



The Governor's Budget once again includes the legalization of recreational marijuana, creates a new Office of Cannabis Management, and attempts to balance the budget with “new” marijuana revenue. We continue to fiercely oppose these measures, as there is no amount of revenue that can possibly offset the harm of the legalization of marijuana on our children.

With the serious crisis of youth vaping and tobacco use, and in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, while still battling the opioid crisis, this harmful legislation is counterintuitive.

Further, creation of a new Office of Cannabis Management, while at the same time cutting state school aid is unconscionable. The Executive Budget Proposal shows hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts of state support to our public schools. Why would the proposal then spend scarce resources on proposals that would actually physically and mentally harm our children?

NYS PTA urges you to heed the recommendations from leading medical and public health organizations, education groups, and the law enforcement community and do NOT legalize recreational marijuana.

Protect Our Children

Oppose the Legalization of Recreational Marijuana

In 2017, the American Medical Association concluded cannabis is a dangerous drug and a serious public health concern, and that the sale of cannabis for recreational use should not be legalized.

In 2015, the American Academy of Pediatrics offered, “We know marijuana can be very harmful to adolescent health and development. Making it more available to adults – even if restrictions are in place – will increase the access for teens.”

The American Lung Association is clear, “Smoking marijuana clearly damages the human lung, and regular use leads to chronic bronchitis and can cause an immune-compromised person to be more susceptible to lung infections.”

In November 2020, UCLA researchers found “smoking ... causes more severe infection by SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in the airways of the lungs.”

From 2005 to 2015, the number of youth (ages 13-20) who went to urgent care for marijuana related illnesses increased 172%. In Colorado after legalization, marijuana impaired driving deaths went up 150%.

According to the CDC, 80% of lung illness and deaths are THC-related, and 1 in 10 marijuana users will become addicted. For people who begin using younger than 18, that number rises to 1 in 6.

In Colorado, toxicology reports of adolescent suicide victims show increased marijuana usage, and marijuana has been linked to schizophrenia, depression and anxiety.

A recent systematic review and meta-analysis in JAMA Psychiatry (2019) of 11 studies including more than 23,000 individuals, found that adolescent cannabis consumption was associated with increased risk of developing depression and suicidal behavior later in life, even in the absence of a premonitory condition.

The Children’s Hospital of Colorado outlines the dangers of “Acute Marijuana Intoxication” and discusses the harm of child overdoses, usually as a result of ingestion of edible forms of marijuana (gummy bears, brownies and lollipops).

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