety and accountability.

Q. What about health risks.
A. Cannabis carries risks. Regulation addresses them through labeling, testing, age limits, and education.

Q. Will youth use increase.
A. Regulated stores check ID. Street dealers do not. Large national surveys often show no sustained increase in youth use after legalization.

Q. What about impaired driving.
A. Driving under the influence remains illegal. Regulation supports enforcement and public education.

Q. Is this about tax revenue.
A. Revenue is a benefit. Safety and control come first.

Q. Why a ballot vote.
A. The Hawai‘i Constitution allows voter ratified decisions. If voters reject it, the result settles the issue.

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Representative sources include.

• Hawai‘i Department of Health. Medical Cannabis Registry Program
• Hawai‘i Judiciary and Department of Justice arrest and citation statistics
• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention alcohol related mortality data
• National Institutes of Health and federal youth cannabis survey data
• Colorado Department of Public Safety marijuana enforcement reports
• American Civil Liberties Union cannabis enforcement disparity reports

Sources get updated as new public data is released.