



**CLAIM** **RESPONSE**

**Legalization / regulation increases the availability of cannabis.**

- Evidence suggests that prohibition has been generally unsuccessful in reducing the availability of cannabis. In the United States, research indicates that since 1990, the price of cannabis has decreased while potency has increased, despite increasing investments in enforcement-based supply reduction efforts (Werb et al., 2013). Given that we can't measure the underground market directly, these indicators act as proxy markers, suggesting that the supply - and by extension the availability - of cannabis has likely increased.
- The perceived availability of cannabis among young people has remained high, notwithstanding increases in drug control budgets. For the past 39 years, between 81% and 90% of twelfth graders in the United States have reported that they could obtain cannabis "fairly easily" or "very easily" (Monitoring the Future, 2014). Similarly, in the European Union, research from 2014 indicates that 58% of young people aged 15 to 24 believe it would be either very easy or fairly easy to obtain cannabis within 24 hours (European Commission, 2014).
- By allowing governments to set legal age restrictions, the strict legal regulation of cannabis markets could actually be more effective than prohibition at restricting the availability of cannabis to young people (Rolles, 2009), as has occurred with tobacco regulation (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2012).

**BOTTOM LINE:** Evidence suggests that the supply of illegal cannabis has increased under a prohibition model, and that availability has remained high among youth. Evidence does not suggest that cannabis availability among youth has increased under regulatory systems.

**REFERENCES:**

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