

Chair: Sen. Jake LaTurner and committee members:

I am writing you reference Senate Bill proposal #155 by the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee. My name is Victor Riggin, the 2nd Vice President with the Kansas Narcotics Officers Association and I represent Law Enforcement Officers from all over the State of Kansas. We come to you as opposition to the SB 155

As a member and current Vice-President of the Kansas Narcotics Officers Association you can already guess that we stand firmly against legalization of marijuana at any level. We anticipated this move and are preparing a strong opposition to this bill. The Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police, Kansas Sheriffs Association, and Kansas Peace Officers Association are also strongly opposed to this proposed legislation.

I have read the SB155 proposal and find myself looking at the language in the proposed bill finding issues in the bill as it is written that should make everyone cringe in fear. The bill is too wide open for interpretation and is too loose with it's conditions. This is not so much as medical marijuana bill for "Care and Compassion" but more like a recreational marijuana bill. I would invite anyone from this committee for a sit down to discuss the numerous problems with the language in this bill.

I will admit we have a strong stance against legalization of marijuana on any level. KNOA does recognize the budget issues the State of Kansas is in and we understand that your job is extremely hard in trying to find a way to make ends meet. But selling illegal narcotics is not the answer. What is told to you is that taxing and controlling marijuana would be the answer to our problems. A couple of issues immediately rise up.

- 1) Marijuana is already a controlled substance and deemed illegal by the United States Government.
- 2) The State of Kansas already has in place a tax system on those who distribute marijuana. The people who make money on dealing marijuana are already being taxed.

We already tax and regulate prescription drugs in this State. One of our biggest problems right now in the war on drugs is the rise in abuse of prescription medications. We have overdoses every year that are directly related to the abuse of prescription medications. Now we are asking to tax and regulate marijuana just as we tax and regulate prescription medications, alcohol or tobacco. We have alcohol related accidents in the State everyday which are related to alcohol. You will hear that nobody has ever died of a marijuana overdose. Either has tobacco but tobacco is one of the leading factors in heart disease and cancer. Where do we draw the line?

The history of THC would lead you to believe that this is a safe drug. That is a myth. The marijuana from the 60's is no match to the marijuana of today. The marijuana of today contains a THC level three times larger than the THC level of the marijuana in the 60's. What does that mean you ask? That means more dependency, more addiction, more of a "high" and more of a problem for our community.

I have 18 years of law enforcement experience and have worked all over the department. I have worked patrol, worked as an undercover officer, lead detective on a homicide case and currently working child sex cases. I have worked the trenches and I can tell you without a doubt that illegal drugs such as marijuana go hand in hand with violence in our streets. The City of Topeka has multiple homicides a year

that are directly related to marijuana. Marijuana is a common denominator in the violence we see on the streets every day.

Many will argue whether or not gun ownership is tied to gun violence. There is no hard data tied to the that as much as some people try and link the two. I invite you to look up the 10 most dangerous cities in the United States when you are talking about violent crime according to Forbes magazine.

- 1) Detroit, MI
- 2) St. Louis, MO
- 3) Oakland, CA
- 4) Memphis, TN
- 5) Birmingham, AL
- 6) Atlanta, GA
- 7) Baltimore, MA
- 8) Stockton, CA
- 9) Cleveland, OH
- 10) Buffalo, NY

As you can see Chicago, IL is not even on that list but had 762 homicides last year. And as I write this 11 people have been killed in the last 48 hours in Chicago, IL. So of those 11 cities seven of them have legalized marijuana on some level.

We are all smart people and we already know that this is merely for proponents of the full legalization of marijuana to get their "foot in the door". Marijuana is a Scheduled Narcotic and is currently illegal by the Federal Government. Passing of such legislation on any level is dangerous and irresponsible. Not only does the passing of legalization of marijuana cause multiple issues in regards to how we do our job on a daily basis but it's impact on the society where we live is strongly affected.

If the violence wasn't enough to make you think twice about legalizing marijuana think about this. Did you know that the top 18 States of marijuana use among kids 12 – 17 years old all have some form of marijuana legalization whether it be medical or recreational? What are we telling our children?

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