



Observations from:

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Please find attached commentary on the Marijuana legalization question in Massachusetts. The Campaign to Regulate Marijuana like Alcohol in Massachusetts has it all wrong!!!

I am expressing why legalizing marijuana is bad for Massachusetts. I encourage everyone to become familiar with these **7 myths**. Please pass this information on to keep our communities safe from Marijuana legalization. What follows is my own experience and perspective on marijuana legalization.

**Myth 1: Marijuana is Harmless and Non-addictive:**

I've addressed this in many of my classes. Marijuana in the 1980's and early 90s averaged just 4 percent THC. A number of samples now range more than 20 percent THC. Back in the 80s and 90s people usually smoked a joint, which contains .25 grams of marijuana.

Now everyone smokes a blunt (a marijuana-rolled cigar), which is averaging close to a 1 full gram of marijuana. Smoking one blunt today, at 20 percent THC, is like smoking 16 old-school joints. It's like going from one light beer to a dozen shots of vodka.

"Marijuana is not as addictive as drugs like tobacco or heroin, but its addiction rate is one in every eleven adults who have ever tried it — or one in six adolescents who have ever used it — should give us pause."

**Myth 2: Eliminate Black Market:** Legalization does not reduce the black market, it worsens it. There is a regulated retail market which is taxed and overseen and an unregulated market that avoids the retail-taxes by the state. Since cultivation processing is allowed, (independent of the retail market), the black market becomes a gray market for people who choose the use of legalization to shield them from the breaking the law. The black market focuses on circumventing the taxed system. Legal marijuana in

Colorado and Washington have been distributed to every other state in the country, including the alleged protected adolescents.

**Myth 3: Countless People are Behind Bars Simply for Smoking Marijuana:**

No one is in jail for possession of pot in Massachusetts. Not now, not ten years ago. UNLESS: It was multiple offenses, concurrent with other crimes, past history, probation violations. The data shown on arrests is extremely flawed because law enforcement does not differentiate factors such as arrests being incidental to other charges such as arrest was for operating with a suspended license and marijuana was discovered during search, if there were multiple drugs during arrest, what the arrestees criminal history was, if the arrest was for a warrant and found drugs in car. If people are concerned with arrest, they should know that Denver PD arrests have increased significantly because no one possesses, cultivates or follows law to not sell marijuana so it has generated more arrests. In reality it should focus on socio-economic status to provide a better picture.

**Myth 4: The Legality of Alcohol and Tobacco Strengthen the Case for Legal Marijuana:**

Alcohol kills 100,000 people annually and tobacco kills another 500,000 people every year. These two legal drugs are the biggest contributors to healthcare costs in this country.

In many respects, because of its prevalence, alcohol is far worse than any of our currently illegal drugs, including crack. For example, alcohol causes much more violence and murder in our society than any other drug.

**Myth 5: Legal Marijuana will Solve the Government's Budgetary Problems:**

Society gains about 15 to 20 billion dollars a year from the taxes imposed on alcohol, while it loses over 200 billion dollars a year in healthcare, criminal justice and other costs directly related to alcohol use and abuse. That's a ratio of 10 to 1 (or higher) of costs to revenue. Tobacco is hardly better. The \$25 billion collected in tobacco taxes, doesn't even come close to offsetting the more than \$200 billion in lost social costs from tobacco use.

**Myth 6: Accept the inevitable:** Should we accept that legalization will happen and therefore try to make best policy we can? If legalization is allowed in our state, it will allow the cultivation of marijuana on privately owned property. We will never be able to determine how much is grown or sold. How much of this cultivated marijuana winds up on the black market, never to be taxed and gets into the hands of under 21 year olds?

**Myth 7: Control Marijuana Infused Products:** Marijuana Infused Products came with Medical Marijuana, but most common citizens don't realize it yet. Less people are "smoking" weed and are now using concentrates, oils, shatter, dabs (90 % THC), and Marijuana Infused Products. We cannot control Marijuana Infused Products as the THC levels vary in these products, as well as the effects on the individual who is using it.

I am concerned about the path society is taking toward the legalization of drugs and we surely must educate ourselves. If you think marijuana legalization a good idea I suspect you may change your mind after seeing what is going on in Colorado. Here in Massachusetts, we haven't (even) fully implemented medical marijuana. We are still trying to eliminate cigarette smoking and now want to allow smoking joints? With all the problems we are facing with the current opiate crisis, it seems foolish to rush into such legalization.



## **Key Message Points**

### **Overall frame**

*This isn't about being able to smoke a joint. Question 4 is about creating a billion-dollar commercial industry in Massachusetts to promote and sell this drug, including the dangerous edibles market that's a particular risk for kids.*

### **Tier One Issues**

#### **Edibles**

*Question 4 would authorize the promotion and sale of highly potent marijuana edibles, including candy, cookies and soda that are a particular risk for ingestion for kids and pets. Edibles like these account for nearly half of all marijuana sold in Colorado.*

#### **Additional Facts**

- There is no limit on the potency of edible products in Colorado, nor are limits written into the proposed law in Massachusetts.
- Edible products have been known to have THC levels reaching as high as 95%, compared to THC in current marijuana plants that average 17-18% THC.
- Doctors at Children's Hospital Denver reported that, after legalization, the ER began treating one to two kids a month for accidental marijuana ingestion. Prior to legalization, they reported none.

#### **Impaired Driving**

*Question 4 would increase the problem of drugged driving in Massachusetts. The number of traffic deaths due to marijuana impaired drivers doubled in the year after Washington state legalized. It's also difficult to detect or punish drugged drivers because there's no Breathalyzer test for marijuana.*

### **Tier Two Issues**

#### **Home grow**

*Question 4 authorizes people to grow thousands of dollars worth of marijuana plants at their homes, even over the objection of neighbors. In Colorado, this has created an entirely new black market where criminals are coming into the state to grow marijuana and sell it illegally out of state or via Craigslist.*

#### **Teen Use**

*Since becoming the first state to legalize, Colorado has also become the number one state in the nation for teen marijuana use. Use by teens jumped by over twelve percent in the two years since Colorado legalized, and we can expect an increase in teen use in Massachusetts as well.*

#### **Impact on local communities**

*Question 4 sets no limits on the number of marijuana producers and sellers that could open in Massachusetts. In Colorado, there are already more pot shops than the number of McDonalds and Starbucks combined.*

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## IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

No matter what we think philosophically about the idea of legalizing pot, the MA proposal we vote on in November would be a very bad law for the people of the Commonwealth. It was written by the marijuana industry and would be a law that protects **ONLY** the marijuana industry. Because of the way the law is written and what's in the law itself, this is not something that can be "fixed" at the state house if this passes.

**SETS NO** limits on potency

**SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZES** marijuana edibles (products like candy bars, gummy bears, "cannabis cola," etc.), oils and concentrates

**SEVERELY** limits municipalities' (and the state's) ability to limit the nature and presence of the marijuana industry in their communities.

**BARS** communities from restricting "home grows."

**GUARANTEES PREFERENTIAL LICENSING** for existing industry insiders

**SETS** tax rate very low, meaning little or no net revenue benefit

**HAS NO** protections against drugged driving

**NO** provisions for data collection and research

**SETS NO LIMIT** on the number of stores that can sell marijuana statewide or number of operations to grow or manufacture marijuana and marijuana products.

**PROHIBITS** communities from enacting meaningful numerical caps on the number of marijuana stores (or types of marijuana businesses) except if explicitly authorized by special city/town referendum.

**MANDATES** that communities must allow retail marijuana stores to open in any "area" that already has a medical marijuana dispensary.

**GRANTS** existing medical marijuana facilities the right to enter the recreational market at the same location—i.e. morph their dispensary into a "pot shop."

**BARS** communities from restricting "home grows."

**PROHIBITS** host community agreements that require marijuana businesses to pay anything over and above whatever costs are directly attributable to their operation.

**INCLUDES LEGAL LOOPHOLE** for the marijuana industry to challenge and potentially invalidate any state or local rule deemed "unreasonably impracticable."