

## PASTOR BRIEF

**Issue 4: The Arkansas Adult Use Cannabis Amendment**

**Background:** Today, 36 medical marijuana dispensaries and eight marijuana farms provide medical marijuana to 89,461 Arkansas medical marijuana card holders.

**Summary:** Issue 4, the Arkansas Adult Use Cannabis Amendment is on the Arkansas General Election Ballot this November. This proposed amendment would make so-called “recreational” marijuana legal everywhere in Arkansas. It would increase the number of marijuana stores to 120 and the number of farms to 20. This amendment repeals large sections of Amendment 98, the Arkansas Medical Marijuana Amendment, and it removes all legislative authority to regulate marijuana. The marijuana industry crafted this amendment, and they are financing the campaign to pass it.

**More About Issue Four**

- **Crime:** It will allow drug cartels to operate marijuana dispensaries and cultivation facilities anywhere in Arkansas, because there are no residency requirements for owners and no criminal background checks for those who work there and none for certain people who apply for a license to grow or sell marijuana.
- **Drug Legalization:** It legalizes much more than the cannabis plant. It legalizes tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), a powerful, addictive drug extracted from the cannabis plant, sometimes using an environmentally dangerous process.
- **Harm to Communities:** It allows marijuana dispensaries and processing facilities to be located next to city parks, playgrounds, drug rehab facilities, homeless shelters, picnic areas, libraries, and other places frequented by children and other vulnerable people.
- **Uncontrollable Monopoly:** It prevents the Arkansas Legislature, cities, or counties from passing any laws, including zoning and taxes, to regulate marijuana.
- **Appealing to Children:** It allows an unlimited amount of tetrahydrocannabinol to be infused into candy and soft drinks that appeal to children, and it opens the door to prime time TV advertising.

**A Christian View**

**Higher purpose than getting high.** The whole point of consuming “recreational” marijuana is to get high. The Bible has numerous warnings against drunkenness. Being filled with the Spirit leads to more self-control, but using marijuana leads to less self-control and a loss of inhibitions. See: Gal 5:22-23

**Christ-followers are commanded to stay awake**—to be alert to the privilege and responsibility of living out their citizenship of the gospel always, everywhere, and before everyone. Marijuana clouds our ability to perceive the world clearly, and it dulls our sense of urgency about what disciples of Christ should be doing. It clouds a person's senses, and it makes it more difficult for them to see their need for Christ. See: Mark 13:32-37



## Science on the Harm Caused by Marijuana

**More Drug Addicts:** Approximately one in ten people who use marijuana will become addicted to it. Three out of ten people who use marijuana will develop a marijuana use disorder in which they will try and fail to stop using marijuana even when it causes them health and social problems.

**Harm to Mothers and Children:** Using marijuana during pregnancy causes complications, and it can affect the child later in life, causing problems with attention, memory, problem-solving skills, and behavior. Children and infants who are exposed to secondhand marijuana smoke can experience the same issues as the smoker.

**Marijuana Poisoning:** Adults who consume food or drinks laced with high concentrations of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) can experience marijuana poisoning. Children can be poisoned by consuming marijuana candy, cookies, soft drinks or other marijuana edibles. They have trouble breathing and have to go to the emergency room or be hospitalized. One child has died. Food or drink products infused with marijuana carry a greater risk of poisoning, because it may take up to two hours for the THC in food to take effect.

**Won't Help the Opioid Epidemic:** Using marijuana increases the risk of opioid misuse. Marijuana legalization has not resulted in a decrease in opioid overdose deaths in places where it is legal.

**Hurts Brain Development:** People who use marijuana are more likely to suffer psychotic episodes that causes them not to know what is real, hallucinate, and become paranoid. Long-term effects include increased risk of psychosis and schizophrenia.

**Causes Death and Injury:** Second only to alcohol, marijuana impairs drivers by slowing reaction time and the ability to make decisions, impairing coordination, and distorting perception

### Three Important Questions

**When it comes to using marijuana, what about personal freedom? Why not let people do what they want to do?** A person's choice to use marijuana never impacts them alone. Sooner or later, it will hurt their health, their family, their job, their community, and endanger innocent people on the highway. When a marijuana user lands in the hospital, or they lose their job because they can't work, or their kids end up in foster care, or it is your loved one who they kill while driving on the highway, you may decide that we can't just let people do as they please. One sure way to grow government and taxes is to give people more ways to harm themselves and their families because it is the government that will be called upon to clean up their mess. Besides that, how can Christians take such a callous attitude? The Bible says we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. There is nothing loving about standing by and looking the other way in silence while your neighbor destroys his or her life and those around them.

**Alcohol is legal, so why not legalize marijuana?** The terrible toll of alcoholism is well documented as well as the scourge of opioid addiction. With millions spent trying to mitigate the destruction wrought by alcohol and opioids, it makes no sense to legalize another drug backed by an industry whose only way of making a profit is to create more drug addicts.

**Since people are going to use marijuana, why not make it legal and tax it?** The marijuana industry wrote the Arkansas Adult Use Cannabis Amendment. The way they wrote the amendment, the State of Arkansas will lose money. They repealed all the state and local taxes on medical marijuana and made it illegal for anyone to tax it in any way. They set a very low state tax rate for so-called "recreational" marijuana, and additional taxes on it are prohibited. Since the amendment prohibits the inventorying of medical and "recreational" marijuana separately, it will be difficult for Arkansas to collect what little tax there is.