

How (and how much) the 50 states do drugs, in 5 maps

By Aaron Blake, Updated: November 22 at 1:35 pm

Rep. Trey Radel's (R-Fla.) [admission this week that he used cocaine](#) has sparked a renewed interest in the popularity of illegal drug use in today's society.

[Petula Dvorak noted in her column today](#) that 1.6 million Americans cop to being regular cocaine users -- a fact that surprised The Fix and others on Twitter (but makes more sense when you consider it's basically 1 out of every 200 people).

But what about all drugs? And do red states and blue states have different drugs of choice?

Here's a quick rundown:

1) Blue states like drugs more than red states

Below is a 2008 study, from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, of how many people 12 or older say they have used illicit drugs in the past year.

You'll notice the states with the lowest drug use are more red than blue, while the blue states on the West Coast in the Northeast had the highest use rates.

Apparently, Republicans [listened to Nancy Reagan](#) more than Democrats.

2) Cocaine is popular in D.C.

Radel's drug of choice barely registers in much of the Midwest but is much more popular in blue states -- as well as the District of Columbia, where Radel was caught buying 3.5 grams.

Radel's home state of Florida is about average for cocaine use nationwide.

3) California and D.C. have a problem

No state has as much in the way of substance-abuse disorders as the Golden State, according to another recent SAMHSA study. And D.C. is right there too.

The other state with a widespread problem: Rhode Island.

Radel, by the way, comes from Southwest Florida, where substance-abuse disorders are among the lowest in the country.

4) Red states are much more into prescription drugs

While red states don't do illegal drugs as much, they do have much more of an issue with prescription drugs.

Of the 12 states with the highest percentage of prescription drug overdoses, just one is a solidly blue state: Rhode Island.

5) The state known for Bourbon doesn't have a problem with alcohol

Let's switch to alcohol -- the substance with which Radel says he has a problem -- for a moment.

Now, we expect that Utah would have one of the lowest rates of alcohol use disorders, given the prohibition on alcohol use in the Mormon Church.

But the second-driest state in the Union is none other than ... Kentucky?

© The Washington Post Company