



## New Cato Institute Study Argues for Legalization of Marijuana

On behalf of Christopher G. Porreca, Attorney at Law posted in [Drug Charges](#) on Friday, October 1, 2010

In 2008, more than 14 million people were arrested on drug charges. [Drug possession convictions](#) can make things difficult for people from all walks of life. Students face legal and educational penalties. Adults run the risk of jail time and consequences on future jobs. When it comes to marijuana, many people think these penalties are too harsh.

The Cato Institute recently released a new study titled "The Budgetary Impact of Ending Drug Prohibition" regarding the legalization of marijuana and other drugs. In it, they point out how much the state of New Jersey spends enforcing laws related to marijuana as well as how much the state stands to gain if the drug becomes legal.

Researchers analyzed the amount of money spent by states and municipal authorizes to enforce marijuana laws. The found that in 2008, New Jersey police departments, courts and prisons spent \$183,039,000 to investigate, charge, prosecute and jail marijuana offenders. Marijuana related offenses account for 22 percent of the total money spent by New Jersey on all drug crimes related issues in 2008.

That cost includes paying police officers to arrest individuals suspected of marijuana possession, paying prosecutors and judges to deal with the court cases and paying for the offender to spend time in jail. The study acknowledges that "some drug offenders pay fines, which partially offset the expenditure required to arrest, convict, and incarcerate these offenders."

However, researchers still concluded that New Jersey and other states spend hundreds of millions of dollars enforcing marijuana laws. They also argue that New Jersey could see \$80 million in revenue each year if marijuana became legal. That revenue would come from sales and income taxes related to purchasing and selling marijuana.

**Source:** Examiner.com, "[Cato: NJ, PA Spent \\$373 Million on marijuana enforcement](#)," Chris Goldstein, 29 Sept 2010

Tags: [Budgetary Impact of Ending Drug Prohibition](#), [New Jersey](#), [marijuana possession](#)

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