

OPPOSE A.1248/S.854

Say NO to the Legalization of Recreational Marijuana



We must protect our children.

We STRONGLY OPPOSE A.1248/S.854 and the Executive's marijuana proposal.

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

With the serious crisis of youth vaping and tobacco use, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, while battling the opioid crisis, this harmful legislation is counterintuitive, and the 30-day amendments are shocking.

In 2017, the American Medical Association concluded cannabis is a dangerous drug, 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."

A new report in the Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs detailed exactly our point – children from California are significantly more likely to use marijuana since its legalization there in 2016.

Data from over three million 7th, 9th, and 11th grade students who participated in the California Healthy Kids Survey from 2010-2011 through 2018-2019 school years revealed **an 18% increase in the likelihood of lifetime marijuana use and a 23% increase in past 30-day usage since California legalized marijuana.** Nevada and Oregon saw similar trends: once legalized, youth marijuana usage significantly increased when analyzing data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

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%.

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 pre-morbid condition.

Lastly, the argument that marijuana will be a significant revenue generator is false. The director of the Division of Budget himself told press that the initial estimates of hundreds of millions of dollars would not be realized. In California, marijuana revenue was 92% LESS than expected.

The anticipated costs associated with legalization far outweigh any revenue: increased health care and medical costs, increased law enforcement and court administration costs, increased substance use prevention and treatment costs, burden on school districts, burden on the economy and workplaces, and increased costs for mental health services.

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