



Overall Talking Points

- The move to legalize marijuana is really a move to commercialize marijuana for profit. It is today's version of Big Tobacco, and it should be discouraged.
- We are moving way too fast to legalize in this country without taking into account the costs of such a policy. We need to slow down. The only people who benefit from a rush to legalize are a small number of investors.
- Today's marijuana is much more potent than in the past – with pot edibles, candies, cookies, ice creams, and vaping oils being up to 99% THC. Compare that to 5% Woodstock Weed.
- More minority kids are being arrested in Colorado for pot since legalization, and car crashes related to marijuana, young adult use, and workplace positives are skyrocketing in legal states.
- We do not need to legalize in order to reform the criminal justice system. We can remove criminal penalties, expunge records, and offer justice without commercializing today's highly pure THC pot products.
- Marijuana legalization is not the tax revenue boon proponents claim it to be. Colorado still faces considerable issues with education systems being drastically underfunded and states with legal marijuana markets face a combined budget deficit this year of \$71 billion.
- The marijuana industry is seeing increased investment from existing giants of addiction. Altria, the parent company of Phillip Morris, recently invested more than \$2 billion into the industry and has secured a minority ownership into Juul – the vaping giant – in a move to cement future stakes in the industry.

Health Harms and Addiction

- More stoned people do not help society. According to the National Institutes of Health¹, Mayo Clinic², the Cleveland Clinic³, and World Health Organization⁴, marijuana is addictive, and can produce withdrawal and dependence. Today's marijuana is much more potent than in the past.
- *Brain Changes*: The NIH states that regular marijuana use can reduce IQ by 8 points and may be irreversible; it also impairs memory and learning.⁵
- Marijuana can be a pathway to other drugs of abuse: Four out of every ten lifetime marijuana users will go on to use another drug in their lifetime.⁶ According to the American Journal of Psychiatry, "cannabis use, even among adults with moderate to severe pain, was associated with a substantially increased risk of nonmedical prescription opioid use."⁷ Studies in Europe have found that "adolescent THC exposure

in rats seemed to affect the rodents' brain maturation, as they subsequently displayed "heroin-seeking" behavior.⁸

Legalization

- According to the Department of Health and Human Services, Colorado holds the top ranking for first time marijuana use among youth in the country (This is the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, the only population wide, national drug survey for all Americans 12 and older.)⁹ Other studies showing no increase are not representative of the whole state.
- The top states for marijuana use in the US all have relaxed laws.
- Young adult use has been skyrocketing, especially in legal states.¹⁰
- Marijuana-related ER visits by Colorado teens on the rise since legalization.¹¹
- Studies have shown mental illness is on the rise in legal states.¹²
- AAA has reported that fatalities among people who have recently used marijuana have doubled since legalization in Washington State.¹³

Budgets

- Tax revenue from marijuana accounts for less than one percent of state revenues where the drug is "legal."
- Even as marijuana markets grow, research shows tax revenue quickly tapers off (Pew Trusts, 2019).
- With the COVID-19 pandemic, states with "legal" marijuana markets have not been helped by marijuana revenues. The budget deficits in states with mature marijuana markets comprise a combined \$71B (CA, CO, NV, OR, WA). The tax revenues from marijuana barely combine for \$2.5B.
- It took upwards of five years for Colorado to bring in annual tax revenues of \$300 million, and it has not been consistent. No "legal" state has met its initial projections.
- In the discussions on the potential tax revenue, states must also consider the costs of legalization. Leading cost drivers continue to be law enforcement (combatting exploding underground markets), drugged driving deaths, car crashes, workforce issues, and mental and other health issues. One study in Colorado, conducted by the Centennial Institute, found with every dollar in marijuana tax revenue, \$4.50 must be spent to mitigate the costs.

Colorado

- 70% of CO dispensaries were found to be recommending THC products to pregnant mothers for nausea.¹⁶
- Past month marijuana use among 12 to 17 year-olds increased 4% in Colorado from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018. In non-legal states, past year and past month use rates are significantly lower than in the state of Colorado (NSDUH State Comparisons, 2019).
- In Colorado, only 15.9% of young people aged 12 to 17 years old perceive a great risk from using marijuana once a month, compared to a national rate of 23.6% (NSDUH State Comparisons, 2019).
- In 2017, 34% of high schoolers reported dabbing as the means of marijuana consumption. Dabbing marijuana delivers a far more potent high than smoked marijuana flower (Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, 2019).
- Marijuana, which can cause depression and suicidality, particularly in young users, was found in the toxicology screens of 200 suicide victims in the state in 2017, up from 83 in 2012 (Colorado Violent Death Reporting System, 2019).
- The crime rate in Colorado has increased 11 times faster than the rest of the nation since legalization. with the Colorado Bureau of Investigation reporting an 8.3% increase in property crimes and 18.6% increase in violent crimes.¹⁷

Drugged Driving

- Driving under the influence of marijuana is dangerous. Marijuana use impairs driving in a number of ways: by slowing reaction time, decreasing coordination, and impairing judgment of time and distance.
- Polysubstance use—using marijuana along with alcohol or another drug—increases the risk of a vehicle crash more than the drugs being used alone (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2019a). Nevertheless, marijuana-impaired driving is rising while the perception of its negative consequences is decreasing.
- In Colorado and Washington State, marijuana-impaired driving fatalities have more than doubled.¹⁸
- In 2018, marijuana-impaired drivers were implicated in 18.2% of traffic fatalities in the state of Colorado, marking a 109% increase since legalization was implemented (Colorado Department of Transportation, 2019).
- One in five drivers in Washington State are under the influence of marijuana, up from one in 10 prior to legalization.¹⁹

Black Market

- In 2016 alone, Colorado law enforcement confiscated 7,116 pounds of marijuana, carried out 252 felony arrests, and made 346 highway interdictions of marijuana headed to 36 different U.S. states (RMHIDTA, 2017).²¹
- A leaked police report in Oregon revealed that at least 70% of marijuana sales in 2016 were on the black market and around three to five times the amount of marijuana consumed in Oregon leaves the state for illegal sales (Hughes, 2017; Associated Press, 2017, August 14; OSPDES, 2017).²²
- In 2018, investigations into illicit marijuana operations in Colorado jumped to 257, up from 144 in 2017. 6.1 tons of bulk marijuana were seized in 2018 (Rocky Mountain HIDTA Colorado Task Forces, 2019).
- In early 2019, Colorado reported its largest drug bust yet, which yielded 80,000 illegal marijuana plants, and \$2.1 million in cash. 42 search warrants were served (US News, 2019).
- According to NBC News, the New York Times, and other media outlets, foreign cartels and criminal syndicates are using marijuana's legal status in Colorado and California as a cover for massive illicit growing operations on federal lands and in housing developments. California Governor Gavin Newsome recently called in the state's National Guard to help combat massive illegal farms in the state's northern territories.

Opioids

- A large 2018 *Lancet* study found marijuana users were less likely than non-users to report pain reduction and did not use opioids less.²³
- Marijuana more than doubles the risk of developing opioid use disorder or initiating nonmedical prescription opioid use.²⁴
- According to the National Academies of Science: "There is moderate evidence of a statistical association between cannabis use and the development of substance dependence and/or a substance abuse disorder for substances including alcohol, tobacco, and other illicit drugs."

Workplace:

- Marijuana positivity rates are up in legalized states, which is a risk for employers and the public. As of 2018, positivity rates are up 48% in Nevada, 14% in Massachusetts, and 11% in California.²⁵

Top Workforce Positivity Increases Since Legalization to 2019:

Nevada: 142% increase since 2016 (1.9% vs. 4.6%)
Oregon: 136% increase since 2014 (1.9% vs. 4.5%)
Massachusetts: 113% since 2016 (2.7% vs. 3.8%)
Washington: 86.3% increase since 2014 (2.2% vs. 4.1%)
Colorado: 63% increase since 2013 (1.9% vs. 3.1%)
California: 45% increase since 2016 (2.2% vs. 3.2%)
Michigan: 44% increase since 2017 (2.7% vs. 3.9)
Massachusetts: 40% increase since 2016 (2.7% vs. 3.8)

- In the general workforce, marijuana positivity increased 4% from 2017 while it increased nearly 8% in the safety-sensitive workforce.²⁶

¹ See NIDA. (2018, June 25). Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana> on 2018, July 2.

² See Irons, B. M.D., Mayo Clinic. (2015, Feb. 19). Speaking of Health. Retrieved from <https://mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/the-problem-with-kids-and-cannabis> on 2018, July 2 and Mayo Clinic Staff. (2017, Oct. 24). Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements-marijuana/art-20364974> on 2018, July 2.

³ See Cleveland Clinic. (2014, July 29). Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/4392-marijuana> on 2018, July 2

⁴ See World Health Organization. (2016). The Health and Social Effects of Nonmedical Cannabis Use. Retrieved from <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/251056/9789241510240-eng.pdf;jsessionid=3EBC6F1B98621EB7690654FDFB631BEB?sequence=1> on 2018, July 2.

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- ⁵ See NIDA. (2018, June 25). Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana> on 2018, July 2.
- ⁶ See Secades-Villa, R., Garcia-Rodriguez, O., Jin, C.J., Wang S., & Blanco, C. (2014, Aug. 2). Probability and Predictors of the Cannabis Gateway Effect: A National Study. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25168081> on 2018, July 2.
- ⁷ See Olfson, M., Wall, M.M., Liu, S.M., Blanco, C. (2017, Sept. 26). Cannabis Use and Risk of Prescription Opioid Use Disorder in the United States. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28946762> on 2018, July 2. ⁸ See Serena Stopponi et al., *Chronic THC During Adolescence Increases the Vulnerability to Stress-Induced Relapse to Heroin Seeking in Adult Rats*, 24 EUR. NEUROPSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY 1037, 1038 (2014).
- ⁹ See Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2017). 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Rockville, MD.
- ¹⁰ See Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2017). 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Rockville, MD.
- ¹¹ See <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-marijuana-kids/marijuana-related-er-visits-by-colorado-teens-on-the-rise-idUSKBN1HO38A>
- ¹² See <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09540261.2018.1467385>
- ¹³ See Johnson, T. (2016, May 10). Fatal Road Crashes Involving Marijuana Double After State Legalizes Drug. Retrieved from <https://newsroom.aaa.com/2016/05/fatal-road-crashes-involving-marijuana-double-state-legalizes-drug/> on 2018, July 2
- ¹⁴ See Smart Approaches to Marijuana. (2018 March). Lessons Learned from Marijuana Legalization in Four U.S. States and D.C. Retrieved from <https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SAM-Lessons-Learned-From-Marijuana-Legalization-Digital.pdf> on 2018, July 2.
- ¹⁵ See Colorado Department of Public Safety. (2016). Marijuana legalization in Colorado: Early findings. Retrieved from <https://cdpsdocs.state.co.us/ors/docs/reports/2016-SB13-283-Rpt.pdf> on 2018, Feb. 3.
- ¹⁶ See Smart Approaches to Marijuana. (2018 March). Lessons Learned from Marijuana Legalization in Four U.S. States and D.C. Retrieved from <https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SAM-Lessons-Learned-From-Marijuana-Legalization-Digital.pdf> on 2018, July 2.
- ¹⁷ See Mitchell, K. (2017, July 11). Crime rate in Colorado increases much faster than rest of the country. Denver Post. Retrieved from <https://www.denverpost.com/2017/07/11/colorado-sees-big-increase-crime-10-percent-higher-murder-rate/> on 2018, Feb. 3 and Colorado Bureau of Investigation. (2017). National Uniform Crime Reports. Retrieved from <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cbi/crime-colorado1> on 2018, 2018 Feb. 3.
- ¹⁸ See Highway Loss Data Institute. (2017, August 3). Studies link legalized use of recreational marijuana with increase in crashes. Status Report, 52(5). Retrieved from <http://www.iihs.org/iihs/sr/statusreport/article/52/5/3> on 2018, Feb. 3. And Washington Traffic Safety Commission. (2016). Driver toxicology testing and the involvement of marijuana in fatal crashes, 2010–2014. Olympia, WA: Author. Retrieved from http://wtsc.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2015/10/Driver-Toxicology-Testing-and-the-Involvement-of-Marijuana-in-Fatal-Crashes_REVFeb2016.pdf on 2018, Feb. 3.
- ¹⁹ See Smart Approaches to Marijuana. (2018 March). Lessons Learned from Marijuana Legalization in Four U.S. States and D.C. Retrieved from <https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SAM-Lessons-Learned-From-Marijuana-Legalization-Digital.pdf> on 2018, July 2.
- ²⁰ See <https://www.denverpost.com/2018/08/09/driving-while-high-colorado/>
- ²¹ See Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area. (2017). The legalization of marijuana in Colorado: The impact. Retrieved from <http://www.rmhidta.org/html/FINAL%202017%20Legalization%20of%20Marijuana%20in%20Colorado%20The%20Impact.pdf> on 2018, Feb. 3.
- ²² See Hughes, T. (2017, July 31). Marijuana’s legalization fuels black market in other states. USA Today. Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2017/07/31/marijuana-black-market/507417001/> on 2018, Feb. 3, Associated Press. (2017, August 14). Marijuana-legal states struggle with black-market weed. Los Angeles Daily News. Retrieved from <https://www.dailynews.com/2017/08/14/marijuana-legal-states-struggle-with-black-market-weed/> on 2018, Feb. 3, and Oregon State Police-Drug Enforcement Section. (2017). A baseline evaluation of cannabis enforcement priorities in Oregon. Retrieved from <https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Oregon-State-Police-report-January-2017.pdf> on 2018, Feb 3.

²³ See [https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanpub/PIIS2468-2667\(18\)30110-5.pdf](https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanpub/PIIS2468-2667(18)30110-5.pdf)

²⁴ See NIDA. (2017, Sept. 26). Marijuana Use is Associated with an increased Risk of Prescription Opioid Misuse and use Disorders. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/news-events/news-releases/2017/09/marijuana-use-associated-increased-risk-prescription-opioid-misuse-use-disorders> on 2018, July 2.

²⁵ See Quest Diagnostics. (2015, June 9) Illicit Drug Positivity Rate Increases Sharply in Workplace Testing, Finds Quest Diagnostics Drug Testing Index™ Analysis. Retrieved from <http://newsroom.questdiagnostics.com/2015-06-09-Illicit-Drug-Positivity-Rate-Increases-Sharply-in-Workplace-Testing-Finds-Quest-Diagnostics-Drug-Testing-Index-Analysis> on 2018, July 2.

²⁶ See Jupe, N. (2018 May 8) Quest Diagnostics Employer Solutions Blog. Retrieved from <https://blog.employersolutions.com/drug-testing-index-workforce-drug-positivity-at-highest-rate-in-a-decade/> on 2018, July 2.