



North Carolina Opinions about Marijuana

Produced in partnership with
The Charlotte Observer, The Durham Herald-Sun & The Raleigh News & Observer

Survey of North Carolina Adults
January 29-31, 2021

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About This Survey

The Elon University Poll conducted a representative online survey of 1,455 in North Carolina from Jan 29-31, 2021.

The overall results have a credibility interval of +/- 2.7 percentage points. Unless otherwise noted, results reported below are percentages (%) and sample sizes (N).

This survey's questionnaire explored attitudes related to marijuana legalization, impeachment and COVID-19 vaccination. This report is focused on marijuana attitudes.

For highlights and interpretation of the key findings from this survey, please see the press release associated with this report.

Topline Results

Marijuana

Medical Marijuana

“Do you oppose or support the legalization of marijuana, **for medical purposes**, in North Carolina?”

	%	N
Oppose	18	265
Support	73	1063
Don't Know	9	125
Total	100	1453

*[2017 Opposition = 17%](#)

Recreational Marijuana

“Do you oppose or support the legalization of marijuana, **for recreational use**, in North Carolina?”

	%	N
Oppose	34	496
Support	54	780
Don't Know	12	179
Total	100	1454

*[2017 Opposition = 51%](#)

Reducing Penalties

“Would you support or oppose reducing penalties for marijuana in North Carolina? This could involve treating marijuana possession as a civil offense such as a minor traffic violation rather than a criminal punishment.”

	%	N
Support	67	973
Oppose	20	296
Don't Know	13	182
Total	100	1452

Gateway Drug

“Is marijuana as a “gateway drug” that leads to the use of “hard drugs” like heroin or cocaine?”

	%	N
Yes	27	393
No	53	761
Don't Know	20	296
Total	100	1451

Economy and Marijuana

“Would legalizing marijuana help or hurt the economy in North Carolina?”

	%	N
Help	64	929
Hurt	16	225
Don't Know	21	297
Total	100	1451

Vehicle Accidents

“Would vehicle accidents increase or decrease if marijuana was legalized?”

	%	N
Increase	36	518
Decrease	17	240
Don't Know	48	695
Total	100	1453

Morality and Marijuana

“Is it morally wrong to use marijuana?”

	%	N
Yes	22	326
No	63	908
Don't Know	15	219
Total	100	1453

Crime and Legalization

“Would crime increase or decrease if marijuana was legalized?”

	%	N
Increase	24	345
Decrease	45	654
Don't Know	31	453
Total	100	1452

Demographics¹

Gender

	%	N
Male	48	698
Female	52	757
Total	100	1455

Age

	%	N
18 to 24	13	183
25 to 44	34	492
45 to 64	34	496
65+	20	284
Total	100	1455

¹ Some demographic response options were collapsed for reporting and display purposes.

Education

	%	N
Less than Bachelors	70	1018
Bachelors or Higher	30	437
Total	100	1455

Race

	%	N
White	67	975
Black	21	306
Other	12	175
Total	100	1455

Party Identification²

	%	N
Republican	30	437
Neither	35	509
Democrat	35	509
Total	100	1455

County Density³

	%	N
Rural	39	573
Suburban	25	365
Urban	36	517
Total	100	1455

² Self-identified.

³ County type was determined according to classifications created by the [NC Rural Center](#).

Question Order

[Results for this survey are contained in three separate reports]

1. Have you already taken a COVID-19 vaccine?
2. Do you plan to take a COVID-19 vaccine when it is available to you?
3. How worried are you about side effects of a COVID-19 vaccine?
4. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the state government in North Carolina has handled COVID-19 vaccine distribution
5. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the federal government in Washington has handled COVID-19 vaccine distribution
6. Have you attempted to get a COVID-19 vaccine?
7. Why were you unable to get the COVID-19 vaccine?
8. How easy or difficult was your experience of getting the COVID-19 vaccine?
9. What is the most important reason why you said "{piped text}" about intending to take a COVID-19 vaccine?
10. Do you oppose or support the legalization of marijuana, for medical purposes, in North Carolina?
11. Do you oppose or support the legalization of marijuana, for recreational use, in North Carolina?
12. Would you support or oppose reducing penalties for marijuana in North Carolina? This could involve treating marijuana possession as a civil offense such as a minor traffic violation rather than a criminal punishment.
13. Is marijuana as a “gateway drug” that leads to the use of “hard drugs” like heroin or cocaine?
14. Would legalizing marijuana help or hurt the economy in North Carolina?
15. Would vehicle accidents increase or decrease if marijuana was legalized?
16. Is it morally wrong to use marijuana?
17. Would crime increase or decrease if marijuana was legalized?
18. Do you approve or disapprove of the job that Joe Biden is doing as President?
19. Do you approve or disapprove of the job that Roy Cooper is doing as Governor?
20. How responsible do you think former President Trump is for the violence at the Capitol Building on January 6th?
21. Do you support or oppose the impeachment proceedings against former President Trump?
22. If convicted by the U.S. Senate, Donald Trump could be banned from running for president again in 2024. Do you support or oppose the Senate prohibiting Donald Trump from running in the future?

Crosstabulations

Note: In this section of the report, the numbers reported are row percentages, and comparisons can be made within columns. Due to weights and rounding, row percentages do not always sum to 100. Caution is warranted when interpreting differences in the crosstabulations. Sub-group sample sizes are smaller, and therefore the credibility intervals for these estimates are wider.

Medical Marijuana

“Do you oppose or support the legalization of marijuana, for medical purposes, in North Carolina? “

	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Support</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>
	%	%	%	%
Less than Bachelors	18	72	10	100
Bachelors or Higher	20	75	5	100
18 to 24	21	69	10	100
25 to 44	13	79	9	100
45 to 64	17	76	7	100
65+	28	62	10	100
Republican	27	64	9	100
Neither	13	79	9	100
Democrat	17	75	8	100
White	18	75	8	100
Black	19	71	10	100
Other	20	69	11	100
Registered Voter	20	73	7	100
Male	20	73	7	100
Female	17	73	10	100
Overall	18	73	9	100

Recreational Marijuana

“Do you oppose or support the legalization of marijuana, for recreational use, in North Carolina?”

	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Support</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>
	%	%	%	%
Less than Bachelors	32	55	13	100
Bachelors or Higher	38	51	11	100
18 to 24	23	62	15	100
25 to 44	22	65	13	100
45 to 64	38	52	11	100
65+	56	32	12	100
Republican	49	43	8	100
Neither	27	57	16	100
Democrat	29	59	12	100
White	36	53	11	100
Black	29	56	15	100
Other	30	56	14	100
Registered Voter	35	53	12	100
Male	33	57	10	100
Female	35	51	15	100
Overall	34	54	12	100

Reduced Penalties

“Would you support or oppose reducing penalties for marijuana in North Carolina? This could involve treating marijuana possession as a civil offense such as a minor traffic violation rather than a criminal punishment.”

	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>
	%	%	%	%
Less than Bachelors	65	22	13	100
Bachelors or Higher	72	18	11	100
18 to 24	62	25	13	100
25 to 44	70	17	12	100
45 to 64	68	20	12	100
65+	63	24	13	100
Republican	60	27	14	100
Neither	69	18	13	100
Democrat	71	17	12	100
White	70	19	11	100
Black	65	21	14	100
Other	56	27	18	100
Registered Voter	68	20	12	100
Male	69	20	11	100
Female	65	20	14	100
Overall	67	20	13	100

Methodological Information

Mode:	Online
Population:	North Carolina Adult Residents
Dates in the field:	January 29-31, 2021
Sample Size:	1,455
Credibility Interval	+/- 2.7%
Weighting Variables (NC):	Education, Party Identification, Age, Sex, Race, County Density

Procedure

The Elon University Poll used an online sample provided by Lucid, LLC. Respondents were recruited for this sample from many sample providers in the Lucid marketplace and received small amounts of compensation in exchange for their opinions. The survey was not an open-linked posted on social media, but rather was by direct invitation to a very large national pool of people who agree to take online surveys. More information about the Lucid marketplace and quality tests are available [here](#). Quotas on race, Hispanic ethnicity, sex, and age were applied prior to online survey commencement.

Online interviews were included in the final dataset if respondents spent a minimum length of time on the interview and particular sections, and if a respondent progressed through the entire survey. Open-ended online responses were individually inspected by the poll directors, who then deleted ten cases that were invalid. Respondents were recruited to the survey with a generic description about issues in North Carolina

Credibility Interval

Unlike a traditional random digit-dial telephone survey, online surveys do not have traditional margin of errors. Nonprobability quota samples like these do not adhere to assumptions of random selection. To account for uncertainty inherent in any sample-based research design, we provide a credibility interval. More information about this technique can be found [here](#). The credibility interval was calculated by inflating traditional confidence intervals by a design effect calculated using the squared sum of weights. For this North Carolina sample, this means: $(1.042 * 2.57 = 2.676)$. We round these values up for presentation of results. As with all surveys, total survey error often exceeds sampling error.

Support for Transparency

The Elon University Poll supports transparency in survey research and is a charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research Transparency Initiative, which is a program promoting openness and transparency about survey research methods and operations among survey research professionals and the industry. All information about the Elon University Poll that we release to the public conforms to reporting conventions recommended by the American Association for Public Opinion Research and the National Council on Public Polls.

Weighting Information

Weights were generated in Stata using a technique known as iterative proportional fitting, also known as raking. The weight variable was calculated based on all of the variables in the table below. *Party identification population parameters are an estimate.

	Population %	Unweighted %	Weighted %
18-24	13	12	13
25-44	34	37	34
45-64	34	35	34
65+	20	16	20
Male	48	45	48
Female	52	55	52
White	67	67	67
Black	21	19	21
Other	12	14	12
Hispanic	9	8	9
Not Hispanic	91	92	91
< Bachelor's	70	60	70
Bachelor's or more	30	40	30
Rural County	39	38	39
Suburban	25	28	25
Urban	36	34	36
Republican	30	28	30
Neither	35	37	35
Democrat	35	35	35

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who pays for the Elon University Poll?

Elon University fully funds the Elon University Poll. The poll operates under the auspices of the College of Arts and Sciences at Elon University, led by Dean Gabie Smith. The Elon University administration, led by Dr. Connie Ledoux Book, president of the university, fully supports the Elon University Poll as part of its service to the community. Because of this generous support, the Elon University Poll does not engage in any contract work. This permits the Elon University Poll to operate as a neutral, non-biased, non-partisan resource.

2. Does the Elon University Poll favor a certain party?

The Elon University Poll is an academic, non-partisan survey research organization. We do not engage or work with any political candidates or parties. We employ best practices to ensure the results are not biased.

3. Did you weight the data?

Yes. We apply weights to the data. For this survey, we generated results using raking based on U.S. Census data. For more details, see the Weighting Information above.

4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online surveys over traditional random-digital dial surveys?

Traditional telephone surveys have a clear advantage over online surveys such as this in that assumptions of equal probability of selection are more appropriate. Furthermore, online surveys do not capture opinions of respondents who lack internet access.

However, our opinion is that [declining telephone response rates](#) and the growth in online sample pool sizes have narrowed quality differences between the two modes. In the case of this survey, we hoped to capture opinions related to a breaking news item. An online survey enabled us to quickly gather a large enough sample size to make inferences about the U.S. population. Additionally, like many college students, our student survey interviewers are not on campus at this time.

Additional information about opt-in surveys in general is available from AAPOR and the [Pew Research Center](#).

About the Elon University Poll

The Elon University Poll conducts statewide, regional, and national surveys on issues of importance to North Carolinians as well as other states. Information from these polls is shared with media, citizens and public officials to facilitate informed public policy making through the better understanding of citizens' opinions and attitudes.



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[Owen Covington](#) is Director of the Elon University News Bureau. A native North Carolinian, Owen Covington joined the staff of Elon University in 2016 after spending 17 years in the field of journalism as a reporter and editor for daily and weekly news outlets in North Carolina and Kentucky. As director of the Elon University News Bureau, Covington oversees the promotion of Elon and its students, faculty and staff both through stories told across Elon's media channels as well as through interactions with state, national and international media. He is involved in media relations, including responding to requests from print, digital and broadcast media outlets, and works to promote content generated by a variety of Elon news sources.

For more information on the Elon University Poll, visit elon.edu/elonpoll

If you have specific questions about this poll, you can reach the directors of the poll via email (jhusser at elon dot edu & kusry at elon dot edu).

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