

Faith Community Rationale for Stopping the Legalization of Recreational Marijuana

On the November 6, 2018 statewide ballot, Michigan citizens will be asked to vote on whether to legalize recreational marijuana in our state. This ballot initiative, funded by outside-of-Michigan billionaires, is being aggressively pushed by the Marijuana industry. Medical marijuana was legalized in 2008 and took 9 years to put healthy regulations on it. This November is about legalizing recreational marijuana.

Why should the faith community care if recreational marijuana is legal? Do we have a responsibility to prevent its expansion? Who are we to project our convictions on others? Below is why we believe recreational marijuana passage in Michigan would be a detriment to our families and communities.

Is Recreational Marijuana mentioned in the Bible?

Although God's Word does not specifically mention *marijuana*, drunkenness is expressly prohibited. And it commands us to be good stewards of our body; its use can cause great harm.

Marijuana is a psychoactive substance that impairs a person's perception of reality, creates passivity, diminishes one's ability to observe, remember, and reason while creating a numbing effect on the mind and body. Studies show that marijuana usage, especially among young people, can cause brain damage.

The concentration of THC (the psychoactive chemical compound in marijuana) in today's marijuana **is much higher than previous generations experienced**, making the drug significantly more potent. Even a small amount of THC can have a negative impact.

Compared to alcohol, a much lower dosage of marijuana can induce intoxication. The purpose for the use of recreational marijuana is to "get high," violating the Christian value of sobriety. If the scriptures prohibit intoxication by alcohol, they also prohibit intoxication by marijuana. Both impair our ability to fulfill God's purpose.

Instead, Christians should endeavor to be filled with the Holy Spirit and refrain from dulling or diminishing our God-given physical and mental ability to serve and glorify God, hear his Spirit, and obey His voice.

What are Scriptures to Back Our Arguments Up?

Following are several scriptures we believe speak to the idea of recreational marijuana.

Ephesians 5:18: *"And do not get drunk on wine [or high on marijuana], for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit."*

1 Thessalonians 5:5-8: *“For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.”*

Titus 2:2,6: *“Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.”*

1 Peter 4:7: *“Therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.”*

1 Peter 5:8: *“Be sober-minded; be watchful.”*

Galatians 5:21: *“...[E]nvy; drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

Proverbs 23:19-21: *“Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way. Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.”*

Proverbs 23:32-33: *“In the end it [alcohol] bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things.”*

Why We Should Oppose Legalization of Recreational Marijuana:

Here are some bullet points that speak to why we - as people of faith - should take this idea seriously and do all we can to make sure it does not win in November. For more details on these points please see the resource page on our website (mentioned below).

It hurts youth. Legalizing recreational marijuana will send a devastating message to the next generation. In our society, things that are deemed legal are widely considered to be moral. It has increased suicides among youth, alters the pathways of their brain, and can often result in addiction. Though some will argue that the age limit is 21 years of age, what they do not tell you is that under this law every adult in a house can have up to 12 plants. This will make it way more accessible than it is now. It is often deceptively cloaked, i.e. in edible format that will look appealing to a child.

Marijuana is a gateway drug. Although not all users will go on to harder drugs, virtually all addicts and drug abusers started with marijuana.

It sets a poor standard. It sets a standard for what is acceptable as society.

It is costly. The social cost to families and children will greatly outweigh any proposed economic benefits.

Federal Law is against it. Federal law designates marijuana as a controlled substance and is

illegal to possess and use. Therefore, if the ballot measure passes the State of Michigan will be out of compliance with Federal Law.

It is irresponsible. As Christians we are commanded to be good citizens and follow the law. The only two exceptions are when the law commands us to do something that God prohibits or when the law prohibits something that God commands us to do. Marijuana does not fall into either of those categories.

Making recreational marijuana legal will make it more accessible and therefore expand its use—and misuse.

Heavy burden to other Industries. Legalization of recreational marijuana has aggressive negative consequences. It has proven to be an increased burden on hospitals and ERs, on the Post Office (as people attempt to ship it out of state in massive measure), on Law Enforcement just to name a few. See resources on our website to provide additional details.

It has been proven to be detrimental. Explore the studies and resources on our website and you will see that it has proven to be of great detriment to individuals and communities, where legalized. If it has proven to fail for other states, why take the chance with ours?

Summary:

We believe in being responsible Christian citizens. We have a duty to be active participants in society. What is allowed through legislation or ballot initiatives is influenced by our actions or inactions at the ballot box.

We have a duty to work to make sure this society is the best it can be; our citizenship here on earth should reflect and be in good representation of what is represented in Heaven. Law is meant for our protection. Boundaries are to protect us - not to limit our fun.

Unleashing recreational marijuana into the streets of Michigan will be an overall negative on who we are as a people. And it will be bad for our communities.

For these reasons and more found on our websites, we urge people of faith to take a stand and to help us stop the legalization of recreational marijuana in Michigan on Tuesday, November 6, 2018.

For more information: www.healthyandproductivemi.org/faith

For more research see: www.healthyandproductivemi.org/resources

To find out how you can educate and mobilize your church and organization on this topic visit www.ctvmichigan.org/stop-marijuana and www.ctvmichigan.org/vote