

# High Expectations! How Will the Legalization of Marijuana Impact Communities of Color?

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The New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization Act legalizes the personal use of cannabis for people age 21 and older, subject to state regulations; decriminalizes small amounts of marijuana and hashish possession and removes marijuana as a Schedule I drug. Communities of color may expect to see a decrease in marijuana related arrests and incarceration rates. The Act may also bring economic growth to minority communities. The Act provides the opportunity for minority business owners to establish lucrative cannabis dispensaries, subject to certain State licensing requirements. However, there are other potential consequences that must be considered. Although the Act requires cannabis users to be 21 or older, there is a concern that it will become more accessible to minors who may view the legalized drug as harmless. Furthermore, there is a concern that corporations selling cannabis will target their sales to minority youth by utilizing social media influencers and employing other similar strategies. Guillermo Artiles joins a panel with diverse views on the subject during the NJSBA Annual Meeting 2021.