

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."

