

Drug Policy Alliance

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://drugpolicy.org/resource/racial-disparities-marijuana-arrests-virginia-2003-2013>

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"Racial Disparities in Marijuana Arrests in Virginia (2003-2013)" reveals that marijuana possession arrests in Virginia have increased dramatically in recent years despite a nationwide trend in favor of reforming marijuana laws. Between 2003 and 2013, marijuana arrests in Virginia increased by 76%. Black Virginians have been disproportionately impacted by marijuana law enforcement despite constituting only 20% of the state's population and using marijuana at a similar rate as white Virginians. During the eleven-year period examined by this report, arrests of black people in Virginia for marijuana possession more than doubled. By comparison, arrests of white people during this period increased by only 44%. This report provides a detailed look at the disproportionate impact of marijuana arrests on black residents of Virginia and the long term impact of a marijuana arrest on an individual's future. Virginia has moved in the wrong direction as many states and federal lawmakers have taken steps to reform marijuana laws. It is time for Virginia lawmakers to address egregious racial disparities in Virginia's marijuana arrests by reforming the state's marijuana laws.

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Our new strategic plan takes bold steps to dismantle this war on drugs and our communities. Join us in seeing this vision through.

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