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Weeding Out Marijuana

THE HIGH COST OF A POT HIGH

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For almost 50 years at a cost of over \$1 trillion, America led the world's effort to combat illicit drugs. Tragically, we have forsaken that role to become a rogue nation in violation of three international treaties that require the criminalization of possession and production of cannabis/marijuana. Nine states and Washington, D.C. have legalized the recreational use of marijuana. California alone has over 50,000 outdoor cultivation sites that produce marijuana under the guise of medicine, while supplying over 60 percent of the entire U.S. marijuana black market, more than all the drug cartels combined.

Credit for this atrocity goes primarily to former President Barack Obama, who for eight years catered to George Soros by simply refusing to enforce federal laws. During that period, marijuana use increased roughly 50 percent from 15 to 23 million people, as Soros's net worth went from \$7 to \$27.3 billion.

Due to competition from home grown marijuana, the Mexican drug cartels shifted to heroin and overdose deaths increased from about 105 to 175 people a day. Overdose is not the only cause of death nor the only adverse consequence of drug abuse. The vast majority of abusers started their

drug journey with marijuana and the human, environmental, and economic costs are astronomical.

The Human Harms

Unlike alcohol or other drugs, marijuana is a fat-soluble toxin that remains in the body and brain for a month, compounding with each additional use. It was a harmful drug 50 years ago when the potency, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), was only 1/2 to 2 percent. Today the THC content ranges from about 25 percent in smoked form, to concentrates used in dabbing and vaping that range from about 50 to 99 percent, and the harms escalate accordingly.

Dabbing is inhaling the vapors from a concentrated form of marijuana made by an extraction method that uses butane gas. Dabs, also known as butane hash oil — which are sometimes called “budder,” “honeycomb” or “earwax” — are more potent than

conventional forms of marijuana because of the much higher concentrations of THC.

Vaping is the heating of cannabis without burning the leaves. The heat releases the active ingredients into a vapor that is then released into the air in a fine mist created by a vaporizer device. Since combustion does not occur, smoke is not created.



Marijuana can cause physical and structural changes to the developing brain for anyone under age 25 or even up to 30 years. Marijuana can shrink the hippocampus, which is the learning, memory, and cognition center of the brain. The

consequences are loss of IQ by as much as 8 points. It can cause psychotic breaks that lead to gruesome acts of violence, mass murders, and suicides. Marijuana elevates the chances of mental illness five times and suicide seven times. Seventeen percent of adolescents and nine percent of those 18 or older

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will become addicted. Marijuana can cause DNA damage that can cause birth abnormalities and neurological damage to the next four generations. Traffic deaths from marijuana impairment have doubled in states that have legalized marijuana for any use.

It does not bode well for the future of our country that 38 percent of college students consume cannabis, many of whom will become impaired, mentally ill, addicted, dependent on public support, incarcerated or headed to an early grave.

The Environmental Damage

Marijuana is a thirsty plant consuming 6 to 8 gallons of water per day during growing season. The 50,000 grow sites in California have drained streams and destroyed pristine eco systems. The plant's associated poisons, pesticides and fertilizers are killing massive amounts of wildlife, including the environmentally protected spotted owl that famously shut down the entire lumber industry. Sickeningly, lab tests have revealed that 93 percent of that marijuana is tainted with dangerous pesticides. One of the insecticides frequently used is carbofuron, which is banned in the U.S. since 1/8 teaspoon is sufficient to bring down a 300-pound bear! Cleaning up these sites requires hazmat gear and a labor force the size of the National Guard. The Mexican drug cartels are using our national forests as marijuana plantations that they guard with weapons making the forests no longer safe for people to enjoy.

In Calaveras County, California, 1,200 grow sites have devastated the land with toxins that seep into the soil threatening the watershed, which supplies 3.5 million people (www.silentpoison.com). The estimated cost of reclamation is as high as \$2 billion just for Calaveras County. Costs for the state could exceed \$50 billion.

The Economic Cost

Marijuana is the most frequently used illicit drug and gateway to all others. This drug use impacts law enforcement, physical health, mental illness, homelessness, education, welfare, and traffic accidents and could approach \$1.8 trillion per annum. Former President Reagan's "War on Drugs" reduced drug use by 50 percent, according to a study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The study revealed that in 1999, 14.8 million Americans used illicit drugs, while in 1979, there were 25 million users. Lowering drug use can save thousands of lives.

The Democratic Party's platform calls for a "reasoned pathway to future legalization" of marijuana, while the Republican platform is silent. Many Millennials favor legalization because they have been fed lies and propaganda for 20 years and do not know the harmful effects of legalizing marijuana. Many libertarians want freedom on the flawed premise that one can consume marijuana without having an adverse impact on others.

To make America great again, we need strong leaders with the knowledge, wisdom, and courage to stand against billionaires with evil intent, corrupt politicians, and the heavily financed illicit drug trade. Only the federal government has the resources to stop the societal chaos brought about by marijuana legalization. It is time to put the right people in place to get it done. Our future depends on it. 

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Last January, U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions rescinded former President Obama's guidance documents that many interpreted as allowing states to legalize marijuana with minimal federal interference. In fact, marijuana remains illegal and is classified as a schedule 1 drug under the federal Controlled Substances Act of 1970, the strictest category and with criminal penalties attached.

The Obama administration took a soft approach to marijuana, essentially letting states legalize it as long as they met certain criteria, even though research suggests that marijuana legalization could lead to more use. Washington state was the first to legalize marijuana for recreational purposes in 2012, followed by eight more states and Washington, D.C.: Oregon, California, Nevada, Colorado, Alaska, Maine, Vermont, and Massachusetts. Thirteen states have decriminalized, but not legalized, marijuana. Twenty-nine states have legalized it for medical purposes.

The Sessions memo revokes an earlier memo issued by former Deputy Attorney General James Cole. The Cole memo prevented the Drug Enforcement Agency from enforcing federal marijuana laws in states where the drug was legalized for recreational use and/or medical use. It stymied the DEA's ability to target marijuana traffickers who were able to exploit state law to manufacture and distribute marijuana.

Mr. Sessions explained that his new memo "simply directs all U.S. Attorneys to use previously established prosecutorial principles that provide them all the necessary tools to disrupt criminal organizations, tackle the growing drug crisis, and thwart violent crime across our country."

