

MISSISSIPPI HORIZON



Get the Real Story about Initiative 65

We understand how medical marijuana may sound appealing, but Initiative 65 goes about this completely the wrong way. There are serious consequences that could do real harm to kids, communities, schools, drivers, workers and all Mississippians.

Mississippi needs to take a cautious approach to marijuana. Initiative 65 is an effort by the \$13 billion marijuana industry to legalize marijuana in Mississippi by writing their own regulations and enshrining them in our State Constitution – in effect, protecting Big Marijuana in our Constitution. If we vote to pass this on November 3rd, we will open a Pandora's Box and there will be no turning back since it will then be in our Constitution and out of the reach of our Legislature and Governor.

1. Presented as healthy, but dangerous.
 - a. Initiative 65 would allow marijuana use for broad and nonspecific reasons. This is not about end of life palliative care – it's about creating constitutional protections for an industry that wants as many people as possible to use their drug.
 - b. Studies show permanent brain damage if marijuana is used regularly under age 25
 - c. Negatively affects processing speed, reasoning, executive function, memory
 - d. It's more potent and addictive today than previous generations; it used to have 2% THC – now growers have bred strains to enhance THC content much like Big Tobacco did with nicotine to make it more addictive – popular strains sold in CO now have 17-28%. Some edible products have 80-90% THC.
 - e. US Surgeon General Jerome Adams says there is no such thing as medical marijuana and emphasizes its danger to brain development and how potent it has become.
 - f. CO and OR have seen spikes in car accidents due to drugged drivers, who are slower to react and poorer judges of their surroundings. Marijuana is the drug most likely to be found in drivers fatally injured in car crash.
 - g. Specific examples of marijuana causing youth suicides in CO after consuming marijuana cookie or using concentrated form of marijuana even though no history of depression.

2. If you liked Big Tobacco, you'll love Big Marijuana...
 - a. Big Tobacco said cigarettes were good for you. Their advertising said "More Doctors Smoke Camels," or that Lucky Strike would help with your digestion. That was a big lie and now we spend millions of dollars each year trying to get people to not smoke. Thank goodness Mississippi didn't make the mistake of protecting Big Tobacco in our constitution.
 - b. Now, Big Marijuana is telling the same sort of lie. Our young people will believe them – just like people believed Big Tobacco - and it will be very hard to undo the damage that will be done if marijuana is protected in our constitution.
 - c. The Initiative 65 campaign is being funded by a marijuana industry that is as big as the NFL and is growing fast. They intend to sell a product that can cause permanent damage to people and make as much money as they can for as long as they can. And then leave MS with the impact on families, teachers, law enforcement and children.
3. If marijuana is medicine, then we should treat it like any other medicine with research and testing. We must know what is in it and be able to control the dosage. There can be a medicinal benefit from components of marijuana. Mississippians can use four FDA approved drugs now that are based on CBD and THC being used to treat seizures, AIDS patients and cancer patients. Let's have more research and more safe medicines. But smoking and vaping anything – including marijuana – is not medicine.
4. Initiative 65 would create two sets of drug laws – medical marijuana for the wealthy and well connected and old-fashioned weed for poorer folks. It would be a constitutional right to smoke ~10 joints per day if you are well connected enough to have a doctor give you a certificate and rich enough to afford medical marijuana that costs 40% more than what it costs on the street. But if you don't have access to the certificate or enough cash – because Medicaid and insurance won't pay for marijuana – then you're still at risk of going to jail for smoking pot. A scheme like this is bad public policy and it certainly shouldn't be enshrined in our constitution.
5. Would be a nightmare for law enforcement. That's what we heard recently from Sheriff Tucker in Madison County, Sheriff Sims in Forrest County, and Sheriff Ezell in Jackson County.

6. Doctors could give Mississippians the legal right to smoke 5 ounces of marijuana every four weeks – the legal equivalent to about 300 joints a month or 10/day
 - a. Studies show marijuana negatively affects processing speed, reasoning, executive function and memory. The potential negative impact on workforce, drivers and children is incalculable.

7. The marijuana industry knows that communities don't want pot shops on their street corners. That's why they crafted their constitutional amendment in such a way that if Initiative 65 passes, then no mayor and no city council could restrict where marijuana dispensaries – pot shops – could open.
 - a. The State of Oklahoma has over 2,200 pot shops; a comparable number in MS would yield 20 per county.

8. If you feel like the Legislature should legalize marijuana, you can send that message by voting for Initiative 65A. It would instruct the Legislature to develop a program based on science, with medicine to be overseen by doctors, nurses and pharmacists, and it would limit the smoking of marijuana to terminally ill patients.

9. Initiative 65 would empower 11 unelected people to run this new industry with unprecedented taxing, spending and regulatory authority inconsistent with our form of government.
 - a. Not answerable to the State Legislature or any elected official.

10. We should learn from the mistakes of other states. A YES vote on initiative 65 is gambling with our young people's lives and Mississippi's future.