

To the Citizens of New Hampshire

Your state leadership is contemplating making a substantial change to life in New Hampshire. Marijuana has already been decriminalized. Several of your senators are pushing for legalized and commercialized marijuana products. They hope to generate enough money to balance a budget.

First, let me say, be educated about what is being proposed. The commercialized marijuana industry has made products with potency levels that have never been seen before. Many products being produced have 50 to 90 times the THC (a hallucinogen) content as the “joints” from Woodstock. Increasing the potency, as has been done in Colorado, will NOT decrease the harms.

Five years of legalization/commercialization in Colorado has led to many unpredicted changes in our communities. I live in Pueblo, CO (dubbed the “Napa Valley of Cannabis” by our former city commissioner). We have more than two times the number of marijuana dispensaries as we do Starbucks + McDonalds. Our city has seen a dramatic rise in homelessness (as had San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Orange County, etc.). Pueblo does not have a permanent homeless shelter, in a time when we need it the most. We were able to put together a temporary homeless shelter this past winter.

Along with the increase in homelessness, overall drug use has increased. My long-term study (pre & post legalization) shows an increase in not only marijuana use, but cocaine, amphetamines, and opiates. Amphetamine use in our community has almost tripled since the legalization of marijuana.

One of two local hospitals had to dramatically cut services due to severe financial difficulties in the last year. This hospital has been in the area for 132 years. The remaining hospital has been overwhelmed and our emergency wait time has gone from less than an hour to over 5 hours on almost a daily basis. We are having a difficult time recruiting new medical providers to the area.

Youth usage will increase. Do not be fooled. If you legalize and normalize use in the community, youth and adolescent use will follow suit. A study from school resource officers in Colorado from 2017 showed that children who had marijuana at school got it from: 23% - parents, 39% - someone who purchased it legally. Over 60% of kids feel that it is easy or very easy to get marijuana in our community. The number one diagnosis in adolescent treatment centers in CO is cannabis abuse disorder. Will there be enough tax revenue to cover the cost of adolescent rehabilitation alone? Marijuana has known and potentially profound and irreversible effects on brain function and IQ in adolescents and young adults. There is a correlation with increased use and increased episodes of psychosis. Pueblo School district 60 had a chronic absenteeism rate of 38% this year (up from 27% last year). Imagine 38% of your children chronically absent from school. Where will those 38% end up? How will this help New Hampshire’s economy?

Over the years, communities have not generated enough tax revenue to cover the costs of harms from tobacco or alcohol. The same will be true for the tax revenue from marijuana. The costs of harms – homelessness, youth addiction, increased crime, medical illnesses (psychosis,

cannabinoid induced hyperemesis, cardiovascular effects, lung disease, drugged driving, etc.) will, without a doubt, exceed any tax revenue generated by the commercialization of marijuana. In order to increase tax revenue, the community would have to increase usage and this in turn will lead to more harms.

Finally, the promise that the number of illegal grows will decrease is false. Personally, my neighbor was a known Cuban cartel drug house – taken down twice. Both the electrical and water connections to the house had been altered, making this house a serious fire hazard. There were other drugs and guns associated with this house. No one wants this neighbor. Our police and DEA agents can't keep up with the number of illegal grows. Forest land is being decimated by grows.

As Senator Martha Hennessey stated in a recent senate hearing “more is not always better”. Legalization and commercialization is not a pathway to a balanced budget for New Hampshire.

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