

HR 556 – Cannabis Reform

As a member of GASP (Group Against Smokers' Pollution and a NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Employee Association, I am requesting that the state prohibit the smoking and vaping of marijuana. Not only does marijuana contain the toxins of tobacco smoke, but it also contains 3.5 times the particulate matter and other intoxicants, and second-hand marijuana smoke is even more hazardous than tobacco smoke. Vaping of cannabis and other chemicals can create indoor pollution similar to that of industrial air pollution, causing respiratory and heart disease.

In reference to the intoxicating nature of cannabis, it is very easy to become "high". For example, many years ago, when marijuana was not as powerful as it is now, I was sitting in a large room near a small group of people smoking marijuana from a "bong", but was not deliberately inhaling anything myself; nevertheless, I became extremely intoxicated; my personality changed and I immediately became very slow in my thinking and reaction time. While the smokers in the room said they were fine with driving home, I knew that I would never be able to drive safely under the influence of marijuana. I was not reading or remembering any written materials (like street signs!) In spite of increased visual acuity, I had no sense of time, and simply felt happy and giddy. It is very disconcerting now to think of people in this condition driving a motor vehicle, however common that seems to be.

Worse than my personal experience is that of a friend in college who was smoking in bed and became so high that he fell asleep with the lit joint in his hand and, thus, burned down his entire fraternity house. In classrooms also and perhaps even in the workplace, students cannot learn or perform properly.

Needless to say, accidents, fires, pollution resulting in disease and – yes - climate change, and higher insurance and government spending (decimating any profits from legalizing marijuana smoking), and so many harmful consequences from this type of smoking and vaping should certainly make us all learn from the dangers of cigarette smoking and do everything possible to prevent far worse situations for our Maryland residents.