

Mayor's Report on Recreational Marijuana 11/2/2015

I recently attended a presentation on what is called the CRMLA initiative (Campaign to Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol) which featured speakers from both Matforce and Arizonans for Responsible Drug Policy. Since the decriminalization of marijuana will probably be on the ballot in the near future, it is extremely important that Arizona's citizens get involved, get educated- and above all, vote.

I need to say at the outset that I am against the legalization of recreational marijuana because I believe that the legal, economic and cultural impacts will be devastating to our state. In most issues, there are a number of pros and cons to weigh in the decision making process- but when it comes to recreational marijuana usage the negatives outweigh the positives by far.

When a mind-altering drug is approved for public consumption, there needs to be some means of measuring the residual effects in order to ensure public safety. Just as airplane pilots are regulated in regards to elapsed time "from the bottle to the throttle", there needs to be a means of ensuring that those operating machinery and driving equipment pose no threat to those around them. Workplace accidents, employment issues, and increased insurance costs can all become unintended consequences of legalization if we are not careful.

Perhaps the most measurable outcome is that of economic impact to the state: while proponents tout the increased tax revenues, nothing is said about the increased costs of incarceration due to impaired driving, loss of productivity in the workplace, costs of treatment, and emergency room costs due to accidental ingestion. A good example of this is the liquor industry: the 79 million dollars that Arizona receives in tax revenue pales in comparison to the billion dollar cost of treatment reported by the Department of Health Services alone.

The greatest threat to Arizonans, though, is that of a cultural nature. Preliminary data shows a 7 to 8 point drop in I.Q. for long term users, and high school students who engage in daily use have been shown to be 60% less likely to graduate. A nation which is "numb and dumb" is easy prey for those who would impose tyranny upon them, and you can rest assured we have plenty of those. According to George Washington, our Constitutional form of government cannot survive without a moral and informed populace. We have lost enough of our freedoms already- it would be a shame to sell the rest of them for a plate of brownies.

Chris Marley, Mayor of Chino Valley