

August 14, 2018

Dear Governor Hogan,

Today, I received a notice via email, from the Maryland Cannabis Policy Coalition, asking that you confirm your position regarding the legalization of recreational marijuana.

I'm hoping your responses will be something like, "Enough is enough. Maryland is going to start a campaign to educate people about the very real, scientifically researched and proven dangers of marijuana."

"This doesn't mean that as a user this will happen to you, but the dangers are real, and people need to know the risks involved."

The reason I say this, is that in my early 20s I began to smoke. Being high made me feel so good, that I became addicted. For roughly 2 years, between my 23rd and 25th birthdays, I was high every single day.

Then shortly after my 25th birthday, I had a psychotic breakdown. It was a combination of severe depression, anxiety, and paranoia - so much so that I was practically catatonic, and only able to function with intense effort.

But here's the kicker, despite all the therapy and all the medication, some 45 years later I still struggle with mental illness, especially the depression. It's something I have to struggle with most every day.

So don't believe anyone who says marijuana is harmless. They're either ignorant, in denial, or lying.

And it's not just me. Over the past several years, several organizations have been formed by parents whose kids have had their lives ruined by marijuana. The one I'm most familiar with is ***momsstrong.org***.

I encourage you to become aware of this, because you won't hear about it from the marijuana lobby.

That's what I'm the most angry about, politicians, lobbyists, and lawyers ignoring the harm that's caused to children, teens, and young adults, all in the name of money. I have nothing against profit, but this is wrong.

On YouTube, there's the video testimony of Dr. Stephen Simmerville, head of pediatrics at St. Mary's - Corwin Hospital in Pueblo Colorado. Roughly 1 out of 10 children born there have a brain anomaly because their pregnant mothers smoked marijuana,

believing it to be a safe and beneficial drug.

The areas effected are the amygdala and the hippocampus, the same areas of the brain that marijuana effects in teens and adults. Dr. Simmerville says it's something that doctors have been aware of since the 1970s.

They've followed these babies up with image scans age 8 and as teens. The anomalies don't heal.

As Dr. Simmerville states, 10% of babies born in Colorado have a permanent brain defect, that can be easily prevented! - <https://youtu.be/K4bcl9Fqfls>

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Then there are the articles about Colorado kids who are poisoned by marijuana edibles, some with systems so depressed that they have to be put on life support - "Two were admitted to the intensive care unit." - <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/news/articles/2013/05/27/kids-poisoned-by-medical-marijuana-study-finds?page=2>

You may recall there was an incident here in Maryland earlier this year, when some first graders ended up going to a hospital, because one girl took her father's marijuana gummies lying out - <http://www.poppot.org/2018/01/24/maryland-children-get-sick-big-marijuana-pushes-its-agenda/>

Maryland's most notorious marijuana incident so far, was when 16 people on an Amtrak passenger train were killed in January 1987, when the engineer and brakeman of a locomotive fouled the main line - because of being high on marijuana, they missed the signal to stop.

Even back then, marijuana activists were saying pot wasn't responsible, but Conrail engineer Ricky Gate, in a Baltimore Sun article, says otherwise, "If the joint hadn't been there, I wouldn't have been so inattentive," he said. "I feel it was pretty much exclusively the marijuana -- the marijuana and the disease of addiction." http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1993-06-16/news/1993167057_1_marijuana-legalization-dangers-of-marijuana-alcohol-and-marijuana

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Another thing that angers me is politicians, who should be working to improve the health of their constituents, who are doing the opposite.

Last March I testified in Annapolis about marijuana legalization. The sponsor of the bill, Montgomery County Senator William Smith, made the statement that "No one has died from marijuana."

When it was my turn to testify, I cited a 2014 study from the American Heart Association, one of four they've published concerning negative effects of marijuana on the heart, that spoke of nine confirmed fatal heart attacks due to marijuana - <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1161/JAHA.113.000638>

What was truly revealing was that later in the lobby, I was verbally confronted by a person from the marijuana lobby, who said I was "rude" to challenge Senator Smith, and that I needed to learn my "facts." (There's no higher authority in this country about heart disease than the American Heart Association - what in God's name could he be talking about?).

I replied, "All I deal in is facts", and offered him a copy of my written testimony, which I just so happened to have in my hand, saying that it had over a dozen references to scientific research confirming marijuana's many dangers. As expected, he ignored my offer and walked back into the hearing room.

This incident brings into focus exactly what's going on in our nation today. It's not that the marijuana lobby doesn't know the dangers, THEY DON'T WANT TO KNOW. It's willful ignorance at its worst.

Just like denial in psychology, to acknowledge even just one fact about marijuana's risks, threatens to collapse the entire facade.

So again, I'm asking you to take a stand, much like the stories in the book, "Profiles In Courage."

It's going to happen sooner or later - as the scientific evidence mounts, as more and more innocent kids are lost.

in fact the public's going to demand it, and ask why it didn't happen sooner. They'll want to know who's responsible, who withheld or provided misinformation. Mark my words.

It would be great if Maryland was the state to take the lead in protecting its citizens from the greed of Big Marijuana.

If you want more information, you can visit my site here - <https://georgespicka.weebly.com/marijuana-links.html>

Thank you for your time and interest,

George F. Spicka