TAKE BACK AMERICA
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DO YOU KNOW MARIJUANA...

... is a fat soluble, mind altering, highly toxic drug that remains in the body for up to one month, building up with each additional joint. The two organs most affected are the brain and sexual organs. The potency of the most active chemical, delta 9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), is 10-20 times stronger than 30 years ago.

MARIJUANA IS NOT MEDICINE. The FDA, which must approve all medicines, has reviewed scientific studies of marijuana for over 50 years and concludes it is not a safe or effective medicine, has the potential for harm and is addictive. It cannot be legally prescribed by any doctor. National medical associations for cancer, glaucoma, multiple sclerosis and others oppose using marijuana as a medicine, other than synthetic marijuana called Marinol, which is FDA approved and available in pill form.

CAN CAUSE PERMANENT BRAIN DAMAGE by disrupting development of the brain. It reduces the amount of white matter by as much as 80%, and shrinks the hippocampus, the learning, cognition and memory center of the brain. This can create a loss of 8 points of IQ by age 38.[1] Marijuana is a major factor in the one-third high school dropout rate in America, and why America is 26th in the world academically. The brain isn't fully developed until the mid-twenties, so adolescent use is particularly damaging.

CAUSES HEALTH PROBLEMS INCLUDING CANCER of the head, nose and throat, and is a major cause of testicular cancer in young males.[2] It causes chronic bronchitis and respiratory problems, and elevates the risk of heart attack 4 times 1 hour after smoking.[3]

CAUSES MENTAL ILLNESS, CRIME AND VIOLENCE. Marijuana use exacerbates mental illness. In addition to observed links between marijuana use and mental illness,[4] marijuana affects brain systems that are still maturing through young adulthood, its use by teens has been associated with schizophrenia, paranoia and other psychosis leading to depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts.[5] Jared Loughner, the Tucson shooter, is one of many examples. ONDCP's ADAM II report indicates 52-87% of male arrestees test positive for drugs. 33% of prisoners are mentally ill.[6] Research in Canada showed 72.2% of all individuals who used cannabis and 81.8% of those with CUDs (Cannabis Use Disorders) had a mental illness.[7] Young people are 6 times more likely to develop psychosis, 3 times more likely to have hallucinations, and 4 times more likely to have delusions.

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Teens who smoke marijuana at least once a month are three times more likely to have suicidal thoughts than are non-users.[8] Side effects can appear years after smokers quit.[9] To prevent crime, one must prevent the onset of alcohol and drug use before it begins, on average at age 12 or 13.

CAN KILL OR PERMANENTLY HARM A FETUS. Today's high potency pot (20% plus) can cause fatal brain damage to a fetus only 2 weeks after conception, before the mother even knows she is pregnant. She can quit using pot, but it's too late for the baby. Research from forty years ago showed that marijuana with 1/2 to 2% THC caused a rise in still births from 12% normal to 44%. Many babies that survived child birth had physical deformities and brain damage that altered their behavior well into the teens.[10] Babies of mothers who smoked pot during pregnancy had an 11 fold increase in nonlumphobiastic leukemia. Behavioral problems exist in babies who were exposed to THC, including deficits in attention.[11]

CAUSES DNA DAMAGE. Marijuana causes more cellular damage than even heroin.[12] It also causes mutations to sperm and chromosomal abnormalities that can carry forward and affect future generations. It affects the pituitary gland, a pea size structure at the base of the brain, that is the control center for sex and reproductive hormones and in turn, sexual dysfunction.[13]

IS ADDICTIVE. Research tells us that 1 in 6 people who start using it (marijuana) as adolescents become addicted.[14] Currently about 35% of high school seniors smoke pot regularly, impervious to the harms. According to ONDCP, 17% of those under 18 will become addicted to it, 9% who start after 18 will become addicted, and many will move on to the hard drugs that kill 9000 Americans monthly by overdose (SAMHSA). 68-90% of those started their drug journey with marijuana. Teen "Heavy" marijuana use is up 80% since 2008.[15]

DOUBLES THE RISK OF TRAFFIC DEATHS. Of drivers in a Maryland Trauma Center, 27% of injured drivers tested positive for marijuana, second only to alcohol at 33%. 50% of drivers under 21 tested positive for pot, compared to 33% for alcohol.[16] Fat soluble THC marijuana will "…accumulate and persist in the brain, at its receptors, at higher levels[17] than can be predicted from blood levels." In California, driving deaths from marijuana impairment have doubled since 2004.[18]

SO WHY LEGALIZE MARIJUANA FOR ANY USE?

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SUPPORT THE MOVEMENT:

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ENDNOTES

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