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## **Committed to Kansas Kids**

### **Kansas Juvenile Officers Association for the Senate Health & Welfare Committee**

3/7/2019

Senator Gene Suellentrop- Chairman and Committee

Dear Senator Suellentrop and Committee,

My name is Undersheriff Tom Fischer, and I currently serve as president for the Kansas Juvenile Officers Association (KSJOA). The purpose of this testimony is to oppose the legalization of medical marijuana in Kansas.

KSJOA takes a strong opposition to the legalization of medical marijuana, and we feel that the legalization of medical marijuana will have a negative impact on the youth of Kansas.

We need not look any further than to our neighbors to the west. According to "The Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado: The Impact" (Volume 3) put out by the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) report, in 2013, youth in Colorado between the ages 12-17 saw an average past month marijuana usage of 11.6 percent. This is compared to the national average at that time of 7.15 percent. These statistics put Colorado at the third highest in the nation in youth marijuana usage. Prior to legalization of marijuana in 2006, Colorado ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the nation. This report is from a time that predated the passage of recreational usage in their state.

From pre-commercialization to post-commercialization of medical marijuana, Colorado saw an overall 24 percent increase in youth that use marijuana on at least a monthly basis. This also led to a 40 percent increase in drug related discipline in schools, and a 20 percent increase in kids on probation testing positive for marijuana. All these statistics lead us to believe that the legalization of medical marijuana would go against the great work the State of Kansas has put into reducing juvenile crime and recidivism through legislations such as Senate Bill 367 in 2016.

**KANSAS JUVENILE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION**

Those statistics alone are ample reason for our organization to take the stance that we do. Additionally, we are no medical experts, but there are numerous medical reports available that support the negative effects on teenagers that use marijuana. These reports show negative effects ranging from anxiety to brain development issues.

In the DARE program, we teach our children what using marijuana will do to their bodies. Some examples of this are short term memory loss, loss of the ability to concentrate, slow coordination, your ability to judge distance, speed, reaction time, just these effects are harmful to everyone, especially while operating a motor vehicle. Marijuana smoke has more tar, than tobacco smoke, marijuana users have an increased risk of cancer, and marijuana smoke contains 50% to 70% more of some cancer-causing chemicals.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak here today, and we value the work that you do.

Respectfully Submitted,

Undersheriff Tom Fischer  
KSJOA President

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