

Eagle Forum Report

founded by Phyllis Schlafly

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Throwing Americans Under the Cannabis

WRONG WAY ON THE HIGH WAY

by Scott Chipman, husband, father, grandfather and business owner. He is an activist for public health, safety and quality of life issues and vice president of Americans Against Legalizing Marijuana.

Harvard brain biologist Bertha Madras has described marijuana as the most dangerous drug in the United States, not only because of its impacts on health, but because what people think they know about it is wrong. Marijuana seems ubiquitous in our society today. So, what should we know?

Marijuana is a plant and it has been around for thousands of years and plants are “natural”, but poisons such as hemlock and arsenic are also “natural”. In addition, there is nothing natural about today’s marijuana. The “natural” plant has a THC (the component that makes you high) potency of about 1.5% and a CBD (the component that partially counteracts the THC) potency of about 1%. The plant is psychotropic, meaning it impacts the brain. Even a thousand years ago, the Chinese warned if you use too much you will “see dragons”. For decades botanical marijuana has been hybridized to reduce CBD and increase THC potencies to 14-25%. Edibles, vapes, and other products can range from 25% to 98% THC. In 1920, Mexico was the first country to make marijuana illegal and they did

it because the drug was known to be dangerous to public health and safety. Marijuana also attracts a criminal element.

The process of “legalizing” pot in the U.S. really got started in the 1970s when the founder of NORML (National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws), Keith Stroup announced the strategy of “first

we will get it ‘medicalized’, then normalized and then legalized.” Leftist California was the logical target. It took until

1996 to get marijuana identified as “medicine” with *The Compassionate Use Act*, Prop 215. This act was sold to voters as a way for the seriously ill and dying to have access to marijuana because “no one really cares what drug people use when they are near death.”

The reality was that Prop 215 allowed anyone to get and use pot for any medical purpose that the user thought might be helpful, including an ingrown toenail. The fraud was

wholesale. One of our coalition members received a medi-pot recommendation for “anxiety while driving” his children to soccer practice. I received three recommendations without ever seeing a doctor. There are no proper medical protocols for “legal” medical marijuana.

Prop 215 had opened the door. Pot legalizers then had a setback with the defeat of Prop 19 as black voters, not supportive of marijuana in their neighborhoods, came out to support Barack Obama in 2010 and defeat the first full attempt to legalize “recreational” marijuana by 9 points.

Drug dealers are persistent and in 2016, there were 11 initiatives in California to fully legalize pot. Not one had a chance of getting enough signatures until Sean Parker and George Soros dropped nearly \$30 million to pay between \$7 and \$11 per signature to push *The Adult Use of Marijuana Act* (Prop 64) onto the California ballot. Six more years of fake media narrative on the millions of pot users in jail for a single joint and the potential tax revenue for education and regulation and the fix was in. Marijuana had been decriminalized in California in 1975 to a misdemeanor and then to an infraction with a \$100 fine in 2010. Literally no one was in jail for simple possession of marijuana, but, as it is



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said, “it is easier to convince someone of a lie than to convince them that they have been lied to.” Even today, many people believe the false narrative that thousands are in jail for simple marijuana possession.

California was the start and today we have 41 states, as well the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico that have “medical” marijuana programs and 23 of those have decriminalized cannabis or have full adult-use programs. However, the federal marijuana laws have not changed. *The Controlled Substance Act* still classifies marijuana as illegal. Today, more than ever before, marijuana should be illegal.

Why Should Marijuana Remain Illegal?

The legalizers initiated their whole effort with the idea that marijuana is medicine and, thus, should be legal and accessible. Marijuana is not medicine.

The reality is we do have “medical” marijuana in that we have several cannabis-based drugs that have been properly approved through the Food and Drug Administration process, including Marinol, Epidiolex, Dranabinol. There have been no pharmaceutical protocols utilized related to under-the-counter marijuana products. There is no laboratory evidence marijuana is effective for treating pain, insomnia, anxiety, depression, PTSD, ingrown toenails, or curing cancer. In fact, marijuana users typically require more pain medication after major surgery than non-users. Users often do not sleep well without marijuana because sleeplessness is a withdrawal symptom. Marijuana use can cause or increase depression and is linked to increased psychosis, psychotic breaks and even schizophrenia.

There are important reasons mar-

ijuana cannot be defined as a medicine any more than bourbon would be. To approve a medicine, the FDA requires five criteria to be fulfilled:

1. **The drug’s chemistry must be known and reproducible.** Evidence of a standardized product, consistency, ultra-high purity, fixed dose and a measured shelf life are required by the FDA.
2. **There must be adequate safety studies.** “Dispensary marijuana” cannot be studied or used safely under medical supervision if the substance is not standardized.
3. **There must be adequate and well-controlled studies proving efficacy.** Twelve meta-analyses of clinical trials scrutinizing smoked marijuana and cannabinoids conclude that there is no or insufficient evidence for the use of smoked marijuana for specific medical conditions.
4. **The drug must be accepted by well-qualified experts.** Medical associations generally call for more cannabinoid research but do not endorse smoked marijuana as a medicine. The American Medical Association: “Cannabis is a dangerous drug and as such is a public health concern”; the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: “Medicalization” of smoked marijuana has distorted the perception of the known risks and purposed benefits of this drug;” the American Psychiatric Association: “No current scientific evidence that marijuana is in any way beneficial for treatment of any psychiatric disorder ... the approval process should go through the FDA.”
5. **Scientific evidence must be widely available.** The evidence for approval of medical conditions in state ballot and legisla-

tive initiatives did not conform to rigorous, objective clinical trials nor was it widely available for scrutiny.

Marijuana fails to meet any of these five criteria for accepted medical use in the United States. So, currently it belongs in Schedule 1.

Even if it isn’t a medicine, why illegal?

Marijuana is dangerous. It is not dangerous because it is illegal. It is illegal because it is dangerous. It is particularly dangerous to the developing brain (anyone under about 25 years of age). **About 1 of 10 users will become addicted or acquire cannabis use disorder.**

- **Amotivational Syndrome** – is associated with long-term effects of cannabis use and is characterized by detachment as well as blunted emotion, drives, and executive functions like memory and attention.
- **Anxiety** – Adolescent regular marijuana users have a 3-fold increase risk for anxiety disorder compared to adults.
- **Autism** – Cannabis can alter male sperm DNA in ways associated with autism.
- **Cancer** – Testicular cancer is associated with an over two-fold risk for marijuana users.
- **Heart Health** – Heart attacks are twice as likely in young adults who use cannabis. A heart attack was 4.8 times higher 60 minutes following marijuana use.
- **CBD Cannabidiol** – found to cause liver damage.
- **Depression** – Adolescents who use cannabis have a significant in-

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creased risk of depression and suicidality in adulthood in a study of 23,217 individuals.

- **Marijuana Addiction** – 1-in-6 people who start using the drug before the age of 18 can become addicted.
- **Motor Vehicle Collisions** – The risk of car collisions increases two-fold after smoking cannabis.
- **Neonatal Exposure** – Cannabis causes birth defects. A child's development is impaired by mother's marijuana use during pregnancy.
- **Neurocognitive Effects** – Cannabis use impairs cognitive function such as coordination, ability to plan, organize, solve problems, make decisions, remember, and control emotion and behavior.
- **Psychosis/Schizophrenia** – Daily marijuana use has a five time increase in the odds ratio of developing a psychotic disorder when using high potency cannabis.
- **Suicidality** – Marijuana is the number one drug found in completed teen suicides in Colorado.
- **Violence** – Regular marijuana use was associated with increased incidents of intimate partner violence.

According to data collected by the states of Arizona, Texas and Florida, which are not considered high pot-use states, marijuana is the number one drug associated with children's deaths. These children are not dying as a result of marijuana use or poisoning, although that is happening at an alarmingly increasing rate. The children are dying as a result of abuse or neglect by their parents or guardians who are using marijuana. Unfortunately, such data isn't collected in California, Washington, Oregon or Colorado, which are very high use states.

With All This Harm, Why the Strong Support for Legalization?

First, the "hip" narrative from the 1960s and 1970s that pot never hurt anyone is now in the mainstream of adults who grew up during those years. There are two problems with their "hip" thinking. Most of them know someone who went south due

to marijuana and other drug use. Second, today's marijuana products are 10 to 40 times more potent than back then. I've talked to dozens now in their 60s and 70s who have tried today's marijuana. For example, Jim (70) told me, "I took one hit while on a camping trip and I couldn't set up my tent, make a fire, or cook a meal. I was incapacitated. It was nothing like the pot I used in high school."

Then there is the social justice issue. The drug war supposedly unfairly targeted poor, black and brown communities. So did the drug dealers. Providing permitted pot shops and a path into the marijuana drug dealing industry for persons in those communities does even more harm to the communities some claim to want to help.

Also, there are libertarians who want everyone to be able to do whatever they want to do. They want all drugs legalized and they won't recognize that everyone's actions impact everyone around them.

Finally, if you are a user (about 50 million are) you don't want one of your favorite activities to be identified as illegal. There are now more people in the U.S. accessing marijuana than tobacco. Virtually all drug use has been declining except mari-


juana use. That is because what people think they know about the drug is wrong.

A recent poll indicated that a little over 57% of respondents said that they would support a policy to prohibit the sale of tobacco products. There is no doubt among researchers that marijuana is more dangerous than tobacco, especially in the short term. No

one has had a psychotic breakdown or forgotten a baby in the car to die or driven the wrong way on the freeway or dropped out of school as a result of smoking cigarettes. All these tragedies are regular occurrences from pot use. But, few know this.

The poll shows that with proper information opinions can be changed. This March, Oklahomans voted down full legalization, because their electorate got the information they needed. Unfortunately, it took fifty years to get people to know the facts about tobacco and change their opinions and actions. The truth will come to light about marijuana. The only real question is how many lives will be lost or negatively affected before most people know the truth?

Tell Your Children

Tell your children, tell your grandchildren, tell your friends, neighbors, and the people you meet. Tell everyone. To do that effectively you need to know the subject. And while we all wait for public awareness, opinions and policy to catch up to the science, catch up yourself. Become really informed because this drug (and other drugs) will impact you and yours if it hasn't already done so. 



BOOZE OUT, POT IN

by Anne Schlafly, Eagle Forum Chairman

Americans have radically changed their habits on recreational drugs. Today, 22 percent of Americans currently use marijuana, 20 percent regularly drink alcohol, and 11 percent use tobacco, according to a Marist Poll on “Weed and the American Family.”

This change in habits reflect not only the social acceptance of marijuana, but also the ignorance of the many harms of marijuana. Possession of marijuana is still a federal crime because it is a harmful drug. Marijuana has never been approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

Yet, many people are under the perception that marijuana has health benefits and that marijuana is less harmful than either alcohol or tobacco.

Marijuana no longer has a social stigma. A majority of Americans (56%) consider this illegal drug as socially acceptable. Three-quarters of Americans think that the regular use of either tobacco or alcohol are greater health risks than marijuana usage. Only 18% of Americans think that the regular use of marijuana is a bigger health risk. Many parents worry more about their children using tobacco than other drugs.

Tobacco companies made mon-

ey by marketing cigarettes as “medicine” that was not only safe to use, but good for you. A famous 1946 commercial from R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company used the slogan, “More doctors smoke Camels than any other cigarette.” Celebrities and athletes were paid to endorse tobacco smoking. The advertising was very successful. Tobacco use peaked in 1965 with nearly 42% of Americans who daily used tobacco — one year after the Surgeon General’s Report on Smoking and Health. That bombshell report was a top news story and it found a probable link between smokers and lung cancer. It took decades of public health campaigns to change the public’s attitude and perception of tobacco from a benign medicine to a cancer stick.

We need the same public health campaign on marijuana. This year, the surgeon general issued a report on “Marijuana and the Developing Brain,” which concluded that “No amount of marijuana use during pregnancy or adolescence is known to be safe.” This report needs more publicity to change the perception of pot as medicine.

The correlation between regular use of cannabis and psychosis is strong and the risk is higher for males

than females. Whether males with mental illness are more attracted to marijuana or if the heavy use of marijuana actually cause psychotic symptoms is not known. What we do know is that marijuana use is not benign.

As an employer, would you rather have an employee addicted to pot or alcohol or tobacco? As a parent, would you rather have your child addicted to pot or alcohol or tobacco?

All of these drugs have consequences when used daily. All of these drugs contribute to long-term health issues. All of these drugs can be highly addicting. Tobacco use does not cause the mental impairment that the use of marijuana and alcohol always do cause. For most people, moderate alcohol use does not necessarily lead to addiction.

However, in developing brains under the age of 25, marijuana does cause serious harm and lifetime problems. Regular marijuana use can reduce a person’s IQ by 8 points. Many habitual users of marijuana develop psychosis, depression, and other mental illnesses. At least 56 scientific studies have confirmed the link between high-potency marijuana and psychosis, including a 2020 study published in the Journal of American Medicine. This study found that using high-potency THC (the active ingredient in marijuana) was associated with “significant increases” in addiction and mental health disorders.

Marijuana legalization is being pushed because lawmakers want tax money and drug dealers want profits.



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