Recreational Marijuana Wins Support in Midterm Elections

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In recent years, 23 states have approved medical marijuana, but in Tuesday's elections, voters in six states and Washington, DC, passed measures to decriminalize aspects of recreational pot, the Huffington Post reports.

Voters made Oregon and Alaska the third and fourth states, respectively, to legalize recreational marijuana. Voters in Colorado and Washington state did so in 2012.

Despite the growing approval for marijuana among mainstream Americans, the federal government still classifies the drug as a Schedule 1 substance, just like heroin and LSD.

Specifically, voters in Oregon, Maine, New Mexico, California, New Jersey, Alaska and Washington, DC, elected to legalize the possession, use and sale of recreational marijuana; to decriminalize possession of pot; or to shorten the jail time given to nonviolent offenders.

In Florida, 57 percent of voters approved a measure to legalize medical marijuana, but according to state rules, the measure required 60 percent of the vote to pass. Opposition to the bill was funded primarily by billionaire Republican donor Sheldon Adelson, who spent $5 million to defeat the measure.

Twenty-three states have approved medical marijuana. In many of them, including Connecticut and New York, a person must have a debilitating disease, such as HIV/AIDS or cancer, in order to purchase medical marijuana. Florida would have enacted similar restrictions.

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