

Senators Prozanski, Hayward & Steiner,

I am writing to ask that you please reconsider your efforts to allow marijuana use in pot lounges and tasting events.

Given the fact that Oregon currently has one of the highest rates of DUIs in the country, do you seriously think that by permitting people to get high outside their homes that this number won't see a dramatic increase in years to come?

Are you aware that many individuals who use pot also use alcohol? How many more innocent victims in Oregon need to die unnecessarily because of the distracted, reckless, driving of those who are under the influence of drugs and alcohol?

Did you know that Oregon insurers are planning to increase insurance rates for **all** drivers because of the increased number of driving accidents that were caused by marijuana use?

<https://www.iihs.org/iihs/news/desktopnews/crashes-rise-in-first-states-to-begin-legalized-retail-sales-of-recreational-marijuana>

Why should those who do not use marijuana have to pay more for their car insurance? Does the state of Oregon plan to use some of the marijuana tax revenue it receives to send refunds to those of us who do not use pot? I'm guessing the answer to that question is a resounding no.

Measure 91 called for legalization of marijuana for personal use and for individuals to have the right to grow a few plants without fear of prosecution. Ironically, those who have been the most negatively impacted by Measure 91, Oregon's rural residents, did not vote for the bill. Now you are proposing yet another "emergency" bill, SB 639, which will undoubtedly add yet another undesirable and dangerous element to our rural communities.

Oregon already has many individuals who are struggling with opioid addiction, do you seriously think promoting marijuana use is the way to go? Is it possible that 10 years from now the state could find itself dealing with another major problem, that of marijuana addiction?

It has clearly been the goal of many Oregon senators to wholeheartedly embrace all things marijuana, without a thought to any of the harmful, long term, negative consequences for the general public. The promise of new tax revenue and generous campaign donations has seen our elected officials shamelessly buying all that marijuana is selling, with zero interest in examining the "impartial" facts.

Other states have been very successful in creating new tax revenue by encouraging companies to set up operations that provide living wage jobs. Oregon on the other hand continues make itself unattractive to large corporations, instead preferring to focus on the low-hanging fruit of marijuana.

I think it's fair to say that many voters today are extremely skeptical of politicians and their lack of principles, double standards and unwillingness to do the job of serving the good of the citizens they are supposed to serve. Too many times we taxpayers, who fund your very generous salaries and pensions, are sold out time and time again for yet another special interest group. SB 639 is yet another example of the good of the people being sacrificed for the profit of a few.

Consider the fate of the town of Durango, a picturesque tourist spot that is now forced to deal with the fallout of Colorado's push to legalize marijuana. Now frequented by homeless, hard core regular users, unemployable husks of humans begging in shop doorways, deterring visitors and customers alike. These individuals often started using pot as kids and suffer from wrecked schooling, later in broken, hopeless lives, a grief to their families and a charge on the state. The victims of marijuana seldom die (though they increasingly frequently kill others, in car crashes and violent crime).

It is not long ago since people seriously tried to pretend that cigarettes were safe. Most of them were motivated by greed, and by fear that the truth would destroy their profits. Everyone now agrees that cigarettes cause lung cancer and many other diseases. But we forget the struggle that doctors and scientists had to fight against Big Tobacco to get this accepted.

Our society, learning nothing from the tobacco disaster, has for years been appallingly complacent about the dangers of marijuana, whose effect on the brains and minds of its users can be utterly devastating. Knowledge of its dangers does not show up in statistics due to the powerful influence of the billionaire "Big Dope" lobby and its well-oiled propaganda machine.

Our politicians it seems see vistas of easy money, in profits and in taxes. They are frantically anxious not to see that this drug is associated in major studies (notably the Swedish Army and Dunedin studies) with severe mental illness, and with violent crime and (increasingly) with terrible deaths on the roads. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5042048>

40 years ago, in an interview with an American university newspaper, The Emory Wheel, published on February 6, 1979, Keith Stroup, one of the most avid campaigners for marijuana legalization, rashly revealed the truth about 'medicinal cannabis'.

He said: 'We are trying to get marijuana reclassified medically. If we do that (we'll do it in at least 20 states this year for chemotherapy patents), we'll be using the issue as a red herring to give marijuana a good name.'

<http://nebula.wsimg.com/877af25bdfaf8c3d7ea820534bade713?AccessKeyId=EEB98E648E3097DCA50D&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>

It was true then. It is true now. 'Medical cannabis' is just slick PR and its promoters know it.

Stop listening to those who claim anyone who objects to marijuana use is just another prohibitionist. Don't take my word for it, do your own research, but please start considering the welfare and interests of those you were elected to serve, not just the bidding of the marijuana industry.

Your support of SB 639 will inevitably lead to the death of more innocent victims in Oregon. Can you live with that?

Thank you.

Paula Hawes

Oregon Resident