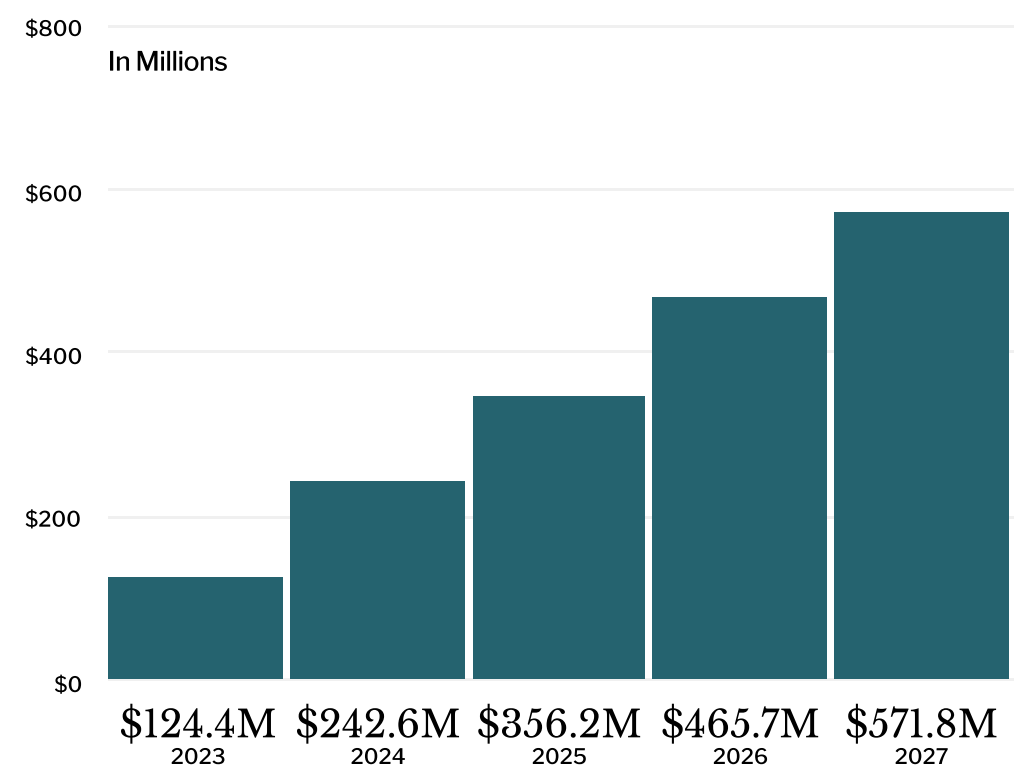


Ending Federal Prison Sentences for Marijuana Offenses

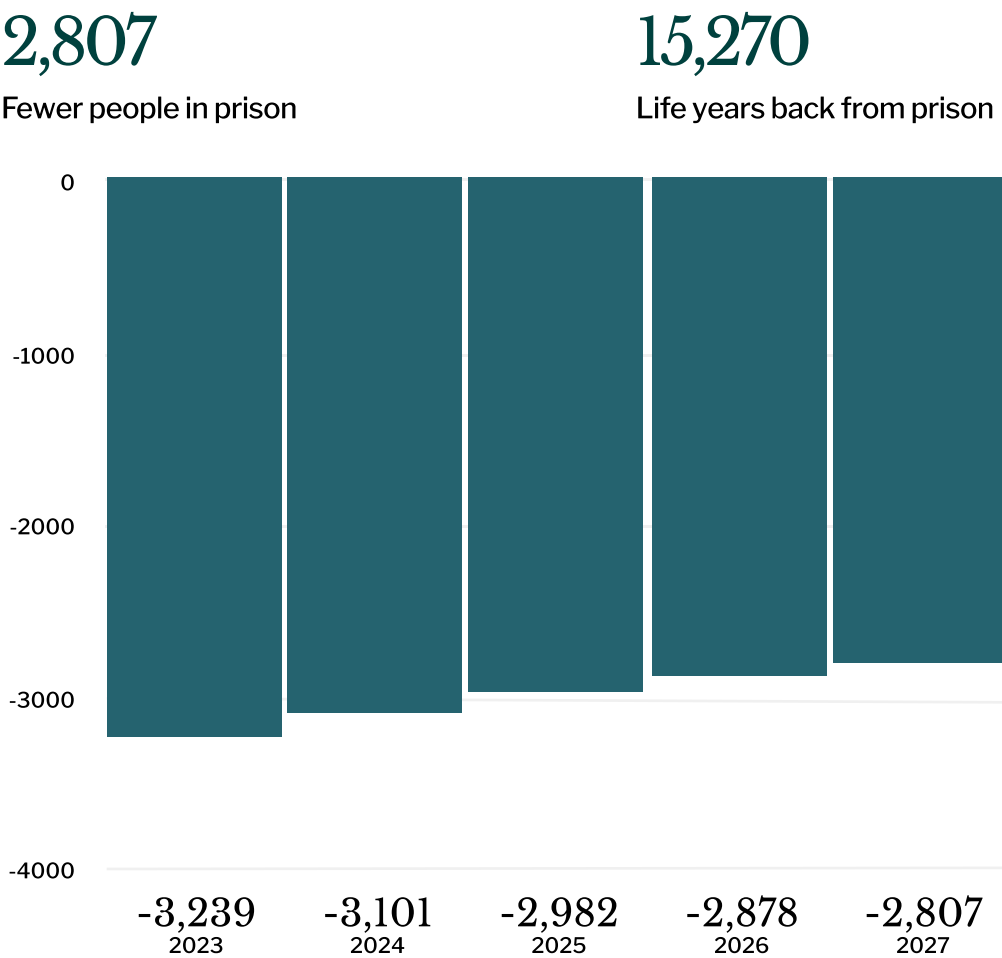
5-year impact on federal prisons

Ending federal marijuana prohibition—specifically, ceasing federal prison commitments for marijuana-related offenses—could reduce incarceration costs by \$571.8M and the federal prison population by 2,807 over 5 years. The policy is also projected to divert roughly 1,120 people from being sent to federal prison each year.

Cumulative cost avoidance



Projected population impact



The opportunity

Support for marijuana legalization among the American public has doubled in the last 20 years, from 34% in 2001 to 68% today. State governments have responded to this shifting public sentiment with policy change - there are now 18 states that allow adult use cannabis and 36 states that have a medical marijuana program.

In spite of these shifts in public opinion and state law, marijuana is still prohibited at the federal level, and more than 3,000 individuals are currently serving marijuana-related sentences in federal prison. Significant racial disparities exist in federal marijuana sentencing; an estimated 60% of people serving time in federal prison for marijuana offenses are of Hispanic descent, and over the past five years, 67% of individuals receiving prison sentences for marijuana offenses were Hispanic.

While the rate of prison sentencing for federal marijuana offenses has declined substantially in the past five years, individuals incarcerated for federal marijuana offenses still face an average sentence of approximately 38 months. Furthermore, nearly 1 in 4 individuals incarcerated under federal marijuana trafficking offenses will face reincarceration.

3,016

individuals serving time in federal prison for marijuana offenses (2020)

1,120

fewer federal prison admissions each year resulting from policy implementation (estimated)

Impact of similar policies at the state level

Among the 18 states that have legalized recreational marijuana, incarceration for marijuana-related offenses has essentially ceased. The rate of marijuana usage in these states has increased, but still generally follows the usage rate trend that existed prior to legalization; youth marijuana use also remains consistent with pre-legalization rates.

Although opponents of legalization have cited decreased road safety and increased violent crime rates as potential negative outcomes, neither of these concerns have been borne out in data published by post-legalization states, in which both of these measures have remained stable following legalization.