

The Marijuana Policy Initiative

We Change Minds About Marijuana Legalization



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A Caution on Medical Marijuana Legalization - The Thin End of the Wedge



“Medical” Marijuana is the thin end of the wedge for addiction as well as recreational legalization.

A version of the following letter was sent to us after its first draft was sent to Governor Dayton of Minnesota. It is as applicable as precautionary tale for Florida, Alaska, and any other state considering legalization of marijuana in any form.

Dear Governor Dayton — The marijuana backlash is coming. Don't get caught on the wrong side of history.

I'm a lifelong Democrat and voted for President Obama twice. But this issue is complex. People across the country are organizing in a grassroots response.

Please learn more at: www.marijuana-policy.org

I am reaching out from Massachusetts, which failed to defeat a medicinal marijuana ballot question in 2012 when \$1,000,000 was poured into the campaign by [marijuana industry billionaire enthusiasts](#).

The marijuana industry succeeded in dominating regulatory development in MA as well, and the application process for certified dispensaries is in a shambles, with influence peddling and pay-to-play activities which have derailed the award of any licenses to date.

The reality is that 95% of users who frequent “medical” marijuana stores are simply individuals with vague unverifiable symptoms of “pain”, or “intractable pain” or “chronic pain”. We note in your state you have attempted to restrict its use to certain conditions but have left the door open to “pain”. That is the thin-end of the wedge. The pot lobby will drive it home until you too are dealing with epidemic of abuse experienced in the other pot states. And yes, you tried to limit it to oils for [vaporizing](#), but oils are put into marijuana candies, soda, baked goods. Did you think that would keep it out of the hands of kids? And what about [edibles—two deaths](#) in Colorado should give you pause.

And who is growing the marijuana? And how much? And who will be inspecting and enforcing production limits. And who will be [rendering the oil](#) from it? Its simply not manageable, or containable. The impulse to abuse this drug is too high. The result: we end up with a large illicit supply and rising youth use rates. Medical marijuana states have the [highest rates of youth use in the nation](#). Massachusetts is ranked #3 for youth use. Minnesota was in the bottom half of that list in 2011. **We don’t want you to join us at the top of the list** for use of pot by 12-17-year-olds. The developing brain is most easily hijacked for addiction. As marijuana availability increases, and perception of harm decreases, more kids use.

The medical research on [high-THC marijuana](#) exposure is rolling in. Even casual youth use causes structural changes in the brain and increases the risk of [progressive addiction](#).

We are in the midst of a [heroin crisis](#). Massachusetts has had over 200 heroin deaths so far this year. One Burlington, VT, hospital handled [9 heroin overdoses on a single day](#) in April. (**Vermont also has the highest rate of youth use of pot in the country.**) We now have support groups for parents of young addicts, called [“Learn To Cope”](#) who tell us that over 90% of their addicted children began their journey into addiction to illicit drugs with potent 21st Century marijuana.

Please **use extreme caution** and do not underestimate the tactics of the newly enriched and emboldened [marijuana lobby](#).

-They are sophisticated.

- They twist science to avoid addressing harms.
- They play on the sympathies of decent and unsuspecting people.
- They cloud the facts about this drug and its negative impacts on kids, adults, families and communities.
- They say this is for adults, but social boundaries are permeable. Where there is more pot, more kids are using.

The marijuana lobby is picking off states one-by-one in an effort to legalize marijuana and open the market to this drug. No legitimate medical association in country endorses marijuana as medicine.

The [marijuana backlash](#) is coming. This is not about medicine. Medicine belongs in a pharmacy under lock and key. FDA-approved cannabis derived medicines are already available there, and more safe formulations should be developed – especially with the non-intoxicating cannabidiol with promise for use in treating seizures. But these medical marijuana laws are not about human suffering. Though their campaigns use suffering people as pawns in the game. This is about selling marijuana. And this is about legalizing marijuana. The People will soon realize that they have been duped. This is all about money and profiting from addiction. Don't get caught on the wrong side of history.

Marijuana is using the same [playbook as Tobacco](#) did in the 20th Century. The casualties of the tobacco epidemic were catastrophic. And 21st century science shows that it is mental health that will be compromised with increasingly potent 21st Century marijuana, in addition to its physical toll.

I trust you will protect the people of Minnesota from the manipulations of this increasingly powerful drug promoting industry. The coming generation deserves your vigilance on this issue.

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