



Just Say Uncool

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Something curious has happened to the young, a new government report suggests: “the number of high school students who use marijuana has decreased by almost half — 44 percent — since states started enacting adult-use legalization.”

I’m quoting an [article](#) from September 22. In it, *Marijuana Moment* editor Tom Angeli repeatedly contrasts the decrease in teen cannabis use with the rise in state legalizations. “The new federal data, released on Monday, shows that 12.9 percent of high school students currently consume cannabis, which is defined as having used it at least once in the past 30 days. That’s down from 23.1 percent in 2011 — the year before the first U.S. states approved recreational marijuana legalization laws.”

Angeli reminds us of a standard argument against marijuana legalization: If marijuana is readily available, kids will *increase* usage of the ‘pernicious weed.’

Hasn’t happened!

But why?

It may be relevant to note that sexual activity among the young has [gone way down](#). So has [testosterone](#) in boys; teen pregnancies are [also in decline](#).

Meanwhile, teen use of prescription drugs is [way up](#). If your brain function is altered by one or more psychiatric medications, doctor prescribed, perhaps these compete with traditional psychoactive drugs, reducing demand.

Angeli insists, however, that “[p]rior research also suggests that marijuana use by young people has generally fallen in states that legalize it for adults.”

If this turns out to be true, we may have to accept his framing: a significant driver of drug use among young people is The Cool Factor, and legal drugs are *not* cool; prohibited drugs *are*.

For decades, anti-drug activists used [celebrities and cartoon characters](#) to convince kids that “drugs aren’t cool.”

Instead, legalization did the job.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.