

Overall Talking Points

- The move to legalize marijuana is really a move to commercialize marijuana for profit. It is today's version of Big Tobacco, and it should be discouraged.
- We are moving way too fast to legalize in this country without taking into account the costs of such a policy. We need to slow down. The only people who benefit from a rush to legalize are a small number of investors.
- Today's marijuana is much more potent than in the past – with pot edibles, candies, cookies, ice creams, and waxes being up to 99% THC. Compare that to 5% Woodstock Weed.
- More minority kids are being arrested in Colorado for pot since legalization, and car crashes related to marijuana, young adult use, and workplace positives are skyrocketing in legal states.
- We do not need to legalize in order to reform the criminal justice system. We can remove criminal penalties, expunge records, and offer justice without commercializing today's highly pure THC pot products.
- The marijuana industry is seeing increased investment from existing giants of addiction. Altria, the parent company of Phillip Morris, recently invested more than \$2 billion into the industry, and has secured a minority ownership into Juul – the vaping giant – in a move to cement future stakes in the industry.

Health Harms and Addiction

- **More stoned people do not help society.** According to the [National Institutes of Health](#)¹, [Mayo Clinic](#)², the [Cleveland Clinic](#)³, and [World Health Organization](#)⁴, marijuana is addictive, and can produce withdrawal and dependence. Today's marijuana is much more potent than in the past.
- **Brain Changes:** [The NIH states that](#) regular marijuana use can reduce IQ by 8 points and may be irreversible; it also impairs memory and learning.⁵
- **Marijuana can be a pathway to other drugs of abuse:** [Four out of every ten](#) lifetime marijuana users will go on to use another drug in their lifetime.⁶ According to the [American Journal of Psychiatry](#), “cannabis use, even among adults with moderate to severe pain, was associated with a substantially increased risk of nonmedical prescription opioid use.”⁷ Studies in Europe have found that “adolescent THC exposure in rats seemed to affect the rodents’ brain maturation, as they subsequently displayed “heroin-seeking” behavior.⁸

Legalization

- According to the Department of Health and Human Services, **Colorado holds the top ranking for first time marijuana use among youth in the country** (This is the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, the only population wide, national drug survey for all Americans 12 and older.)⁹ Other studies showing no increase are not representative of the whole state.
- The top states for marijuana use in the US all have relaxed laws.
- Young adult use has been skyrocketing, especially in legal states.¹⁰
- Marijuana-related ER visits by Colorado teens on the rise since legalization.¹¹
- Studies have shown mental illness is on the rise in legal states.¹²
- AAA has reported that fatalities among people who have recently used marijuana have doubled since legalization in Washington State.¹³

Social Justice

- African Americans are twice as likely to be arrested for marijuana in Colorado and Washington, both states that have legalized recreational use and sales.¹⁴
- In Colorado, between 2012 and 2014, the percentage of Hispanic and African-American arrests for teens under 18 years old increased 29% and 58%, respectively while white youth decreased in arrests by 8%.¹⁵

Colorado

- 70% of CO dispensaries are recommending THC products to pregnant mothers for nausea.¹⁶
- The crime rate in Colorado has increased 11 times faster than the rest of the nation since legalization. with the Colorado Bureau of Investigation reporting an 8.3% increase in property crimes and 18.6% increase in violent crimes.¹⁷

Drugged Driving

- In Colorado and Washington State, marijuana-impaired driving fatalities have more than doubled.¹⁸
- One in five drivers in Washington State are under the influence of marijuana, up from one in 10 prior to legalization.¹⁹

- A recent [study](#) by the Colorado Division of criminal Justice found of the 4,000 drivers tested for marijuana in 2016, 73 percent were found to have the drug in their system.²⁰

Black Market

- In 2016 alone, Colorado law enforcement confiscated 7,116 pounds of marijuana, carried out 252 felony arrests, and made 346 highway interdictions of marijuana headed to 36 different U.S. states (RMHIDTA, 2017).²¹
- A leaked police report in Oregon revealed that at least 70% of marijuana sales in 2016 were on the black market and around three to five times the amount of marijuana consumed in Oregon leaves the state for illegal sales (Hughes, 2017; Associated Press, 2017, August 14; OSPDES, 2017).²²

Opioids

- A large 2018 *Lancet* study found marijuana users were less likely than non-users to report pain reduction, and did not use opioids less.²³
- Marijuana more than doubles the risk of developing opioid use disorder or initiating nonmedical prescription opioid use.²⁴

Workplace:

- Marijuana positivity rates are up in legalized states, which is a risk for employers and the public. As of 2018, positivity rates are up 48% in Nevada, 14% in Massachusetts, and 11% in California.²⁵
- In the general workforce, marijuana positivity increased 4% from 2017 while it increased nearly 8% in the safety-sensitive workforce.²⁶

¹ See NIDA. (2018, June 25). Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana> on 2018, July 2.

² See Irons, B. M.D., Mayo Clinic. (2015, Feb. 19). Speaking of Health. Retrieved from <https://mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/the-problem-with-kids-and-cannabis> on 2018, July 2 and Mayo Clinic Staff. (2017, Oct. 24). Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements-marijuana/art-20364974> on 2018, July 2.

³ See Cleveland Clinic. (2014, July 29). Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/4392-marijuana> on 2018, July 2

⁴ See World Health Organization. (2016). The Health and Social Effects of Nonmedical Cannabis Use. Retrieved from <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/251056/9789241510240-eng.pdf;jsessionid=3EBC6F1B98621EB7690654FDFB631BEB?sequence=1> on 2018, July 2.

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- ⁵ See NIDA. (2018, June 25). Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana> on 2018, July 2.
- ⁶ See Secades-Villa, R., Garcia-Rodriguez, O., Jin, C.J., Wang S., & Blanco, C. (2014, Aug. 2). Probability and Predictors of the Cannabis Gateway Effect: A National Study. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25168081> on 2018, July 2.
- ⁷ See Olfson, M., Wall, M.M., Liu, S.M., Blanco, C. (2017, Sept. 26). Cannabis Use and Risk of Prescription Opioid Use Disorder in the United States. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28946762> on 2018, July 2.
- ⁸ See Serena Stopponi et al., *Chronic THC During Adolescence Increases the Vulnerability to Stress-Induced Relapse to Heroin Seeking in Adult Rats*, 24 EUR. NEUROPSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY 1037, 1038 (2014).
- ⁹ See Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2017). 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Rockville, MD.
- ¹⁰ See Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2017). 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Rockville, MD.
- ¹¹ See <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-marijuana-kids/marijuana-related-er-visits-by-colorado-teens-on-the-rise-idUSKBN1HO38A>
- ¹² See <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09540261.2018.1467385>
- ¹³ See Johnson, T. (2016, May 10). Fatal Road Crashes Involving Marijuana Double After State Legalizes Drug. Retrieved from <https://newsroom.aaa.com/2016/05/fatal-road-crashes-involving-marijuana-double-state-legalizes-drug/> on 2018, July 2
- ¹⁴ See Smart Approaches to Marijuana. (2018 March). Lessons Learned from Marijuana Legalization in Four U.S. States and D.C. Retrieved from <https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SAM-Lessons-Learned-From-Marijuana-Legalization-Digital.pdf> on 2018, July 2.
- ¹⁵ See Colorado Department of Public Safety. (2016). Marijuana legalization in Colorado: Early findings. Retrieved from <https://cdpsdocs.state.co.us/ors/docs/reports/2016-SB13-283-Rpt.pdf> on 2018, Feb. 3.
- ¹⁶ See Smart Approaches to Marijuana. (2018 March). Lessons Learned from Marijuana Legalization in Four U.S. States and D.C. Retrieved from <https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SAM-Lessons-Learned-From-Marijuana-Legalization-Digital.pdf> on 2018, July 2.
- ¹⁷ See Mitchell, K. (2017, July 11). Crime rate in Colorado increases much faster than rest of the country. Denver Post. Retrieved from <https://www.denverpost.com/2017/07/11/colorado-sees-big-increase-crime-10-percent-higher-murder-rate/> on 2018, Feb. 3 and Colorado Bureau of Investigation. (2017). National Uniform Crime Reports. Retrieved from <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cbi/crime-colorado1> on 2018, 2018 Feb. 3.
- ¹⁸ See Highway Loss Data Institute. (2017, August 3). Studies link legalized use of recreational marijuana with increase in crashes. Status Report, 52(5). Retrieved from <http://www.iihs.org/iihs/sr/statusreport/article/52/5/3> on 2018, Feb. 3. And Washington Traffic Safety Commission. (2016). Driver toxicology testing and the involvement of marijuana in fatal crashes, 2010–2014. Olympia, WA: Author. Retrieved from http://wtsc.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2015/10/Driver-ToxicologyTesting-and-the-Involvement-of-Marijuana-in-Fatal-Crashes_REVFeb2016.pdf on 2018, Feb. 3.
- ¹⁹ See Smart Approaches to Marijuana. (2018 March). Lessons Learned from Marijuana Legalization in Four U.S. States and D.C. Retrieved from <https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SAM-Lessons-Learned-From-Marijuana-Legalization-Digital.pdf> on 2018, July 2.
- ²⁰ See <https://www.denverpost.com/2018/08/09/driving-while-high-colorado/>
- ²¹ See Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area. (2017). The legalization of marijuana in Colorado: The impact. Retrieved from <http://www.rmhidta.org/html/FINAL%202017%20Legalization%20of%20Marijuana%20in%20Colorado%20The%20Impact.pdf> on 2018, Feb. 3.
- ²² See Hughes, T. (2017, July 31). Marijuana’s legalization fuels black market in other states. USA Today. Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2017/07/31/marijuana-black-market/507417001/> on 2018, Feb. 3, Associated Press. (2017, August 14). Marijuana-legal states struggle with black-market weed. Los Angeles Daily News. Retrieved from <https://www.dailynews.com/2017/08/14/marijuana-legal-states-struggle-with-black-market-weed/> on 2018, Feb. 3, and Oregon State Police-Drug Enforcement Section. (2017). A baseline evaluation of cannabis enforcement priorities in Oregon. Retrieved from <https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Oregon-State-Police-reportJanuary-2017.pdf> on 2018, Feb 3.
- ²³ See [https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanpub/PIIS2468-2667\(18\)30110-5.pdf](https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanpub/PIIS2468-2667(18)30110-5.pdf)

²⁴ See NIDA. (2017, Sept. 26). Marijuana Use is Associated with an increased Risk of Prescription Opioid Misuse and use Disorders. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/news-events/news-releases/2017/09/marijuana-use-associated-increased-risk-prescription-opioid-misuse-use-disorders> on 2018, July 2.

²⁵ See Quest Diagnostics. (2015, June 9) Illicit Drug Positivity Rate Increases Sharply in Workplace Testing, Finds Quest Diagnostics Drug Testing Index™ Analysis. Retrieved from <http://newsroom.questdiagnostics.com/2015-06-09-Illicit-Drug-Positivity-Rate-Increases-Sharply-in-Workplace-Testing-Finds-Quest-Diagnostics-Drug-Testing-Index-Analysis> on 2018, July 2.

²⁶ See Jupe, N. (2018 May 8) Quest Diagnostics Employer Solutions Blog. Retrieved from <https://blog.employersolutions.com/drug-testing-index-workforce-drug-positivity-at-highest-rate-in-a-decade/> on 2018, July 2.