Anslinger before him; however, throughout the 1970s, eleven states did enact some form of marijuana decriminalization ("Marijuana Timeline"). President Ronald Reagan continued the "war on drugs" with his own appeal to the American public that marijuana harmed families and children. By instituting Section 280E in the federal income tax code, which denied marijuana businesses the ability to deduct operational expenses, his administration set the stage for the current conflict the legal state marijuana industry has with the IRS (Oglesby 2013).

Based on its lengthy and controversial history, recent efforts to enforce the federal marijuana prohibition policy have proved to be futile. In a report by the University of Washington in 2006, it was found that increasing marijuana arrests does not achieve the goals of prohibition. Despite increases in overall arrests from 1994 to 2010, marijuana has become more available, more potent, and less expensive. In addition, the costs of prohibition for the public are significant, which may negatively impact society as a whole (Edwards et al. 4). Enforcing these laws consumes substantial fiscal and organizational resources that are not evenly distributed across the population and could be directed toward other goals. Furthermore, decriminalizing marijuana and deprioritizing enforcement of pot laws have no significant correlation with an increase in pot use; this is consistent with numerous studies done in states and municipalities that have decriminalized (Beckett & Herbert 2006). Therefore, it is necessary to look toward alternative measures such as the one instituted in Colorado to tackle these key issues.

Alternative Policy

Colorado passed Amendment 64, their version of legalizing the recreational use of marijuana, on November 6, 2012 in the general election. It institutes a regulation model similar to the state's alcohol one, where a person 21 years of age or older is allowed to possess limited amounts of pot—either one ounce of processed marijuana or no more than six plants. Additionally, it provides for the licensing and regulation of cultivation,

manufacturing, and testing facilities as well as retail stores. The policy still does not tolerate driving while under the influence of pot, consuming it publicly, or consuming it in a manner that endangers others. Colorado's policy also requires strict labeling on products sold within the state, and the sale of pot to underage citizens is prohibited. Furthermore, it proposes the imposition of an excise tax to be levied on wholesale sales of marijuana, requiring that the first $40 million raised in revenue annually to be directed to the construction of public schools (Colorado General Assembly).

Other key measures of Amendment 64 include no set cap on the amount of marijuana that can be produced per year in the state. Amendment 64 also does not set a cap on the amount of licenses that can be given out to sellers; rather, it actually requires vertical integration. This means every marijuana business who wishes to get a license must be involved in all parts of the business—growing, processing, and selling (Gray 2013). Existing medical dispensaries already in good standing with the state are allowed to apply early for licenses as part of a special provision of Amendment 64. In addition, cultivation for personal use is allowed (Chokshi 2013), and there is a two-year minimum residency requirement for any owner or investor (Gray 2013). Voters passed a referendum in November 2013 that imposes a 25% tax on legalized marijuana, something that was proposed in Amendment 64. Fifteen percent is to go toward public schools and 10% of it will be used to fund marijuana law enforcement (Rayman 2013); this tax is expected to increase annual state revenue by $67 million per year (Choksi 2013).

Evaluative Criteria

To determine whether Michigan should consider a policy similar to Colorado's, it is necessary to evaluate the policy's social acceptability, efficiency, and political feasibility.

Social acceptability is the extent to which the public will accept and support a policy proposal. Clearly, the increasing public support for marijuana legalization is a measure of social acceptability. Marijuana policy has dominated recent media