STRATEGY FOR MANAGING CONTENT ON

Texas for THC
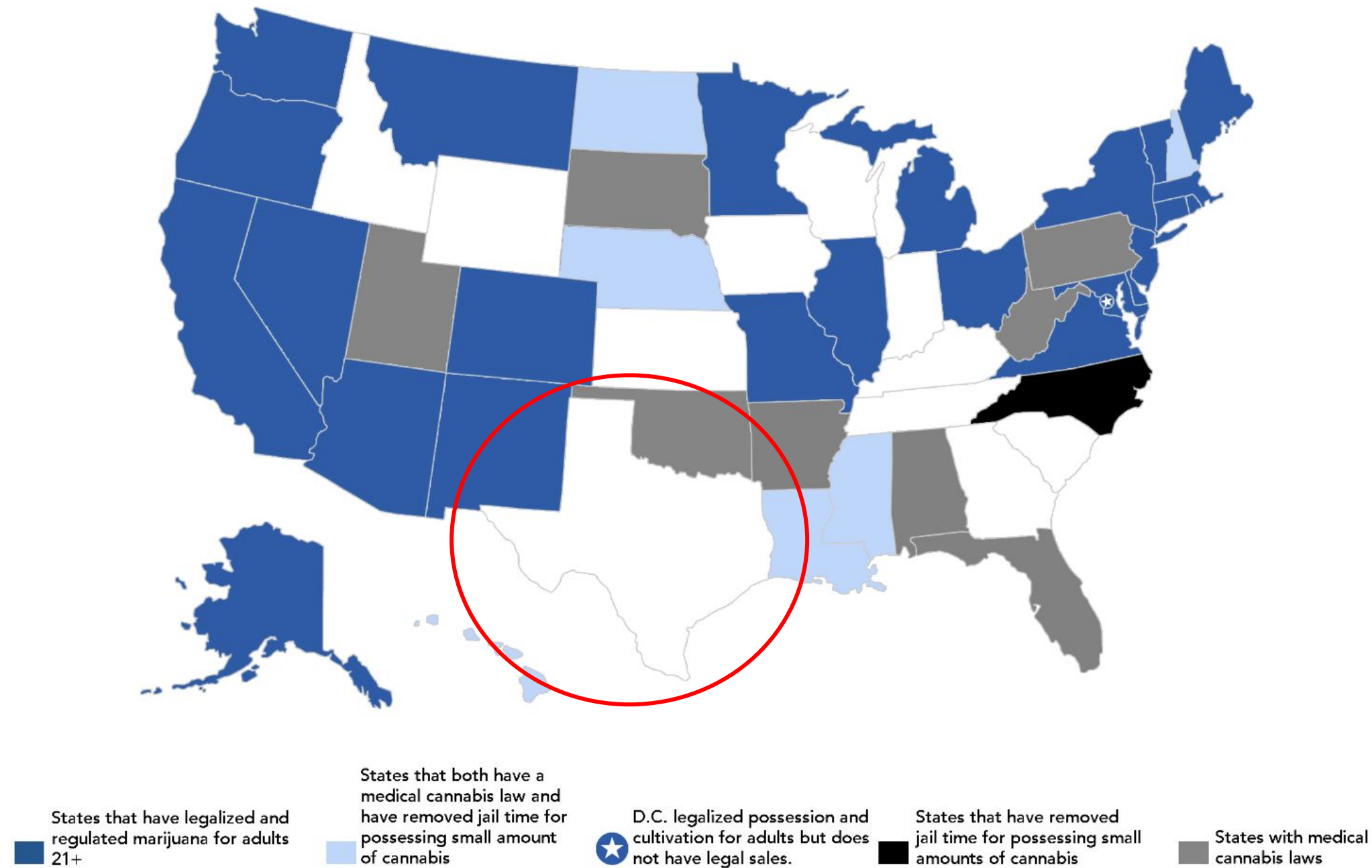
TABLE OF CONTENTS
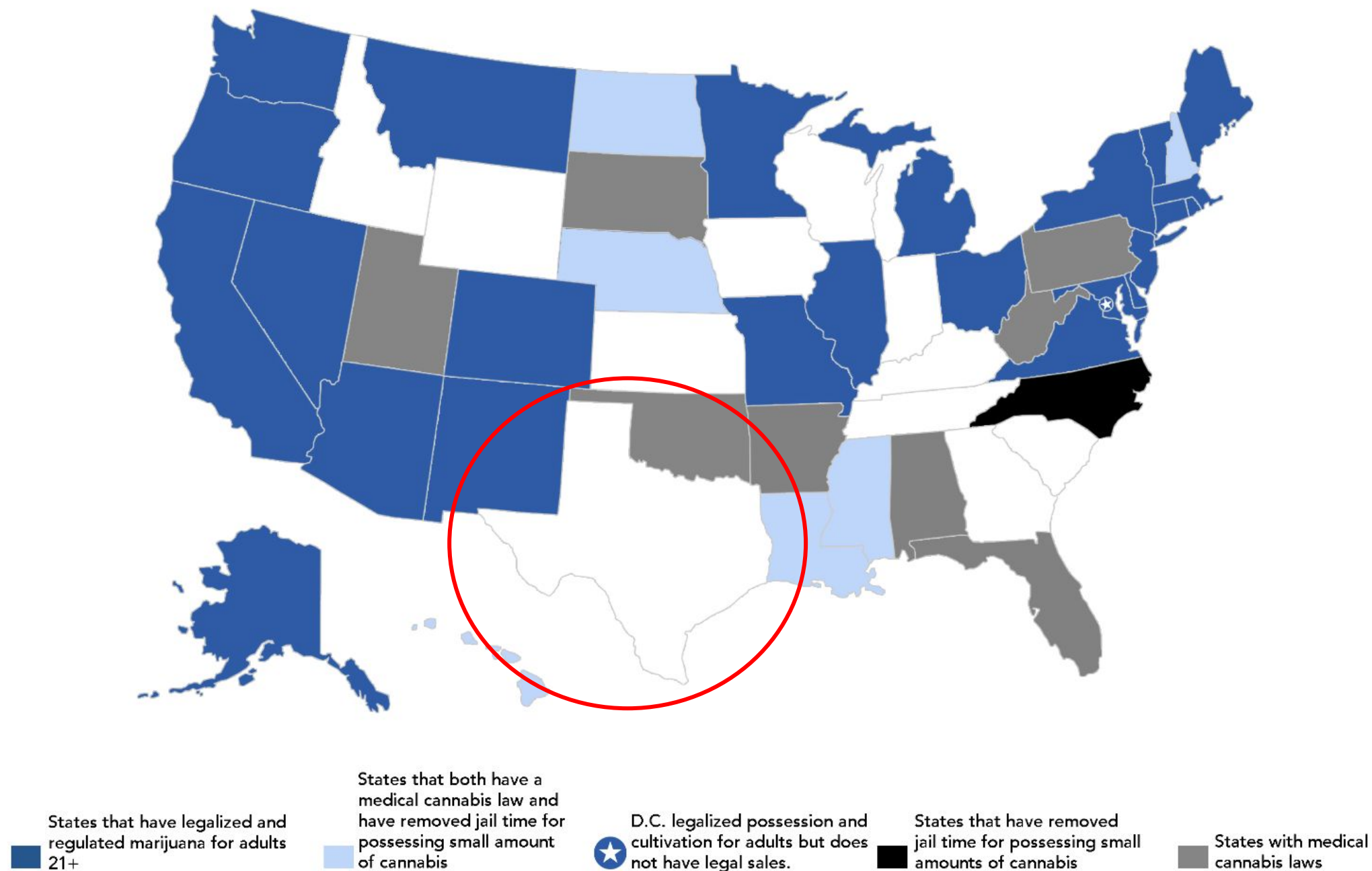
1 BACKGROUND INFO

The State of Play

Texas is one of the last states that still seeks jail time for possession of small amounts of cannabis.

No statewide ballot reform in Texas, one path to legalization

States that have legalized and regulated marijuana for adults 21+

States that both have a medical cannabis law and have removed jail time for possessing small amount of cannabis

D.C. legalized possession and cultivation for adults but does not have legal sales.

States that have removed jail time for possessing small amounts of cannabis

States with medical cannabis laws

The State of Play

States that have legalized and regulated marijuana for adults 21+

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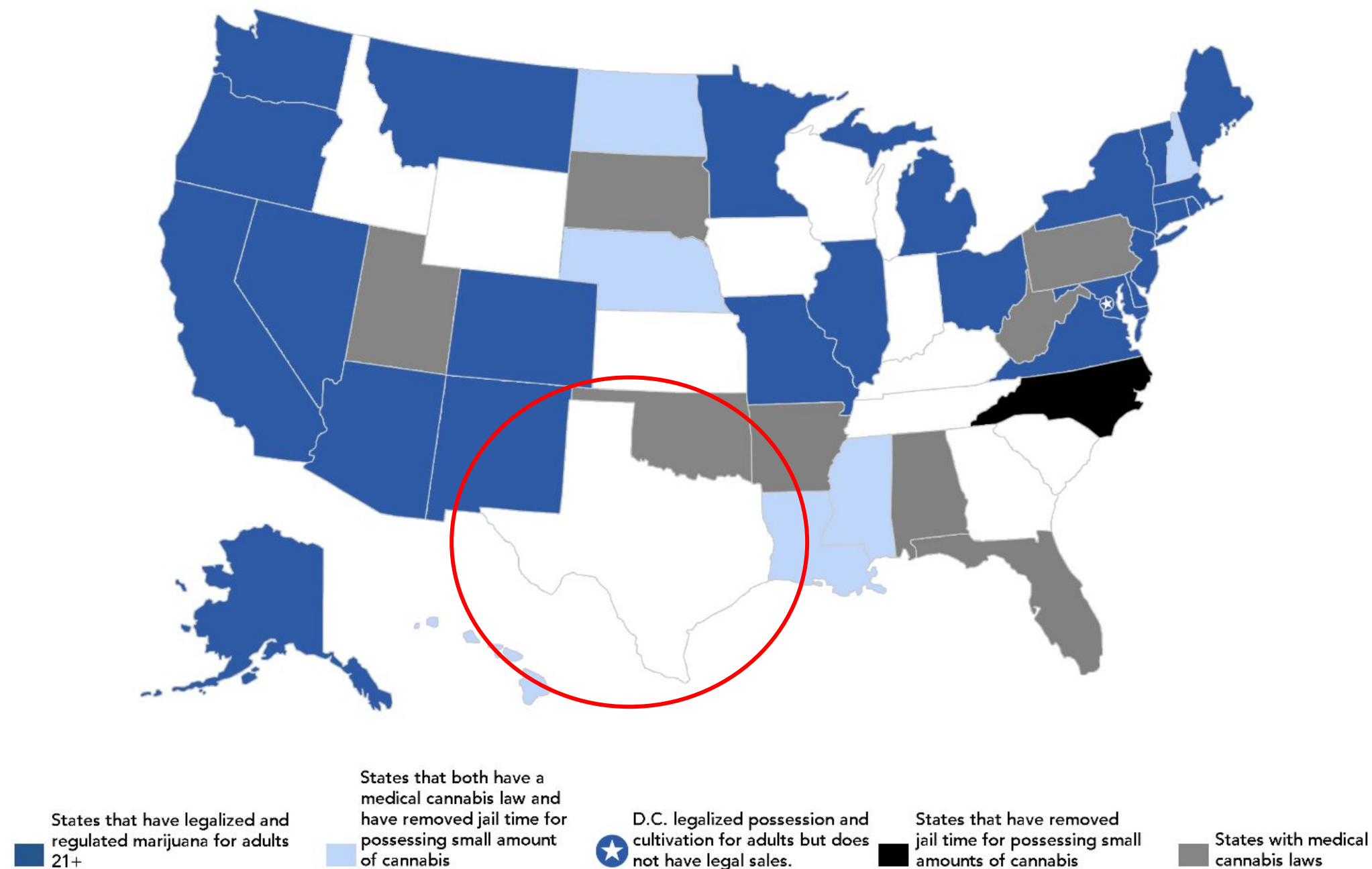States that have removed jail time for possessing small amounts of cannabis

States with medical cannabis laws

Texas is one of the last states that still seeks jail time for possession of small amounts of cannabis.

No statewide ballot reform in Texas, one path to legalization

Texas officials have fought against city-wide efforts to decriminalize cannabis use.
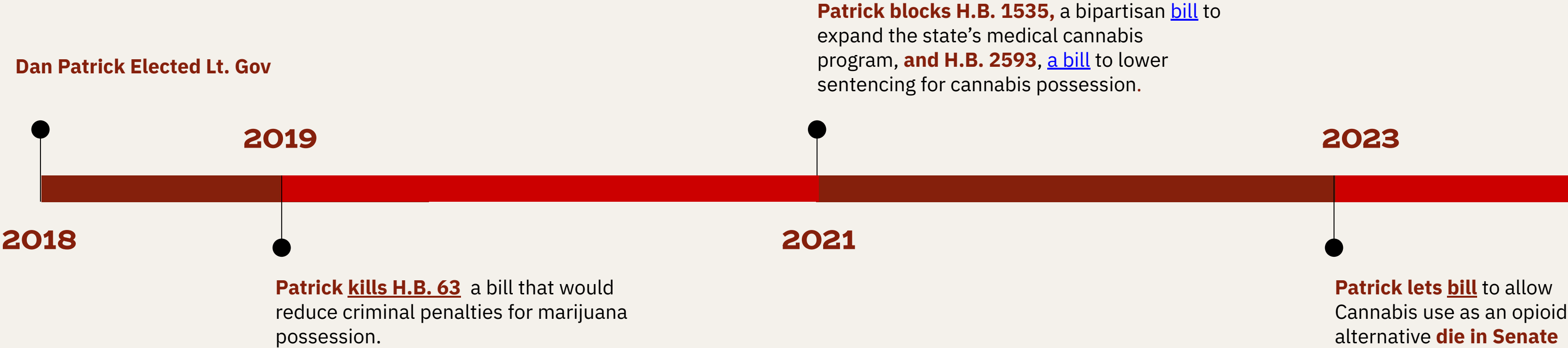
Decriminalization and legalization efforts have been thwarted largely by one man…

Lt. Governor Dan Patrick

Cold War on Cannabis

Patrick blocks H.B. 1535, a bipartisan [bill](#) to expand the state's medical cannabis program, **and H.B. 2593,** [a bill](#) to lower sentencing for cannabis possession.

Dan Patrick Elected Lt. Gov

2019

2023

2018

2021

Patrick kills H.B. 63 a bill that would reduce criminal penalties for marijuana possession.

Patrick lets [bill](#) to allow Cannabis use as an opioid alternative **die in Senate**

Dan Patrick's Reign of Terror

Patrick has "uniquely grasped and **wielded the power** of the growing right-wing movement in Texas"

- *The Houston Chronicle*

- Legalization of **Open-Carry** and **Campus-Carry** laws

- Allowing pastors to **refuse marrying gay couples**

- **Voting Rights Restrictions**

And more...

Support for Patrick

Polling conducted by UT Austin has demonstrated overall approval at 39% and disapproval at 32%. Notably, 18% neither approve nor disapprove, and 15% of "Lean Republicans" don't know who Lt. Gov Patrick is.

Dan Patrick Approval (October 2024)
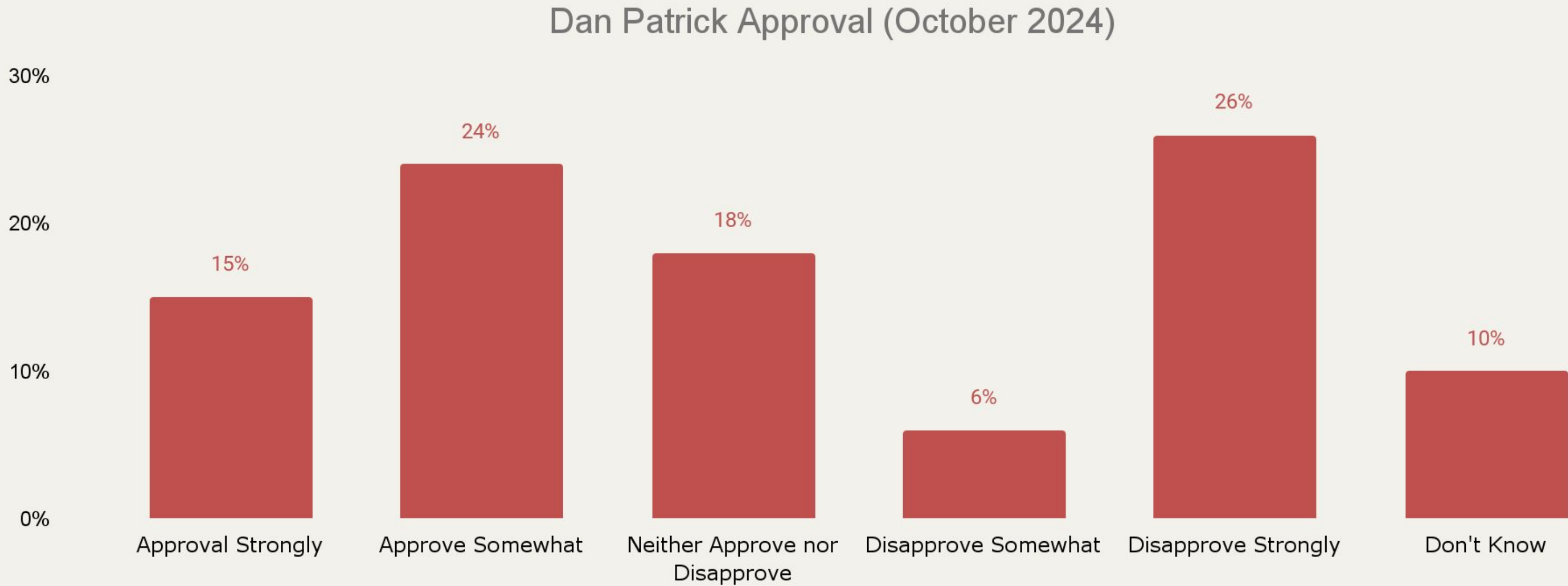
2 HISTORY & RESEARCH

Root Causes

Like abortion, Cannabis use was not always controversial

Cannabis use has strong **historical** and **medicinal** roots in the United States

- Historically used for medicinal, spiritual purposes, and could be **found in pharmacies** in the early 20th Century

**Rising threat perception** in 20th Century

- Racist associations with Mexican immigrants in the wake of the Mexican-American War.
- Association with counterculture movement.
- By 1969, **84% of Americans opposed legalization**

New Generations Usher in **Era of Support**

- Discrepancy between **severe sentencing** and **mild effects** of the drug

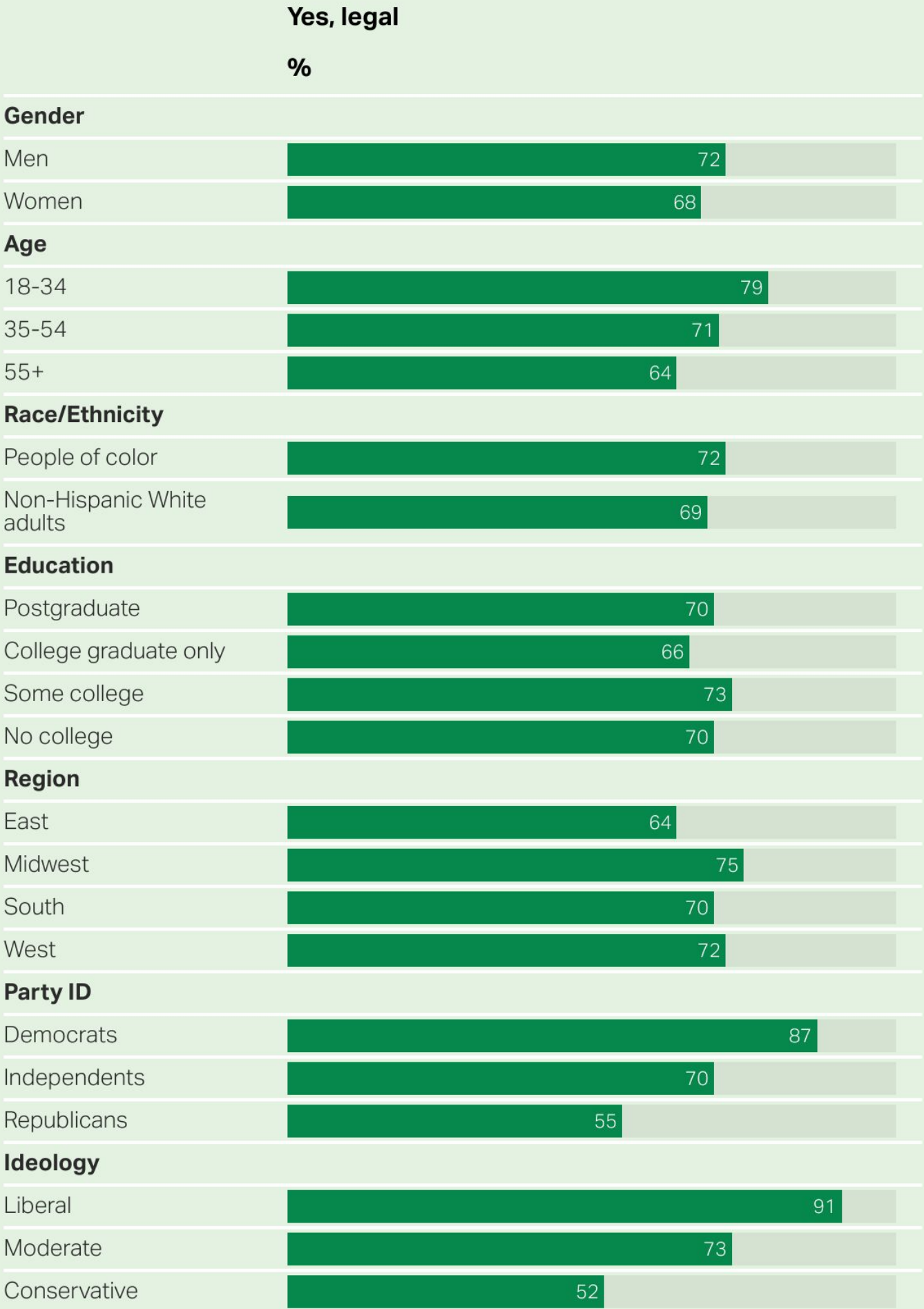# Americans Overwhelmingly Support Marijuana Legalization

80%

60%

40%

20%

0%

TODAY
70%

1/1/1970   1/1/1980   1/1/1990   1/1/2000   1/1/2010   1/1/2020
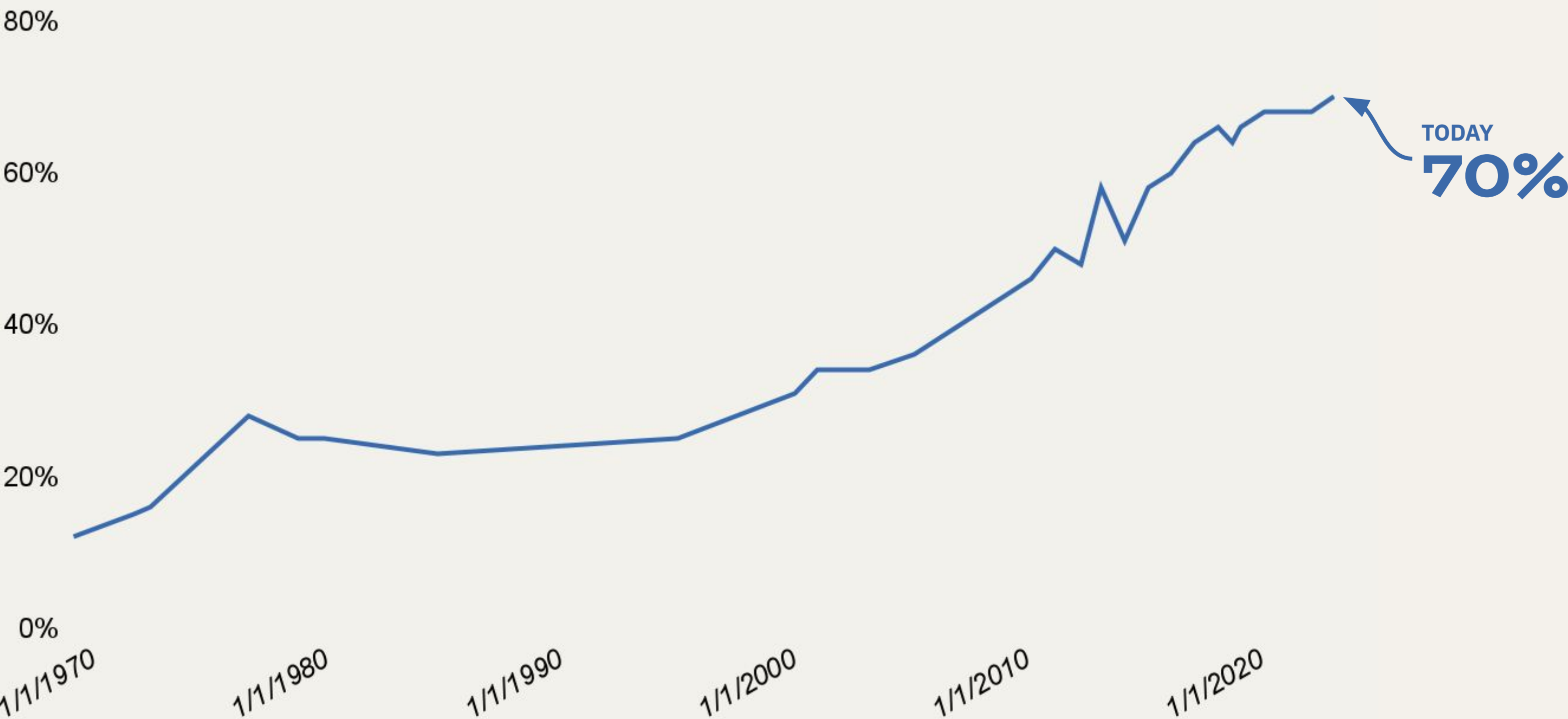
% Support for: "Do you think the use of marijuana should be legal?"

It's Not Just the Libs

Nationally, legalization garners majority support across every major demographic group, with majority approval even among self-identified **conservatives** and **Republicans**

Yes, legal

%

Gender

Men	72
Women	68

Age

18-34	79
35-54	71
55+	64

Race/Ethnicity

People of color	72
Non-Hispanic White adults	69

Education

Postgraduate	70
College graduate only	66
Some college	73
No college	70

Region

East	64
Midwest	75
South	70
West	72

Party ID

Democrats	87
Independents	70
Republicans	55

Ideology

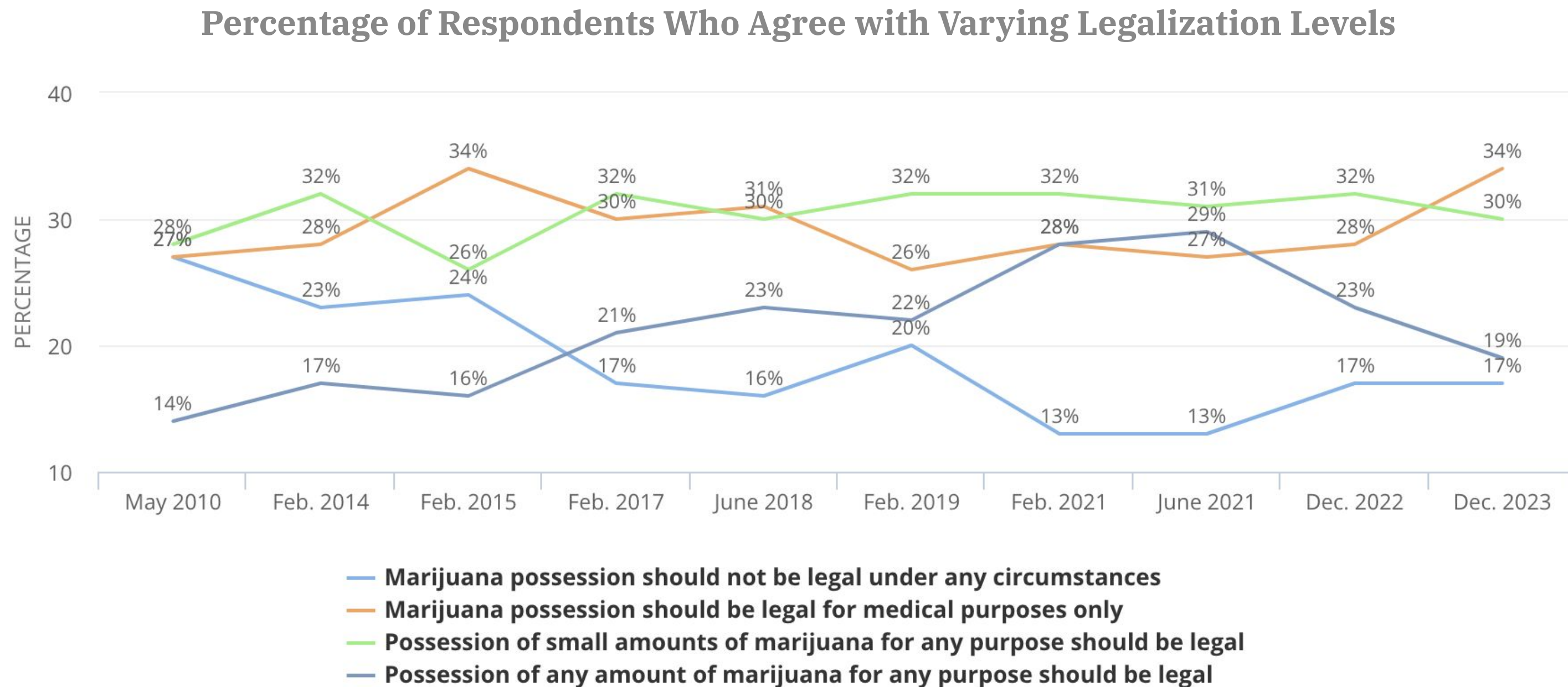|	
Liberal	91
Moderate	73
Conservative	52

Oct. 2-23, 2023

GALLUP

What About Texas?

Texas-specific polling has similarly indicated widespread support
for increased legalization and decriminalization

Percentage of Respondents Who Agree with Varying Legalization Levels

- Marijuana possession should not be legal under any circumstances
- Marijuana possession should be legal for medical purposes only
- Possession of small amounts of marijuana for any purpose should be legal
- Possession of any amount of marijuana for any purpose should be legal

Source: University of Texas/Texas Tribune Polling.

Source: UT Austin

What About Texas?

Freedom presents a compelling messaging opportunity, one with proven success among conservatives.

- 36% of Texas Republicans agree that **Cannabis laws should be less strict.**

- 59% of Texas Republicans agree that the **penalty for Cannabis possession or use should be reduced to a fine.**

- 78% of Republicans agree that **the "government is doing too many things that should be left up to individuals and businesses."**
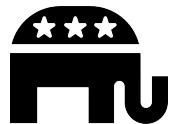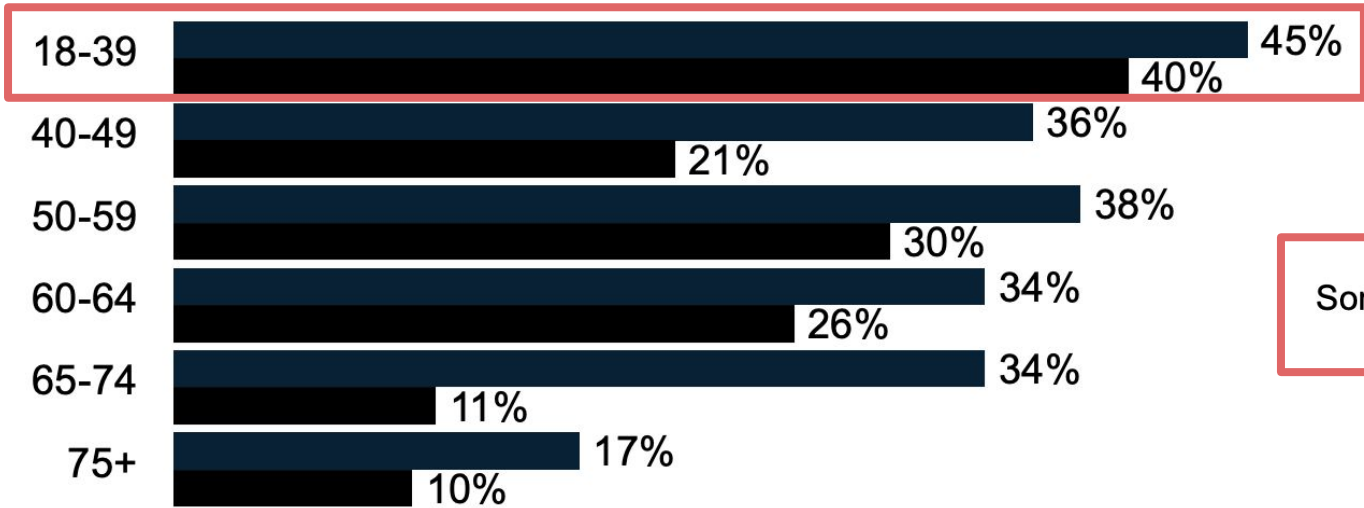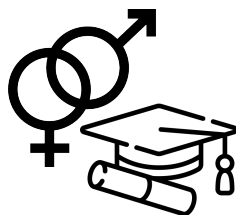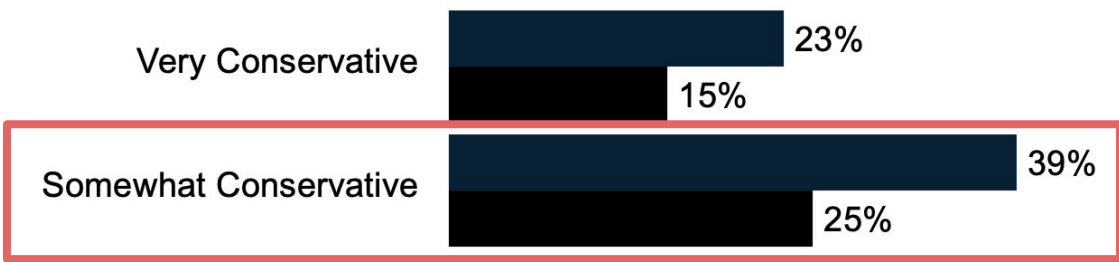
Demographic Support

Opinion research on support for Cannabis legalization among conservative voters in other states indicate a few key audiences and messaging strategies both to use and avoid
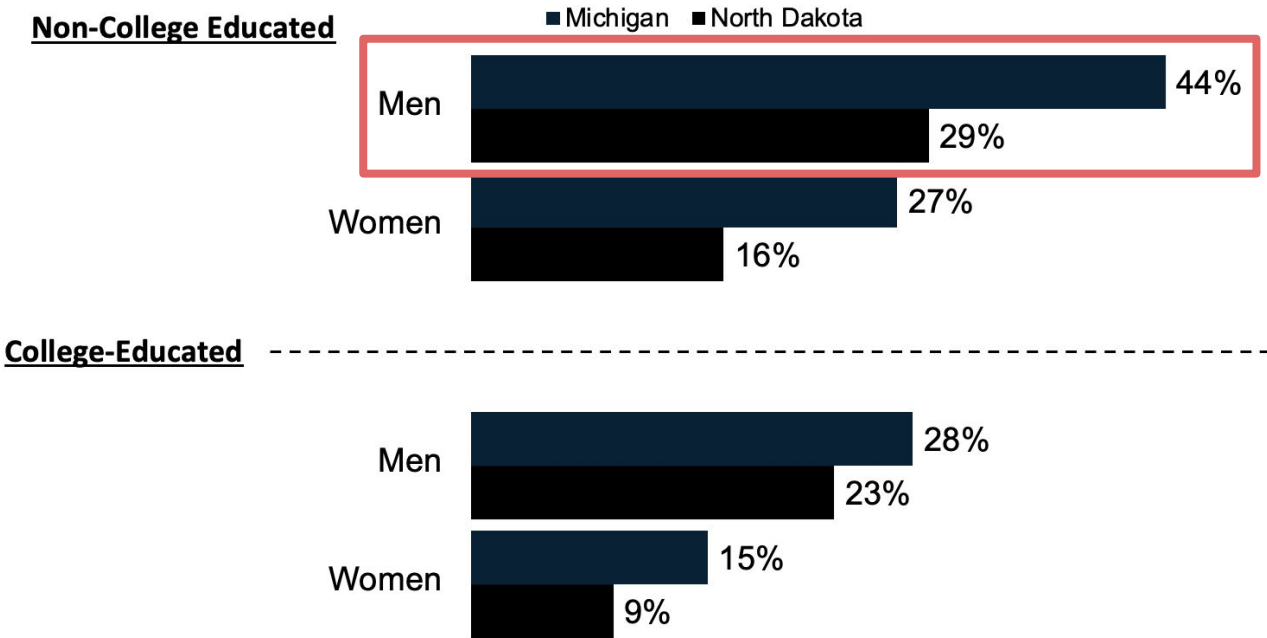
Age

Age	Michigan	North Dakota
18-39	45%	40%
40-49	36%	21%
50-59	38%	30%
60-64	34%	26%
65-74	34%	11%
75+	17%	10%

Ideology

	Michigan	North Dakota
Very Conservative	23%	15%
Somewhat Conservative	39%	25%

■ Michigan ■ North Dakota

Gender & Education

■ Michigan ■ North Dakota

Non-College Educated

	Michigan	North Dakota
Men	44%	29%
Women	27%	16%

College-Educated

	Michigan	North Dakota
Men	28%	23%
Women	15%	9%

The Case Against Patrick

Cannabis legalization presents a compelling opportunity to vote out Dan Patrick

An "unfavorable" environment for the GOP

Luke-warm name recognition & support

Popular policy among key audiences

3 CASE STUDIES & LEARNINGS

Vermont

Legislative Cannabis Legalization

KEY PILLARS

- **Normalization**. Compared cannabis to alcohol to alleviate public concerns about societal harm

- **Security**. Positioned legalization as a way to ensure safety through state oversight, preventing black market

- **Legislative advocacy.** Focus on lobbying legislators (emphasizing bipartisan collaboration), rather than public campaigns

MORAL FOUNDATION

Liberty

INTENDED IMPACT

Demonstrate that legalization is *evident* and safe, encouraging bipartisan cooperation

RESULT

First state to legalize cannabis via legislative action

Michigan
Legalization Campaign

KEY PILLARS

- **Economy.** Focus on direct (jobs) and indirect (taxes for education and infrastructure) economic benefits

- **Social justice.** Positioned legalization as a means to address criminalization of minorities

- **Grassroots mobilization.** Bottom-down strategy. Partnered with local orgsto host community events & door-to-door canvassing

- **Target Media.** Leverage data-driven ads campaigns in social media with targeted audiences and messages

MORAL FOUNDATION

Fairness

INTENDED IMPACT

Social and economic benefits and local advocates = resonate with both audiences

RESULT

56% approved Proposal 1

Nevada

Marijuana Legalization Campaign

KEY PILLARS

- **Better quality tourism.** Highlighted the potential for cannabis to bolster Nevada's tourism while reducing some of the drug-related issues

- **Economy.** Showcased how cannabis tax revenue would found public services, education and healthcare

- **Localized messages.** Tailored messages focusing on tourism for urban centers like Vegas or Reno, while addressing rural areas with broader themes of state self-reliance and independence

MORAL FOUNDATION

Subversion / **Liberty**

INTENDED IMPACT

Appeal to Nevada's self- sustaining and tourist-friendly identity and to conservative fiscal values

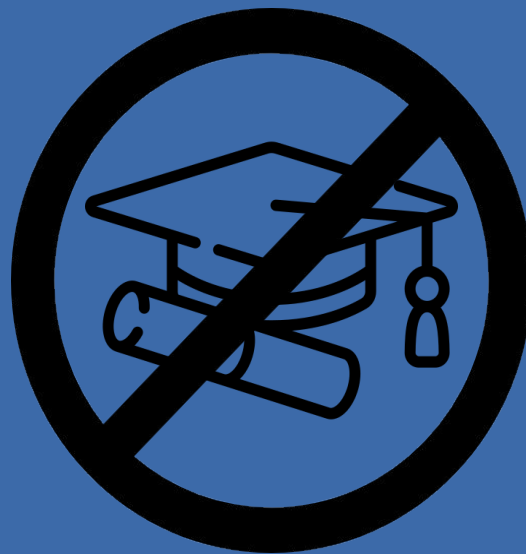### RESULT

Question 2 passed with 54% of approval

4 STRATEGY

Core Audiences

Opinion research on support for Cannabis legalization among conservative voters indicate two primary audiences to target, each with unique messaging strategies and objectives

Non-College Educated Men

Young Moderate Conservatives

Conservative Messaging Research

Opinion research on support for Cannabis legalization among conservative voters indicate a few key audiences and messaging strategies both to use and avoid

Medical Benefits

✓

Freedom from Government

✓

Religious Faith

✗

Common Sense Benefits

Justifications like increased tax revenue and medical benefits
among conservatives who supported Cannabis reform in Michigan

(This findings held true among conservative supporters in North Dakota as well.)

Tax revenues will help the state	28%
Marijuana can help people/Medical benefits	27%
Marijuana is less harmful than alcohol	16%
General support	9%

Conservatives who voted "Yes" on Cannabis reform cited common sense benefits in open-ended responses.

Freedom from Government

Conservatives agree that the government should not be involved
in personal choices that don't affect others

Issue	Michigan		
	All Voters	**Yes Voters**	**No Voters**
For **(state)** economy to grow, we need government to get out of the way of letting new industries develop	88%	89%	89%
As long as people are not hurting anyone else, government should be less involved in their personal choices	79%	90%	76%

Religious Faith
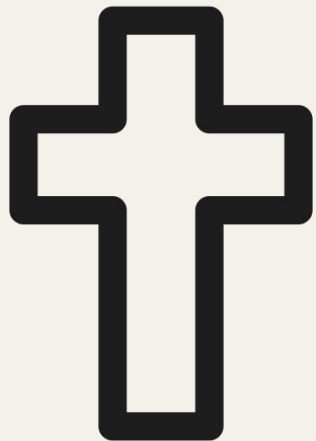
Research from conservatives in other states has demonstrated that highly religious conservatives are poor targets for our campaign. Religious messaging should be avoided, as should specific campaigns targeting conservatives with faith

Short Phrase	Michigan		
	All Voters	Yes Voters	No Voters
A supporter of conservative religious organizations	38%	26%	46%

Conservatives who voted "No" on Cannabis reform were 15-20 percentage points more likely to identify as a supporter of a conservative religious organization.

Audience-Specific Strategies

Core audiences will require unique messaging and messengers to persuade and convince individuals that Lt. Governor Patrick does not support the interests of common sense Texans

Non-College Educated Men
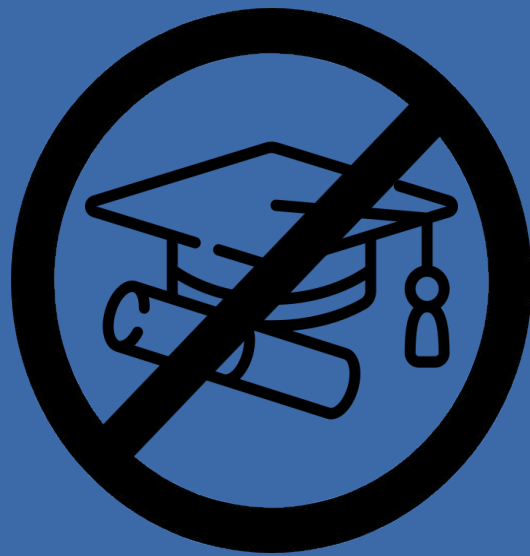
Young Moderate Conservatives

Non-College Educated Men

- Seek to engage with supportive **prominent conservative social media influencers and podcasters** such as Joe Rogan and Dave Portnoy.
- Employ a **freedom-first, anti-government messaging strategy**, tapping into the moral foundations that drive this particular audience segment.
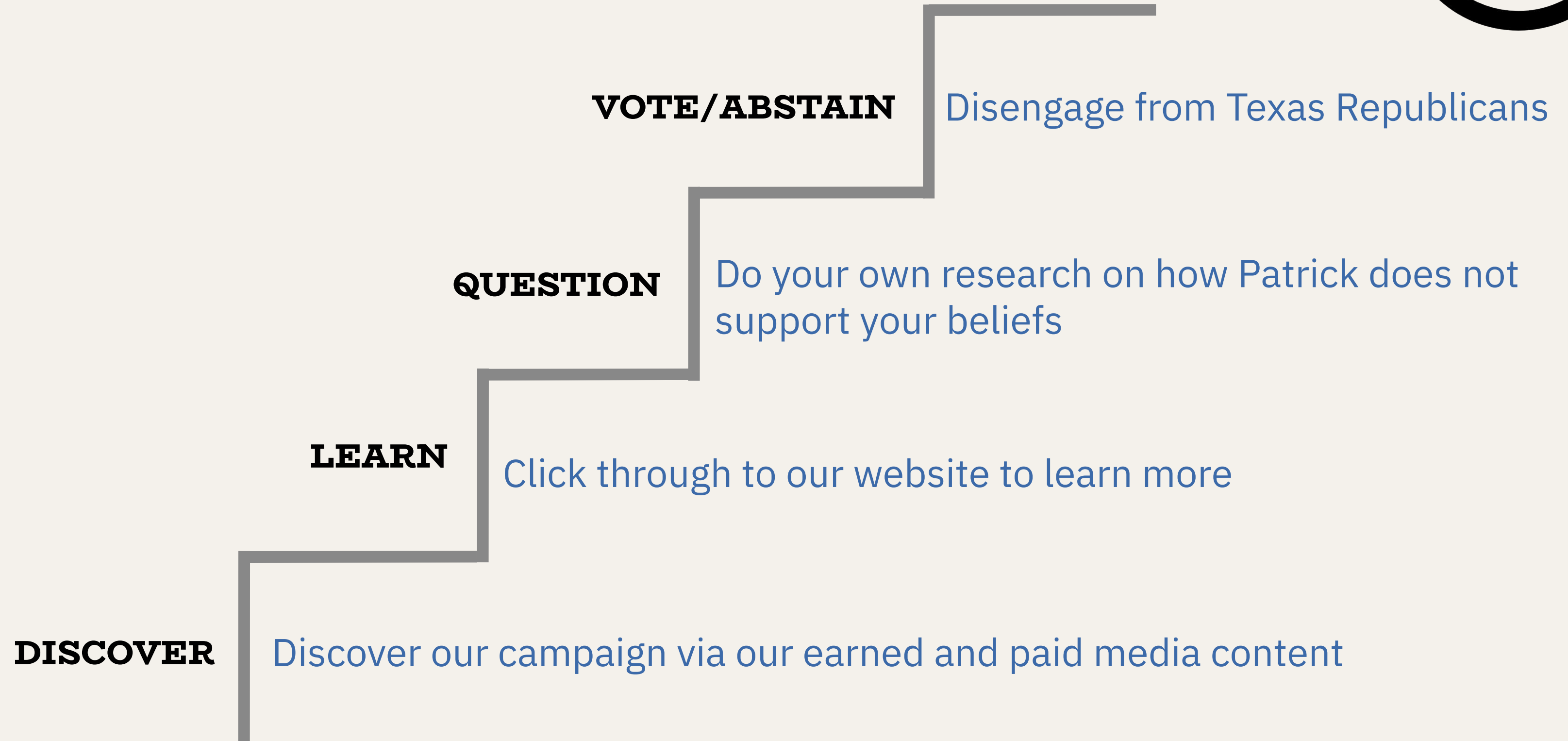
- We would also run **paid advertisements on these channels** and shows popular with this demographic group, compounding the messaging volume.
- These paid advertisements would **direct interested individuals to our website**, where they can provide more information on Lt. Gov. Patrick's record.
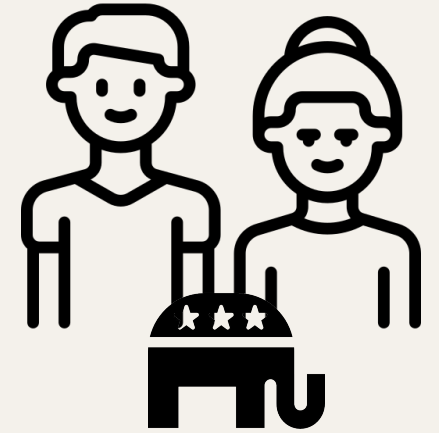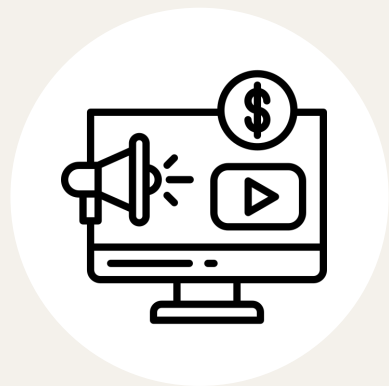
Young Moderate Conservatives

- We will consider employing a messaging strategy to **target this specific audience from the right**, attempting to highlight Patrick's extremist agenda.
- These **"pro Patrick" messages** would highlight the ways that Patrick has shifted Texas to the extreme right in an attempt to drive this audience to the center.
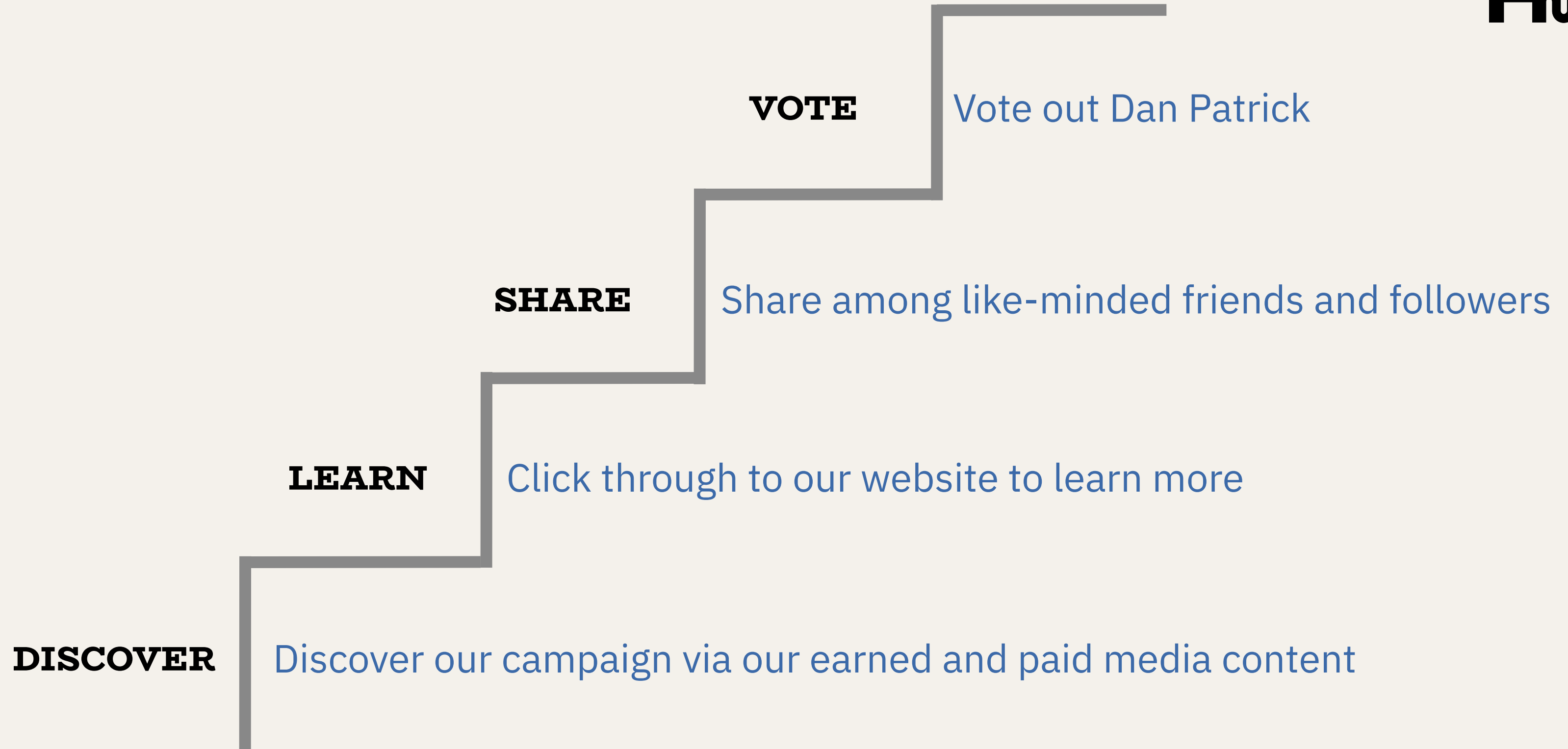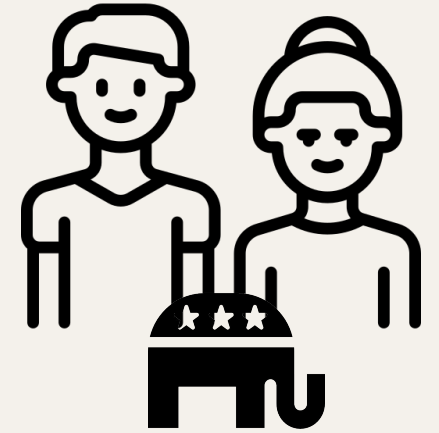
- Work with influencer firms and use paid media to **activate micro-influencers** and **engage moderate audiences** on the social channels that they are already visiting
- Employ a **common-sense messaging strategy**, using former opponents and trusted voices in states that passed legalization as primary messengers in other states (cops, doctors, parents).

Action Ladder

Young Moderate Conservatives

VOTE   Vote out Dan Patrick

SHARE   Share among like-minded friends and followers

LEARN   Click through to our website to learn more

DISCOVER   Discover our campaign via our earned and paid media content

5 Storytelling

Liberty

- Personal Freedom and Autonomy

- Highlight the idea that individuals should have the right to make choices about their own lives, free from unnecessary government interference.

- Appeal to libertarian-leaning voters who value independence and personal responsibility.

After a day on the rig I just want to relax at home and heal my back

5:07 / 15:28

Oil rig worker who has back problems and needs cannabis to work "Texas Tough"

Fairness

- Highlight Economic Opportunity and Fiscal Responsibility

- Underscore the wasted taxpayer dollars on cannabis enforcement and the economic benefits of legalization, such as job creation and revenue generation.

- Frame legalization as a common-sense policy that strengthens local economies and supports small businesses.

COLORADO'S MARIJUANA TAX REVENUE REACHED $248.2 MILLION
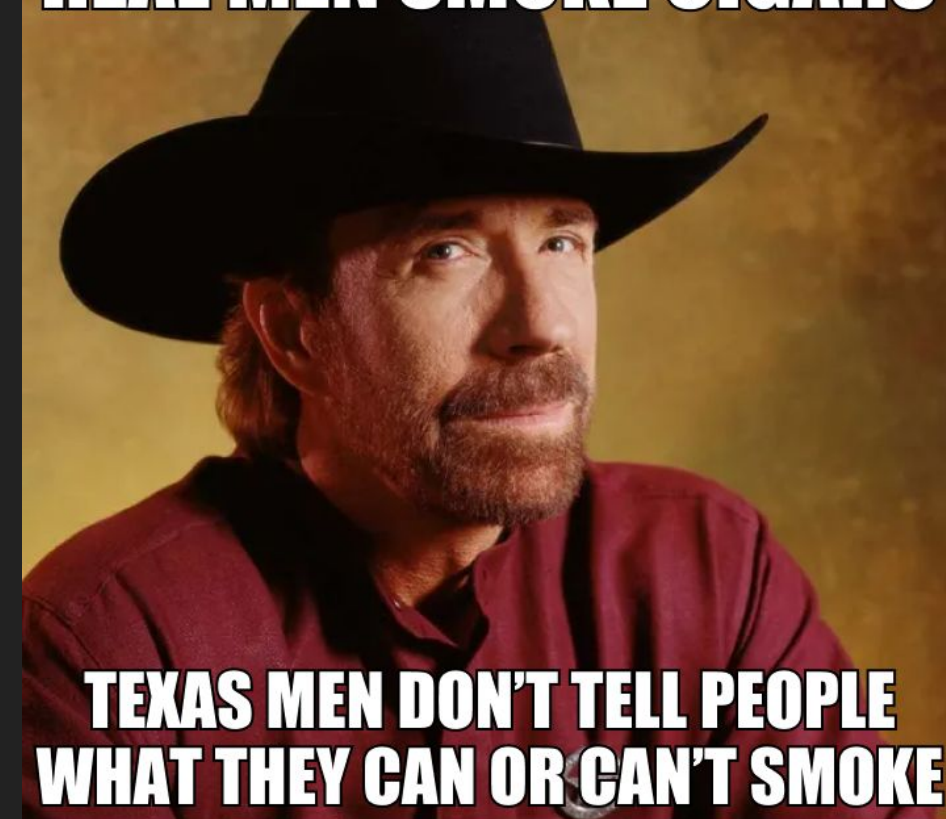
IT'S TIME FOR TEXAS

Subversion

- Moral Integrity and Hypocrisy
- Call out leaders like Lt. Governor Dan Patrick for ignoring the will of the people and protecting outdated policies that harm Texans.
- Leverage conservative language to expose the contradiction between "limited government" rhetoric and their actions.

COME AND TOKE IT

REAL MEN SMOKE CIGARS

TEXAS MEN DON'T TELL PEOPLE WHAT THEY CAN OR CAN'T SMOKE

THINKS THAT RESISTANCE TO GOVERNMENT IS A VIRTUE

BANS YOU FROM SMOKING WEED

Texas for THC Creative Brief

Background

In Texas, state officials have blocked cannabis legalization, despite its broad support among constituents. Decriminalization efforts have been thwarted, largely due to Lt. Governor Dan Patrick. The Texas for THC campaign aims to highlight Patrick's regressive policies, using cannabis reform as a key issue to unseat him. Long-term, the campaign seeks to expose hypocrisy in conservative leadership and shift the political climate to enable populist, progressive policies.

Goals

- Mobilize voters to unseat Lt. Governor Dan Patrick
- Educate the public and highlight widespread support for cannabis reform to build pressure on lawmakers.
- Expose hypocrisy and reveal the disconnect between conservative leadership and constituents' views on cannabis legalization.
- Broaden the platform and use cannabis reform as a springboard for advocating other populist progressive policies.
- Reframe the narrative and position cannabis reform as consistent with conservative values like personal freedom and limited government.

Challenges

- Entrenched political opposition from leaders who have significant influence and resources to resist cannabis reform efforts.
- Persistent stigma around cannabis use in some key conservative communities, making it challenging to shift public perceptions.
- A polarized political climate where associating cannabis reform with progressive policies could alienate moderate or conservative voters.
- Difficulty mobilizing voter turnout, particularly among younger or disengaged individuals who support cannabis legalization.
- Challenges in reframing the narrative to appeal to conservative values while countering misinformation from opponents.
- Resistance from law enforcement, private prisons, and pharmaceutical industries that benefit from maintaining current policies.

One Page Creative Brief

6 PARTNERS

Selection Criteria

✔

ALIGNMENT

Organizations that align with our target audience and our mission (support cannabis reform, social justice, or economic development)

✔ ✔

CREDIBILITY

Partners that bring legitimacy to the campaign, specially in conservative circles

✔ ✔ ✔

AGENCY

Ability to influence audiences and networks that align with the campaign's goals

✔ ✔ ✔ ✔

EXPERTISE

Tailor our partnerships to the strategies we want to leverage

Partner Orgs

| Generalists | Healthcare | Economic Justice | Social Justice |

Partner Orgs

Generalists

NORML

*"Our mission is to **move public opinion sufficiently** to achieve the repeal of marijuana prohibition"*

Marijuana Policy Project

"...for sensible marijuana policies at the federal and state level; our grassroots and lobbying campaigns have changed several laws."

Texans for Accountable Government

*"trans-partisan organization to **combat the intrusive and expanding reach of governmen**t, which threatens to invade every facet of our lives"*

Healthcare

Economic Justice

Social Justice

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Healthcare

Doctors for Drug Policy Reform

*"We focus on correcting long-standing **misconceptions about drug harms to the individual and to public health**"*

Texas Veterans for Medical Cannabis

*"TXVMMC **empowers veterans to speak for medical freedom** and the right to choose medicine that is most appropriate for their medical conditions."*

Economic Justice

Social Justice

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Economic Justice

Foundation for an Informed Texas

*"educational non-profit focused on **educating the citizens of Texas on current marijuana laws**"*

Texas Young Republicans

*"oldest political youth organization in the United States... Our membership is **ideologically diverse, with fiscal conservatism**, social conservatism, libertarian ideals, and center-right viewpoints"*

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Social Justice

Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

*"**ensure Texans** with disabilities may work, live, learn, play and **participate fully in the community of their choice.**"*

Texas Criminal Justice Coalition

"identifies and advances real solutions to the problems facing Texas' juvenile and criminal justice systems"

Republicans Against Marijuana Prohibition

*"We are the voice for all Republicans who **oppose the inhumane and unjust practice of imprisoning people for using the cannabis planT**"*

Media Channels

Earned Media

YouTube
Leverage influencers like Joe Rogan (TX), Lex Fridman, Dave Portnoy, Kevin Durant.

Conservative Media
Fox News (especially Fox & Friends), The Daily Wire, and RedState.

Sports Networks
ESPN, NASCAR programming, and regional sports broadcasters.

Local Talk Radio
Conservative-leaning shows on iHeartRadio and local AM stations.

Paid Media

Facebook
Focus on relatable memes, infographics, and localized stories about economic benefits from cannabis reform.

TikTok
Highlight entertaining, short videos framing legalization as "freedom from government interference."

Twitter (X)
Engage in policy debates and amplify campaign messages via partnerships with popular moderate influencers.

LinkedIn
Focus on professional arguments for cannabis reform, such as job creation and economic growth.

Specialized Channels and Events

NASCAR Events
On-site billboards, sponsored giveaways, or short videos shown during events.

Country Music Festivals
Concerts sponsored by iHeartCountry and SiriusXM's "The Highway."

Niche Channels
DIY home projects, hunting, farming, fishing

7 MEASURING IMPACT

Metrics

Survey

Target population (non-college educated + young conservatives)
- ✓ Voting preferences
- ✓ Lt. Governor Dan Patrick likeability
- ✓ Opinion on cannabis for medical use
- ✓ Opinion on cannabis for recreational use

Pre. Baseline survey. Where are we?

During. 3-monthly survey to analyze if sentiment is changing and why
- ✓ What channels are working (social media spread)
- ✓ What messaging is working (tailored questions)

Post. Final survey. Lessons learned

Measure if campaign is working

1. **Discover**
   - ✓ # people impacted
   - ✓ % of people within our target group

2. **Learn**
   - ✓ # visits to our website
   - ✓ % of people within our target group

3. **Share**
   - ✓ Social spread analysis

4. **Vote**
   - ✓ Voting shift by target group

Thank you