A record number of ballot initiatives regarding recreational and medicinal marijuana were considered during this election season. Five states (Arizona, California, Maine, Massachusetts, and Nevada) considered legalizing recreational marijuana and four states (Arkansas, Florida, Montana and North Dakota) voted on allowing or extending the use of medicinal marijuana.

Last Tuesday, all but one measure passed. The recreational marijuana initiative in Arizona was defeated, with 51.54% of voters opposing the proposal. As the legalization of marijuana continues to grow in states across the nation, some are predicting a boost to the economy. USA Today reports marijuana legalization could provide a $7.8 billion benefit to the nation’s economy and that state taxes on marijuana could raise $1 billion in revenue for California alone.

However, when states relax restrictions on marijuana it could potentially put them in conflict with the Drug Enforcement Administration. While the federal government announced in 2013 that the legalization of marijuana at the state level would generally not result in prosecution at the federal level, it reaffirmed in August that marijuana remains classified as a Schedule 1 drug.

Despite pushback from the federal government, public opinion continues to favor marijuana legalization. The Pew Research Center reported in early October that 57% of Americans say that the use of marijuana should be made legal.

25 states across the nation previously legalized medicinal marijuana, as The Council of State Governments reported this summer. This number has now been increased to 27 states nationwide. Additionally, the states that have legalized recreational marijuana doubled in this election cycle, bringing the total number to eight.
Source URL: http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/content/marijuana-ballot-initiatives-passed-several-state-elections

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