



Proposition 19 – “Regulate, Control and Tax Cannabis Act of 2010”

CWA position – Oppose

A “no” vote means that marijuana will not be legalized in California.

1. Also known as the “Regulate, Control and Tax Cannabis Act of 2010,” Prop 19 allows people 21 years old or older to possess, cultivate, or transport marijuana for personal use.
2. Supporters argue that there are millions of dollars in tax and fee revenue to be gained through legalization. But at what cost to society? Supporters also suggest that Prop 19 will reduce court and jail costs. However, the recent passage of SB 1449 dispels this argument. The bill reduced marijuana possession from a misdemeanor to an infraction, though the fines remain the same. In his signing statement, Gov. Schwarzenegger said, “Notwithstanding my opposition to Proposition 19, however, I am signing this measure because possession of less than an ounce of marijuana is an infraction in everything but name. In this time of drastic budget cuts, prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement, and the courts cannot afford to expend limited resources prosecuting a crime that carries the same punishment as a traffic ticket.”
3. Substance abuse problems already plague our society, whether drugs are legal or illegal. The notion that legalizing a drug that alters one’s ability to perform tasks, impairs normal functioning and represents what many consider to be a gateway to stronger and more addictive and destructive substances can only be detrimental to our culture. Law enforcement officials agree that Prop 19 endangers public safety.
4. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) offers these facts about marijuana:
 - Marijuana is an addictive drug with significant health consequences to its users and others ... The short term effects of marijuana use include: memory loss, distorted perception, trouble with thinking and problem solving, loss of motor skills, decrease in muscle strength, increased heart rate, and anxiety.
 - Marijuana has no medical value that can't be met more effectively by legal drugs.
 - Marijuana users are far more likely to use other drugs like cocaine and heroin than non-marijuana users
 - [A] study of 129 college students found that among heavy users of marijuana critical skills related to attention, memory, and learning were significantly impaired, even after they had not used the drug for at least 24 hours.(See also the National Institute on Drug Abuse’s InfoFacts [here.](#))
5. The DEA cites other vitally important data to consider with regard to marijuana’s effects on society, its potency and the experience of other countries that have experimented with legalization:

Legalization of marijuana, no matter how it begins, will come at the expense of our children and public safety. It will create dependency and treatment issues, and open the door to use of other drugs, impaired health, delinquent behavior, and drugged drivers.

This is not the marijuana of the 1970’s; today’s marijuana is far more powerful. Average THC levels of seized marijuana rose from less than one percent in the mid-1970’s to a national average of over eight

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percent in 2004. And the potency of "B.C. Bud" is roughly twice the national average – ranging from 15 percent to as high as 25 percent THC content.

6. The DEA notes negative experiences with legalization in foreign countries, including the Netherlands where due to “domestic complaints over the spread of marijuana ‘coffee shops,’ the government of the Netherlands has reconsidered its legalization measures. After marijuana became normalized, consumption nearly tripled – from 15 per cent to 44 per cent – among 18 to 20 year-old Dutch youth.” The ramifications of legalization in Switzerland were particularly disturbing. The agency cites that “after liberalization, Switzerland became a magnet for drug users from many other countries. In 1987, Zurich permitted drug use and sales in a part of the city called Platzpitz, dubbed ‘Needle Park.’ By 1992, the number of regular drug users at the park reportedly swelled from a ‘few hundred at the outset in 1987 to about 20,000.’ The area around the park became crime-ridden, forcing closure of the park. The experiment has since been terminated.”
7. Increased crime is a serious and very real concern. An Associated Press article (“[Medical pot is targeted by criminals](#),” March 18, 2010) quotes El Cerrito Police Chief Scott Kirkland who is already critical of the loosened laws concerning medical marijuana and the crimes surrounding its cultivation and sale. He warned, “Whenever you are dealing with drugs and money, there is going to be crime. If people think otherwise, they are very naïve. People think if we decriminalize it, the Mexican cartels and Asian gangs are going to walk away. That’s not the world I live in.” The article also cites several examples of anecdotal evidence of the negative consequences to legalization noting that, “Police and marijuana opponents say the violence is further proof that the proliferation of medical marijuana carries problems that would worsen if pot is legalized or decriminalized.”
 - A man in Washington state was beaten to death last week with what is believed to be a crowbar after confronting an intruder on the rural property where he was growing cannabis to treat painful back problems.
 - Medical marijuana activist Steve Sarich exchanged gunfire with intruders in his home Monday in Kirkland, Wash., shooting and critically injuring one of them.
 - In California, a boy was shot to death in 2007 while allegedly trying to steal a cancer patient's pot plants from his home garden.
 - A respected magazine editor was killed that same year by robbers who targeted his Northern California home for marijuana and money after hearing that his teenage son was growing pot with a doctor's approval.
 - Robbers killed a security guard at a Los Angeles medical marijuana dispensary in 2008.

For additional information on Prop 19 see the [Official Voter Information Guide](#).