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AGE	FEMALE	MALE
30	\$12	\$13
35	\$12	\$13
40	\$13	\$14

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**SURGE DESK** 2010 Elections

## Whom or What to Blame For Prop. 19's Epic Fail?

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**Steven Hoffer** Contributor

AOL News Surge Desk

(Nov. 2) -- Californians are just going to have to face the facts and smoke weed the old fashioned way -- with a medical prescription.

That's because the heavily publicized [Proposition 19](#) -- a ballot initiative to effectively legalize recreational marijuana for Californians age 21 and older -- [failed on Tuesday](#).

Proponents of Prop 19 campaigned on the notion that legalizing marijuana would significantly benefit California's budget by generating tax revenues and reducing state spending on marijuana prohibition. Advocates also claimed that legalization would significantly curb Mexican drug violence. So

why did Prop 19 fail?

"Both claims were overblown," according to Harvard lecturer and CATO institute senior fellow [Jeffery Miron](#). "The budgetary benefits, while not insignificant, would have been small compared with California's fiscal mess. Mexican drug violence is mainly associated with the cocaine and methamphetamine trades, as well as from marijuana traffic to other states."

Marijuana possession in California is equivalent to a mere parking ticket, making the drug 'legal enough' for most voters who are not concerned with facing a \$100 fine compared to the misdemeanor or felony violations enforced by other states. Rolling Stone's [Tim Dickinson](#) emphasizes this point, and echoes Miron's argument.

"The trouble with this decriminalization move as far as Prop 19 was concerned is that the initiative's campaign had been centered on the injustice and waste of law enforcement resources involved in treating cannabis smokers like criminals," Dickinson argues. "Decriminalization scratched that itch for the mid-term electorate -- which skews [older and more conservative](#)."

Politically speaking, Prop 19 lacked the support it needed to succeed. An endorsement from 'Men's Wearhouse Guy' George Zimmer makes for [great one liners](#), but that doesn't compare to having the overwhelming majority of California's political elite [opposing the initiative](#).

There is also another little country -- known as Canada -- with less intimidating organized crime but a comparable stake in maintaining the [status quo](#) that would have shifted had Prop 19 passed. Marijuana is a [3 to 4 billion dollar industry](#) in British Columbia, with a significant percentage of the "BC Bud" produced making its way to California.

By the same token, there is no reason to be surprised that Prop 19 failed in Northern California, arguably the country's region most associated with marijuana production, where many growers feared Prop 19 would negatively affect their livelihood.

Finally, one can attribute Prop 19's failure to the universally applicable explanation for why any vote yields a particular outcome:

In my estimation, the reason that Prop 19 did not pass is due to the fact that more people voted AGAINST it, rather than FOR it, yesterday

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