



Letter to the Editor: Report to the people #76

by Philip W. Chapman
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Three Issues Proponents of Recreational Marijuana May Overlook

If the state passes recreational marijuana local governments must minimize harm.

Let's consider three issues.

1. **Marijuana is not safer than alcohol.** The percentage of adults age 21 and over who use marijuana in the U.S. is roughly between 10% and 13%, vs. 65% who use alcohol. Around 10-15% of drinkers have a substance use disorder, vs. 30% of marijuana users who have Cannabis Use Disorder. If people use marijuana to the extent they use alcohol, the damage will surpass the damage caused by alcohol. (Source: The Pinocchio Test; Parents Against Pot) When a Lie Travels describes why marijuana is not safer than alcohol.
2. **Black markets don't go away and crime increases.** Colorado Attorney General Cynthia Coffman stated: "The criminals are still selling on the black market....we have plenty of cartel activity in Colorado (and) illegal activity that has not decreased at all." (See: The Failed Promise of Legal Pot.) Worse — because marijuana can cause paranoia and psychosis, and those conditions are closely linked to violence — it appears to lead to an increase in violent crime. (Berensen: author of Tell Your Children)
3. **Marijuana Legalization is a Complex Social Justice Issue.** Youth pot use leads to dropping out of school and lower economic success. Pot businesses tend to locate in low income communities. States with legalized marijuana have the highest rates of homelessness. (Source: Parents Against Pot)

Local government should approach this issue carefully.

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