



REGULATION, TAX AND CONTROL WON'T WORK

It will create a bigger black market than the one that exists

By Roger Morgan, Exec Director, Coalition for A Drug-Free California

Legalizing marijuana, even if it were possible by federal law, would do nothing to dissuade the Mexican cartels, and it would encourage the masses to grow marijuana plants at home. Why not? If you have a green thumb, a little garden and are a baby boomer or unemployed, this would be very appealing. One couple recently interviewed in San Francisco was making \$120,000 a year on their tiny patio.

One plant producing one lb of marijuana at 2.5 joints per gram is the equivalent of 1,134 joints. The proposed ten plant limit would equate to 11,340 joints, in only one harvest. Some hydroponic indoor operations get three harvests a year, and a yield of 3 to 5 lbs per plant. The legal markets won't be able to absorb the surge in production.

Even now, before legalization, Humboldt County officials have authorized the growing of 99 plants with a special permit, and they are gravely concerned about what will happen to their economy when legalization lowers the prices and undermines the value of their illegal crops. Incredible! Obviously the social consequences of their insidious products aren't of concern, but maybe they should look a little harder at the situation in Mexico, where decapitation among competing cartels has become in vogue. Is that next?

If legalization were to happen, those seeking a higher "high" than what legalized pot would have; the young people below 21 who couldn't buy it legally; and those outside of California would provide vast new markets for the newly created flood of pot that would hit the market.

The legalizers say prohibition didn't work. It did! Repealing prohibition of alcohol simply put white collars on the Al Capone's of the day. The surge of alcohol use after repeal inflicted a heavy toll on the health, safety and economic well being of all Americans, as it still does today.

Keeping pot illegal has limited the number of people who smoke it regularly to 6.4% of the adult population, 15 million people vs 127,000 who consume alcohol. Legalization would certainly increase the number of smokers. The State Board of Equalization says with legalization it will increase by 40%, but that may well be understated. If it elevated the number of people to even half of those who consume alcohol, marijuana will destroy the nation.

Libertarians rant that they have a right to pursue happiness and put into their bodies what they want. The unspoken caveat, however, is "*in the absence of harm to others.*" The fact is, there is no absence of harm. They make lousy workers, which impacts employers and productivity. They are accident prone. They have physical and mental health issues, generally with no health insurance. They burden the welfare rolls, law enforcement, fill prisons and they are a major cause of injury accidents. They place a huge social and economic burden on the 93.6% who don't smoke.

Regulation, control and taxation of just the legal drugs - alcohol and tobacco - cause the death of about 550,000 Americans annually, at an annual cost of \$700 to \$800 billion. Legalizing marijuana will simply add to the burden.

