



Patrick Boccio <pboccio@greenbrooktwp.org>

Please join me in stopping the next Big Tobacco

1 message

Stephen Reid <sreidassoc@yahoo.com@ccsend.com>

Tue, Jul 17, 2018 at 8:58 AM

Reply-To: sreidassoc@yahoo.com

To: pboccio@greenbrooktwp.org



July 17, 2018

Dear Colleague,

As Mayor of Point Pleasant Beach, our town was the first New Jersey municipality to pass an ordinance banning marijuana sales in our community. I am pleased to report that many other municipalities have followed, from Bergen County to Cape May.

With the Legislature considering a new bill to legalize marijuana in the coming months, it is important that local officials take action now to protect their communities and families from a new "Big Tobacco" type industry that seeks to profit at the expense of the health and safety of our residents.

Make no mistake, marijuana legalization brings a multitude of public health concerns, including increased youth drug use, increased motor vehicle accidents and higher numbers of minority arrests. And with the Garden State in the grips of an opioid crisis, we cannot forget that the CDC has found that marijuana users are nearly three times more likely to be addicted to heroin.

Looking at what's happening in other states, New Jersey elected officials should be very alarmed. In Washington State and Colorado, where marijuana has been legal for five years, pot use has increased, particularly among children. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), Colorado is now the top state in the country for first time users of marijuana in youth and adults.

Local officials also need to be concerned with the impact of increased marijuana use on the roads. Pot-related car crashes continue to skyrocket in the era of legalization and widespread commercialization of marijuana. In Colorado, marijuana-impaired drivers involved in fatal crashes have more than doubled since 2013, the year after the state voted to legalize recreational use of the drug, according to an analysis by the Denver Post. That same study also found that Colorado saw a 40 percent increase in the number of all drivers involved in fatal crashes between 2013 and 2016, and a 145 percent increase in the number of marijuana-impaired drivers involved in fatal crashes in the same period.

Additionally, we've seen significant proof that marijuana legalization is not the step forward for social justice we have been promised. In fact, it's just the opposite, as the marijuana industry routinely targets vulnerable communities as its profit centers. Just take a look at Denver, where the number of pot shops is greater than the number of McDonalds and Starbucks combined. According to the Colorado Department of Public Safety, in the two years after Colorado legalized marijuana, the number of Hispanic and black kids arrested for marijuana-related offenses rose 29 and 58 percent, respectively.

In the same period, the number of white kids being arrested for identical crimes dropped eight percent.

Some say that legalizing and taxing the drug will result in increased budget revenues for the state and New Jersey towns. However, in Colorado, tax revenue gained from marijuana was much smaller than promised and the Denver Post reported pot taxes wouldn't solve the state's budget problems. Additionally, the revenue argument doesn't take into account the long-term, well-documented costs of increased marijuana use on communities. A recent study showed the public health costs of legalization are at least 125% of all revenues collected. These expenses come from increased law enforcement, workplace accidents, stoned driving crashes, and hospital admissions.

As Executive Director of [New Jersey Responsible Approaches to Marijuana Policy](#) (NJ-RAMP) -- a grassroots coalition of medical doctors, community groups, drug prevention professionals, business owners, law enforcement officers and parents -- I am working with municipalities to adopt common sense measures to protect their communities from the negative consequences of legalization.

In the next few months, it is critical for municipalities to take action to protect their communities by passing local zoning ordinances to prohibit pot shops and other related businesses. I am happy to work with you and your town officials in developing these policies and discussing the issues with your community.

I hope you will join me in protecting your town and stopping the marijuana industry from wreaking havoc on your community. New Jersey cannot afford another Big Tobacco industry profiting at the expense of our communities, families and children.

Sincerely,

Stephen Reid
Executive Director, NJ-RAMP
Mayor, Point Pleasant Beach

NJ-RAMP, a project of SAM Action, [400 N. Columbus Street, Suite 202, Alexandria, VA 22314](#)

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