

## Recreational Marijuana Testimony to Md Senate Economics Committee- SB0516 - Winter 2023

Honorable committee members, thank you for this opportunity to testify. I am Debra Roy, the Vice President of the Chemical Sensitivity Disorders Association, a charter member of GASP (Group Against Smokers Pollution), a retired Civil Servant belonging to NARFE (the National Active and Retired Federal Employee Association) and a new member of Who Is Who in America. I am here to request that the state prohibit the smoking and vaping of marijuana, limit recreational edibles to 2 mg of THC per package and set the legal age to use recreational marijuana at 25. Nobody should have to breathe secondhand marijuana smoke or vapor at work, in public or where they live. Secondhand marijuana smoke contains all the toxins of tobacco smoke plus 3.5 times more particulate matter, 20 times more ammonia, 3 -5 times more hydrogen cyanide and THC, an intoxicant (Sup. Doc. #7). Ammonia and hydrogen cyanide are irritants. People with chemical sensitivities are extraordinarily sensitive to irritants. Here is the chart of the cannabinoid pathway of a person with chemical sensitivities (Sup. Doc. #1). Twenty-one of the thirty-four genes in this pathway are impaired. This chart represents a person who is a slow metabolizer of cannabinoids. As a result upon exposure, this person will experience a back up of cannabinoids. Consequently this person will be adversely affected with conditions like chronically recurring sinus infections and severe asthma attacks at much lower levels of exposure than people with normal genes and will take a longer period of time to clear the toxins from his body. One thing that the anti-smoking movement has established is that smokers do not have the right to make others sick. Ethically and legally society has an obligation to protect sensitive people from harm. Exposure to tobacco smoke is a nightmare for people with chemical sensitivities. Soon marijuana smoke will be an even bigger nightmare for them. Presently people with chemical sensitivities are having problems finding affordable smoke-free housing. The introduction of marijuana smoke into this environment will worsen the situation, causing some sensitive people to become homeless. Last year a state senator and delegate representing P.G. County received complaints from various constituents about being sickened by neighbors' marijuana smoke drifting onto their property. And no wonder they complain, the marijuana smoke smells like skunk!(Sup. Doc #2).

The secondhand smoke exposure from marijuana is more hazardous than tobacco smoke. People, even non-sensitive people, who are exposed to secondhand marijuana smoke can have detectable levels of THC in their blood and urine (Sup. Doc. #7). They can even become intoxicated by the exposure. Particulate concentrations created by dabbing and vaping can create levels of indoor air pollution similar to those seen in extreme pollution events like wildfires and extreme industrial pollution (Sup. Doc. #8). Exposures at these concentrations cause cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. ALLOWING MARIJUANA SMOKING AND VAPING LOUNGES WILL VIOLATE OCCUPATIONAL AND HEALTH REGULATIONS THAT REQUIRE EMPLOYERS TO PROVIDE THEIR EMPLOYEES WITH A SAFE WORKPLACE (Sup. Doc. #7). A Nov 2022 Radiology study entitled "Chest CT Findings in Marijuana Smokers" reported higher rates of emphysema and airway inflammation in marijuana smokers than tobacco-only smokers (Sup. Doc. #3).

In the July 2022 edition of the medical Journal Lancet (Sup. Doc # 4), British mental health experts warned that cannabis is not a harmless drug, but is linked to psychosis and addiction. Therefore IT SHOULD NOT BE TREATED AS AN ORDINARY COMMODITY IN THE MARKETPLACE. PEOPLE WHO DAILY USE MARIJUANA WITH OVER TEN PERCENT THC WERE FIVE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE DIAGNOSED WITH PSYCHOSIS COMPARED TO THOSE WHO NEVER USED THE DRUG. Most tragic are the young people who commit suicide as well as those who develop schizophrenia as a result of using marijuana. There is no way, at present, to identify those people who are at risk of developing schizophrenia or becoming suicidal. Had they not used marijuana in the first place, they could have gone through life without developing schizophrenia or becoming suicidal. Marijuana can be highly addictive resulting in cannabis use disorder (CUD). Those with CUD are at higher risk of problems with memory, attention and learning. As a result, in 2014, California

extended Medicaid coverage to low-income individuals so they could have access to CUD treatment (Sup. Doc #6). Here is an example of how addictive cannabis use can be. My friend's 20 something son-in-law was a marijuana vaper. Then he caught viral pneumonia. That landed him in the ICU and he almost died. When he recovered and was released from the hospital, he was warned that if he resumed vaping, it would kill him. He stopped vaping for about a year and now he has resumed vaping marijuana.

One of the things that sets marijuana smoking apart from tobacco smoke is the fact that marijuana is intoxicating. Tobacco smoking has been identified as a cause of many home and forest fires. (see Laurel library sign- Sup. Doc, #1). The Laurel library put out this sign because tobacco smokers were throwing their lit butts in the mulch, causing fires and necessitating calls to the fire department. When a marijuana smoker finishes a joint, he is high and not aware of what he does with the lit butt. This will cause even more house, multifamily dwelling, and forest fires. Vaping devices are also a fire hazard because they sometimes explode, causing fires and bodily harm (Sup. Doc #9). There will be even more loss of life resulting from these all fires. Additionally the fires will contribute to global warming. Since environmentalists are concerned about how much cows contribute to global warming, I cannot help but wonder how much just lighting up marijuana joints will add to global warming.

Another problem posed by discarded marijuana butts is animal poisonings. According to a December 31,2022 New York Times article (Sup. Doc.#7), DOGS ARE BEING POISONED AS A RESULT OF INGESTING DISCARDED MARIJUANA BUTTS. Symptoms include uncoordinated gait, dribbling urine and an exaggerated reaction to normal stimuli. Severe cases progress to respiratory depression, seizures and occasionally death. From 2020 to 2021 there was a 60 percent increase in marijuana toxicity in pets. Pet owners would not have supported the legalization of recreational marijuana had they known the harm marijuana poses to their pets and the costs associated with treatment.

Marijuana smoking is a problem at both colleges and high schools (see Bowie State University Sup. Doc.#1 ). At college the problem is not only in the classroom, but also in polluted dormitories. Just think of trying to study in an environment that is irritating, hallucinogenic and interferes with attention, memory and learning. "Getting it right from the Start"(Sup. Doc.#4) gives us this caution : "We have a collective responsibility to protect children and youth from harm to the developing brain. OF PARTICULAR CONCERN IS THE IMPACT OF LEGALIZATION ON YOUTH BELOW THE AGE OF 25, BECAUSE RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT USE AMONG YOUTH CARRIES SPECIAL RISKS TO THE DEVELOPING BRAIN that are not present for older adults...DAILY USE OF CANNABIS BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HALVES THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE; and DAILY USE OF CONSUMPTION OF CANNABIS WITH OVER 10% THC ...IS ASSOCIATED WITH A FIVE FOLD INCREASE IN THE ODDS OF DEVELOPING PSYCHOSIS, A HEARTRENDING BURDEN FOR FAMILIES AND AN EXPENSIVE AND COMPLEX BURDEN FOR COMMUNITIES... YOUNG ADULT MARIJUANA USE IS AT A 35 YEAR HIGH, AND DAILY MARIJUANA USE AMONG ST 8TH,10TH AND 12TH GRADERS HAS ALSO RISEN PRECIPITOUSLY." According to the CDC: "IN A SINGLE YEAR, THE VAPING EPIDEMIC... HOSPITALIZED OVER 2,700 AND KILLED 68". Because of their experience with vaping, CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA HAS BANNED ALL CANNABIS AND TOBACCO VAPING KPRODUCTS (Sup. Doc. #4). States legalizing cannabis have seen a bigger increase in hospitalizations and poison control visits than other states. States that have legalized cannabis have seen an increase in teenagers getting asthma. There is also concern about parents exposing their children to secondhand marijuana smoke. According to Leana Wen the former Baltimore Health Commissioner, there is abundant research showing that EXPOSURE TO MARIJUANA DURING CHILDHOOD IMPACTS LATER ABILITY, INCLUDING MEMORY, ATTENTION, MOTIVATION AND LEARNING (Sup. Doc#6). These facts make it very clear that any profits derived from the sale

of cannabis are literally going to go up in smoke. TAX REVENUES WILL BE OFFSET BY HARM TO MENTAL HEALTH, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION THAT COME AT GREAT COST TO FAMILIES, EMPLOYERS AND GOVERNMENT. THOSE COMMUNITIES MOST NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY THE WAR ON DRUGS WILL ALSO BE THE ONES MOST NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA USE (Sup. Doc#5 –Evaluation Report p.6).

Vaping and dabbing can be the source of harmful chemical exposures. Vaping is not odorless. One study described dabbing as smelling acrid and more like smoke. Vaping was described as smelling like unheated cannabis. THE DEGRADATION PRODUCTS that result from heating marijuana mixtures include acrolein and methacrolein, which ARE HIGHLY IRRITATING TO THE EYES AND RESPIRATORY SYSTEM. Dabbing and vaping cannabis can create levels of indoor air pollution that are hazardous to human health, in the absence of actual combustion. AEROSOLS FROM VAPING CONTAIN HEAVY METALS AND ULTRA FINE PARTICLES. IF SOMEONE ELSE IS VAPING IN THE SAME AREA , YOU ARE BREATHING IT – THOSE PARTICLES ARE ENTERING YOUR LUNGS WHERE THEY CAN DO DAMAGE (Sup. Doc. #8).

A February 19,2023, Washington Post article reports that AMSTERDAM PLANS TO BAN MARIJUANA SMOKING ON THE STREET STARTING THIS MAY (Sup. Doc. #7). According to the article, the “drug-fueled atmosphere at night makes the neighborhood unsafe”. This is echoed in what a girlfriend, who has a master degree in the public health, wrote me recently about her experience with marijuana smokers in her neighborhood. After the referendum to legalize recreational marijuana in Maryland passed, she states:”It took no time at all for some folks to become more emboldened to smoke in public. For the first time, really, I’m afraid in my parking lot at home as we have several who just smoke in their cars for hours. Believe it or not even in the morning when no one is around, the smell just exudes out of the car. I have experienced contentious interactions with those who smoke pot which seem to indicate much less controlled and more volatile emotional reactions on their part, such as overly anxious and strongly negative interactions with others. That, in turn, can cause other problems (emotional and physical) for friends and family, as they deal with a user in their life.” Maryland would be very wise to follow Amsterdam’s example and ban marijuana smoking. According to the Post article, MOST CLUBS AND BARS IN AMSTERDAM ALREADY DO NOT ALLOW PEOPLE TO SMOKE ON-SITE.

Then there is the problem of people driving under the influence of marijuana (Sup. Doc.#9). Not only is first hand exposure a problem, but so is second and third hand smoke exposures. A passenger smoking in a car could intoxicate the driver. Additionally the marijuana smoke that accumulates on the surfaces of the car’s interior and is released back into the car long after the original smoking event (aka third hand smoke) can also intoxicate a driver. Proving that a driver is intoxicated by marijuana is also a problem because experts cannot agree on how much marijuana intoxicates a driver. Banning all smoking in vehicles would make a police officer’s job simpler because just swabbing a car’s interior and showing that marijuana is present would be enough to take action. The Cannabis Control Authority of Virginia did a survey of cannabis users. Fourteen percent reported driving under the influence. Even more disturbing, many of them reported they thought using cannabis made them a safer driver. However, it is reported that marijuana causes difficulties in concentration, reduced hand-eye coordination, distortion of time and space, and increased reaction times. Moreover vehicle insurance rates will go up as an increase in impaired driving under the influence of marijuana and related accidents are noted (Sup. Doc. #8). A 2020 AAA STUDY SHOWED THAT THE PERCENTAGE OF DRIVERS IN WASHINGTON STATE INVOLVED IN FATAL CRASHES WHO TESTED POSITIVE FOR MARIJUANA INCREASED 100 PERCENT AFTER THE STATE LEGALIZED RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA USE. Some counties in Maryland already have very high vehicle insurance rates. NON-USERS OF MARIJUANA WILL LOSE THEIR ENTHUSIASM

FOR RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA WHEN THEIR CAR INSURANCE RATES GO UP OR EVEN WORSE THEY ARE HIT BY A MARIJUANA IMPAIRED DRIVER.

EFFECTIVE JULY 1 OF THIS YEAR, VIRGINIA IS GOING TO LIMIT THC TO 2 MG PER PACKAGE FOR MARIJUANA EDIBLES because of a spike in accidental THC overdoses in children over the past year. A 4 YEAR OLD BOY RECENTLY DIED IN VIRGINIA AS A RESULT OF EATING HIGH POTENCY MARIJUANA GUMMIES AND CONSEQUENTLY HIS MOTHER IS ON TRIAL (Sup. Doc.#10). If Maryland were to adopt the same standard for recreational edibles from the start, not only would more children be protected, but it would also protect the medical marijuana sector from competition from the recreational marijuana sector. Maryland would do well to learn from the success and failures of other places in this new venture.

Another bill being considered in this legislative session, SENATE BILL 652 – Criminal Law-Felony Murder – Limitation for Youth (Youth Accountability and Safety Act), prohibits a person from being convicted of murder in the first degree if they are under the age of 25 because their brains are not fully developed (Sup. Doc. #10). By the same token, people under the age of 25 should be prohibited from using marijuana for recreational purposes. IF YOU EXCUSE PEOPLE FROM MURDER BECAUSE THEY ARE UNDER 25 THEN YOU SHOULD NOT ALLOW PEOPLE UNDER THE AGE OF 25 TO SMOKE MARIJUANA BECAUSE OF THE PROFOUND DAMAGE MARIJUANA DOES TO THE IMMATURE BRAIN.

According to the JAMA article “Assessment of Incorporation of Lessons learned from Tobacco Control in City and County Laws Regulating Legal Marijuana in California” (Sup. Doc.#6) policy lessons from tobacco control and other legal but harmful products went largely unheeded by cities and counties. COMMUNITIES MAY WISH TO CONSIDER PRECAUTIONARY INCORPORATION OF THESE POLICY LESSONS INTO MARIJUANA REGULATION FROM THE START, POTENTIALLY REDUCING THE RISK OF FAILING OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT YOUTHS AND HEALTH CONSEQUENCES FOR DECADES TO COME.” According to a Politico article (Sup. Doc.#6) “many in the public health world are frustrated that policymakers, eager to get on with legalization, missed the opportunity to mitigate the consequences in advance.” Those of us from GASP are here to ask you to heed the lessons learned from tobacco control and from other localities that have already legalized recreational marijuana and prohibit marijuana smoking and vaping in Maryland, limit THC in edibles to 2 mg. and set the legal age to start using these products at 25. You are a financial committee making health decisions. Before you unleash the serious and long lasting health consequences of this Pandora’s box of recreational marijuana on the general public, it would be wise to form a committee of doctors and public health experts to study this problem and advise you on how to proceed.

If you wish to contact me for further discussion please email me at [Debbieroy44@gmail.com](mailto:Debbieroy44@gmail.com) or call me at (301) 725-5482.

Cannabinoid Pathway				
SNP ID	SNP Name	Risk Allele	Your Alleles	Your Results
rs35070995	ABP1 A678H	C	AA	-/-
rs2494732	AKT1 A27890G	C	TT	-/-
rs806381	CNR1 A88865901G	A	AA	+/+
rs12528858	CNR1 A88867488G	G	AA	-/-
rs806378	CNR1 C88859551T	T	CC	-/-
rs1049353	CNR1 T453T	T	CT	+/-
rs806368	CNR1 T88850100C	C	CT	+/-
rs806374	CNR1 T88857320C	T	CT	+/-
rs806376	CNR1 T88858648C	C	CT	+/-
rs806377	CNR1 T88858723C	T	CT	+/-
rs6454674	CNR1 T88872930G	T	TT	+/+
rs492602	FUT2 A12190G	G	AG	+/-
rs601338	FUT2 G12447A	A	AG	+/-
rs602662	FUT2 G12758A	A	AG	+/-
rs6672995	NLRP3 247621033G>A	A	GG	-/-
rs17221417	NOD2 13533C>G	G	CG	+/-
rs5743289	NOD2 30725C>T	T	CT	+/-
rs2066844	NOD2 Arg675Trp	T	CC	-/-
rs3782905	VDR C37648G	C	CG	+/-
rs2189480	VDR C39987A	T	GT	+/-
rs2238136	VDR C48277713T	T	CC	-/-
rs12717991	VDR G44689A	T	CC	-/-
rs1540339	VDR G46489A	T	CC	-/-
rs2239185	VDR G48244559A	A	AG	+/-
rs886441	VDR G48262964A	G	AG	+/-
rs10783218	VDR G48272743A	A	GG	-/-
rs2853564	VDR G48278487A	G	AA	-/-
rs4237855	VDR G48287203A	A	AG	+/-
rs7975232	VDR G64978T	A	AC	+/-
rs7136534	VDR G9189A	G	CT	-/-
rs2239179	VDR T48257766C	C	CT	+/-
rs11574129	VDR T66512C	G	AA	-/-
rs731236	VDR TAQ	A	AG	+/-
rs1544410	VDR VDR:BsmI	T	CT	+/-



# NOTICE



**Marijuana  
smoking  
prohibited.**

I STILL WEAR IT, BUT MAINLY TO BLOCK THE WEED SMELL.



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