

What's really in that marijuana law?

By Sheriff John Trumbo

This November, Oregon will vote on Measure 80 the Oregon Cannabis Tax Act which seeks to legalize regulated and unregulated marijuana and hemp, which are both federally illegal.

First, does it matter? An awful lot of people say pot is harmless. But it's not. Oregon currently has the nation's third highest rate of marijuana use among youth, ages 12 -17. According to research published in several psychiatric journals, teenagers who smoke pot heavily find it harder to learn, get worse grades, and are less likely to finish high school or college. A study conducted by Dr. Madeline Meier from Duke University found continued use of marijuana can lead to a loss of 8 IQ points in juveniles. The loss of 8 IQ points would move them from a group shared by 50% of juveniles to a group shared by 29%.

Second, under Measure 80, Oregonians will see more Driving under the Influence of marijuana accidents, as where alcohol has an impairment BAC level, there is no defined THC impairment level in Measure 80. So expect lawyers to fight any attempt to set the bar low, and to drag it out in court for years without a defined THC impairment level.

Marijuana causes DUIs and fatal car wrecks. Research from New Zealand found regular pot-smokers 9.5 times as likely to be in a serious or fatal car wreck. A study from the New England Journal of Medicine, found nearly half of impaired drivers who were not using alcohol tested positive for marijuana. That's why the number of fatal car wrecks involving marijuana skyrocketed in Montana when a so-called medical marijuana law went into effect. In 2007-2008 there were 62 fatalities, 20% where blood THC content was the contributing factor. Out of 303 cases, 43% of DUID cases involved THC the active ingredient in marijuana which causes the high.

In Oregon, law enforcement officers don't specify what controlled substance caused the impairment as they do not have the expertise to do so, it requires a specially trained **drug recognition expert** to determine, which requires significant training and costs. There are 5533 law enforcement officers in the State, out of those there are 200 Drug Recognition Experts. The estimated costs of training 5138 officers to become DRE experts would be over \$25.6 million dollars for Oregon law enforcement agencies. That cost does not include DPSST training cost or the cost of analyzing blood done by the Oregon State Police crime lab in Portland.

Third, Measure 80 advocates claim that black market marijuana would be eliminated. In 2011 according to Oregon High Intensity Drug Trafficking (HIDTA) over 125,000 illegal outdoor marijuana plants were found on public lands and over 17,000 marijuana plants found in indoor grows. Most of the outdoor grows are driven by Mexican National Drug Cartels who flood to the Northwest because the climate makes it easy growing, rather than large indoor grows which are costly and take more of their bottom line profits. These Mexican cartels are not in Oregon because their customers live in Oregon, they are in Oregon for the growing season and if caught, to them it is just the cost of doing business, just as the growing numbers of marijuana addictions to legalizers is just the cost of doing business. Mexican cartels would welcome the opportunity to purchase up black market government purchased marijuana at a low cost for distribution in other parts of the country where marijuana would not be legal. The cartels don't work in a vacuum or one market theory. They go where they can grow it and distribute nation-wide where they can sell it.

Fourth, Measure 80 gives a token free ride to criminals who have previously been arrested for marijuana felony crimes, noting that anyone with a felony, prior to Measure 80 passing would be able to apply for a license to grow marijuana for the State, but anyone who commits a crime after the Measure 80 law is in place, would have their license suspended. Even Oregon's so-called medical marijuana program does not allow anyone with a prior felony to get a card.

Finally, Measure 80 is a marijuana advocate's pipedream, in which they can legalize marijuana under the guise of government run pot stores where anyone over 21 can come and buy marijuana. Measure 80 sets up a seven person State Agency in which five of those people are marijuana growers and processors, akin to the fox watching the hen house set up. Measure 80 also allows anyone over 21 to grow any amount of unregulated marijuana as long as they do not sell it or give it away. This would open the door to unscrupulous amounts of marijuana flooding the market illegally and allow easy access for kids. Neighbors could find marijuana growing in their neighbor's back yard and would not be able to do anything about it based on the details of Measure 80.

What's really in the Measure 80 law is the marijuana advocates desire to totally control the marijuana market; from pot driven government stores; to individuals over 21 growing their own; to the unregulated growing of Hemp. The government agency, Health Canada, concluded cultivation of industrial hemp as a commercial crop would necessitate enormous monitoring costs to prevent it from being diverted to the illegal drug market.

Measure 80 is another attempt to circumvent Federal law and is perfectly designed for drug users.

Oregon Voters need to say NO on Measure 80.

Sheriff John Trumbo has spent thirty-nine years in the law enforcement field with thirty-five of those years in the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office. Along with many other noted accolades, he also serves on the executive board of the Oregon State Sheriff's Association.

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