

Californians For Drug-Free Schools

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To: The Connecticut Joint Committee on the Judiciary

Re: Opposition to H.B. 6715 Legalization Of Marijuana And Other Drugs

On behalf of the 90% of Americans who do not abuse alcohol and drugs, we respectfully point out that marijuana and/or other illicit drugs cannot be legalized for any reason without jeopardizing the safety and well being of all Americans.

Marijuana has never passed FDA's safety and efficacy tests as a medicine, nor those conducted by numerous professional organizations that have objectively evaluated it. Marijuana does not heal. It can provide relief from pain, nausea, other symptoms, but there are better medicines that don't have the harmful effects of marijuana. Marijuana cannot become a valid medicine by popular vote; or because of campaign or political contributions by a few billionaires who obviously have something to gain by legalizing illicit drugs, to the detriment of the American people.

The motives of those who promote legalization of harmful drugs are well documented. It is not for the chronically ill, because there are better, legal medicines according to the medical profession. Their real motive is to open the flood gates for recreational use of marijuana, as proven in California.

Legalizing marijuana will increase its use because of availability, decreased perception of harm, and lower prices, as has been the case with alcohol. In turn, increased use of marijuana will result in the following:

- Higher crime rates for juveniles and adults.
- Higher levels of youth suicides and violence.
- More traffic accidents and deaths associated with traffic accidents. Marijuana stays in the system much longer than alcohol. Recent studies have shown that marijuana containing .05 to 3% THC impair ones ability to drive. Some marijuana today has up to 30% THC content. A pilots ability to land a plane 24 hours after smoking a single marijuana cigarette is impaired. It is reasonable to assume that chronic users of marijuana are chronically impaired.
- Increased health costs to the public sector.
- An increase in the number of sexually transmitted disease.
- An increase in mental health, and related costs to the public sector.
- Adverse effects on unborn babies.
- Increased cost for child/family assistance.
- Decreased memory and ability for young people to retain knowledge.
- Decreased academic achievement and graduation rates.
- Lower productivity and motivation by those who smoke marijuana.
- Higher levels of drug use and addiction of marijuana and other drugs.

Two of your most important responsibilities as an elected official are to protect your constituents from harm, and to manage tax dollars intelligently. You cannot fulfill those responsibilities and legalize marijuana.

Sincerely


Roger D. Morgan

MARIJUANA IS A HARMFUL DRUG

Taken from National Health and Safety and Eric Voth, Chairman, Institute of Global Drug Policy

Smoked, crude marijuana cigarettes have never passed the safety and efficacy requirements of the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) for use as a medicine, and are known to be highly toxic, impure and harmful.

Marijuana is a complex, unstable mixture of 483 chemicals, that when smoked, creates over 2,000 chemicals, many of which cause cancer. Over 60 of these chemicals are "cannabinoids", some of which are psychoactive, all are bioactive, and all may remain in the body's fatty tissues for long period of time with unknown consequences. THC, the primary psychoactive substance, varies in potency from .05% to as high as 30%. The unknown concentrations of chemicals and THC make it impossible to create a medically precise and uniform dosage. For that reason, marijuana cigarettes, marijuana brownies and other concoctions remain ineligible to be classified as a medicine. The harmful effects of marijuana follow:

- **Immune System** – The National Institute of Health (NIH) states that marijuana impairs the immune defense system to fight off infections. People with HIV and others with impaired immune systems should avoid marijuana use. (NIH 95-4036 P. 17)
- **Cancer Causing Agents** – Marijuana smoke has 70% more cancer-causing tars than tobacco, such as benzo(a)pyrene, benz(a)anthracene, and benzene in higher concentrations than tobacco smoke. (Denissenko MF et.al. Science 274:430-432, 1996) The Journal of Immunology reported that THC can cause tumor growth by impairing the body's anti-tumor immunity system. (Zhu, LX et.al. J of Immunology 165:373-380, 2000). Babies born to mothers who use marijuana during pregnancy have an eleven fold increase in nonlumphobiastic leukemia. (Robinson LL et.al. Cancer 63:1904-1910, 1989)
- **Hormones and Sexually Transmitted Diseases** – Marijuana use is a major risk factor for the development of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, in adolescents. (Shafer MA et.al. J Pediatr 119:826-833,1991)
- **Mental Effects** – The American Psychiatric Association lists harmful mental effects caused by marijuana, including psychotic disorder (insanity), hallucinations, anxiety disorder (panic attacks), impaired judgment, sensation of slowed time, social withdrawal, perceptual disturbances, impaired motor coordination, delirium, memory deficit, depersonalization, delusions, especially delusions of persecution (paranoia), disorientation, and others. (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) IV, American Psychiatric Association, Washington D.C. 1994) Marijuana now accounts for 18% of those being admitted to hospital emergency rooms for adverse drug reactions, the same as for cocaine and heroine (DAWN 2000).
- **Accidents and Injury** – Marijuana impairs coordination, perception and judgment and is the cause of many accidents. A study of 1023 hospitalized trauma victims revealed that marijuana has been used by 34.7%, compared to alcohol at 33.5%. (Soderstrom CA et al. Archiv Surg 123:733-737, 1998) Another study revealed 12.8% of fatal truck crashes involved marijuana, 12.5% alcohol, 8.5% cocaine, and 7.9% stimulants. (National Transportation Safety Board Report, Washington, DC, Dept of Transportation, Feb 1990). Marijuana is fat soluble and stays in one's system much longer. An experiment on pilots using a computerized flight simulator, showed that their ability to land a plane was still impaired 24 hours after smoking a single marijuana cigarette. (Leirer VO et al. Aviat Space Envir Med

"...Scientists at the National Institute of Health indicate that after carefully examining the existing preclinical and human data, there is no evidence to suggest that smoked marijuana might be superior to currently available therapies for glaucoma, weight loss associated with AIDS, nausea and vomiting associated with cancer chemotherapy, muscle spasticity associated with multiple sclerosis, or intractable pain."