

Marijuana Legalization What They Don't Tell You

You may have seen television commercials or heard statements claiming the benefits of voting Yes on Question 4, Legalization of Marijuana. Since many of these statements are false or misleading, or simply leave out mentioning some important facts relevant to the issue, I would like to inform you from my many years of research since 2008 on the subject. My name is Thomas Purdy and I am a lifelong resident of Worcester, MA.

You may have seen a TV ad stating that Yes on Question 4 will result in \$100 million per year in taxes that can be spent on education and police. The Massachusetts State Senate Special Committee on Marijuana puts actual projections at 50 - 60 million dollars, the first 20 - 25 million dollars of which would go toward regulatory and administrative costs. That would leave a best case scenario of 35 - 40 million dollars for the General Fund. I am predicting that the following will happen. Many investors will apply to create new marijuana retailers. The first choice, by the way goes to already existing medical marijuana dispensaries who would become dual function to also sell recreational marijuana and tax those sales. Many people would quit their legitimate jobs to work in these new retailers. Meanwhile marijuana addicts will have already figured out during the first year that Question 4 allows them to grow 12 marijuana plants in their residence, 7 - 12 plants subject to only a \$100 fine not likely to be enforced. By the time the stores open and though marijuana use has significantly gone up, there will be little demand of customers to buy it and thus most of these promised tax revenues are never realized. And these new employees of the pot stores will become unemployed, possibly acquiring a marijuana addiction themselves in the process.

From an Accounting viewpoint, you can't just look at income from these feeble amounts of taxes on marijuana sales. One must also look at the numerous expenses that we will all end up paying. Consider this. Studies show that amongst marijuana using populations, new cases of psychosis double and cases of schizophrenia occur at seven times the rate versus non-using populations. With over 800,000 marijuana users in Massachusetts, it is a conservative estimate that they have 3% additional cases of these serious mental illness conditions, that is roughly 24,000 people. The minimum treatment costs for these patients is \$18,000 per year. Multiply that by 24,000 people and you get 432 million dollars per year in additional cost caused by marijuana.

Add to this the cost of other mental illness conditions caused by marijuana: anxiety, depression, paranoia, panic attacks and suicidal thoughts. Add the health care costs of additional cases of lung cancer, throat cancer, tongue cancer. In men using marijuana even once per week, they double their risk of getting a deadly form of testicular cancer. Marijuana can cause or exacerbate COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), bronchitis and asthma. It increases the incidence of heart complications and heart attacks even in young people with no history of heart problems.

Add to this the cost of emergency room visits for bad reactions to marijuana which outnumber those for alcohol and all other drugs combined. Add to this the cost of drug rehab. Amongst young people, requests for rehab from marijuana addiction outnumber rehab for alcohol and all other drugs combined. Add to this the costs to business well-documented by statistics, the lowered productivity and increased absenteeism of marijuana using employees versus non-users.

Add to this the financial costs and human toll of personal injury and death, and destruction of expensive equipment in workplace accidents and motor vehicle accidents at a much higher rate per person than alcohol users. Remember that marijuana's THC metabolizes in the body quite differently than alcohol. It is flesh-accumulative and stays in the body for weeks. Even some honest marijuana users have admitted, "I can't get stoned on Friday night and be sure I am safe to drive on Monday morning." That THC which has accumulated in their flesh can come back on them unexpectedly.

Imagine the intangible costs of memory loss, educational failure, loss of ambition, broken dreams. Many studies show that a user under age 25 will experience a 6 - 8 point IQ loss that is never recovered no matter how long they stop using. That's permanent brain damage. In a statement on March 4th by Governor Charlie Baker, Attorney General Maura Healey, and Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, "Even an untrained eye can see differences between the MRI brain images of those who habitually use marijuana and those who don't."

The bottom line is that it is ludicrous to believe that a lousy 35 - 40 million dollars in additional General Fund revenue from taxing marijuana is going to even come close to covering all the above expenses. Several hundred million dollars in costs that we all end up paying for, outweigh any additional tax revenue by over 10 to 1.

The TV ads brag on the child safety of their proposal. I can just imagine how difficult a 14 year old will find it to open their child-proof packaging. With legalization, the concept of perceived risk goes down and underage usage goes up. I am going to predict that over 21 year old users, whether they have just

bought their pot at a retailer, or grab from the harvest of their own plants, will be smoking pot right in the presence of their young children. At today's high potency, underage members of the household will become addicted from second hand smoke alone. And this proposal bans any disqualification to care for your own children or others based on marijuana use.

Owners of rental properties should be aware. If Question 4 passes, you will no longer have the right to forbid tenants to possess marijuana or grow plants in your tenements. If tobacco smoking is not allowed, you may also require marijuana smoking to move outdoors. They may use any other method to get high inside your apartment. The TV ads brag that they ban public usage. But their definition of public usage is totally inappropriate to a gaseous drug. The pot smoker could be out front of their residence literally 2 feet away from the sidewalk, blowing smoke into the faces of pedestrians walking by. If he or she steps onto the public sidewalk, it is only a \$100 fine that probably won't be enforced.

The TV ads claim that this proposal will actually reduce underage usage. In Colorado, years before legalization, 74% of the under 18 users bought their pot from medical marijuana users. You would think that they were already using so much that their underage usage couldn't increase under marijuana legalization, but it has since gone up by 20%. It certainly hasn't gone down.

There is an additional TV commercial with a doctor in favor of Marijuana Legalization. She states that doctors are in favor of it. That makes it sound like most doctors in Massachusetts would vote Yes on Question 4. But the truth is that the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) that represents 24,000 doctors in the state officially opposes Marijuana Legalization, as they opposed Medical Marijuana 4 years ago. An overwhelming majority of doctors in the state do not advocate for the use of marijuana for the treatment of any medical condition. Only 150 out of 30,000 doctors in the state actually write recommendations for so-called "medical marijuana". Most doctors definitely do not see Question 4 as an improvement to medical care as claimed in that TV commercial.

There is not a dedication to honest disclosure amongst the Yes on 4 personnel. Their campaign manager, Jim Borghesani said in an interview on the Channel 5 TV show OTR (On The Record) that the potencies of marijuana haven't gone up! This despite overwhelming proof of scientific testing of marijuana confiscations which show the year-by-year rise in THC potency since the early 1980's. Drug dealers have deliberately bred marijuana plants to do just that. Marijuana that is 15% potent in THC is now widely accepted as being a Hard Drug. And strains 15, 20, even over 30 percent are now commonly available.

Don't be fooled into thinking that the Yes on 4 campaign is a grass roots movement. They wouldn't be able to air a single TV commercial based on campaign contributions from common citizens inside of Massachusetts. 96% of their money comes from out-of-state special interests including billionaire Peter Lewis, a long-time marijuana addict himself. Their motivation is to make big business profits off of human weakness. The result if Question 4 passes, in addition to the harms I have already mentioned, will be that you won't be able to pass through any neighborhood without enduring the constant skunk-like stink of growing marijuana plants. Many will go to sleep to this stink at night and wake up to it in their mornings. And the violation of the rights of the innocent with second hand marijuana smoke will run rampant. So think about what you're voting for.

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For links and references, please go to marijuanathebiglie.com