



# The argument for legalizing and taxing marijuana

By Rob Nikolewski On March 5, 2013

---

LEGALIZING MARIJUANA: Three pieces of legislation in the current 60-day session in Santa Fe deal with the effects of legalizing marijuana or reducing penalties for possession.

To legalize or not?

That's a question New Mexico (and so many other states in the nation) ponders in the wake of Washington state and Colorado recently decriminalizing marijuana.

In the current 60-day legislative session in Santa Fe, there is one bill looking to greatly reduce penalties for pot possession and two memorials in the Senate looking to study the economic and budgetary effects of decriminalizing marijuana.

Proponents of legalization say it will free up law enforcement to tackle violent crimes and libertarians say that what people put in their bodies should be their own choice.

Critics say the economic and law enforcement benefits of decriminalization are overhyped ([click here to see former state Rep. Dennis Kintigh make his argument](#)).

Late last week, Jeffrey Miron of Harvard University's department of economics and a senior fellow at the Cato Institute was in Santa Fe, arguing the economic benefit he sees with taxing and regulating marijuana.

We talked to him outside the Roundhouse. The interview runs 4 minutes:

Miron was the guest of the Rio Grande Foundation and the Drug Policy Alliance.