

Opinion

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Finally here' misses mark: Downsides to legalized marijuana can't be ignored

The "finally here" coverage of legal marijuana in Frederick County, endorsed by the Frederick County Chamber of Commerce, should have emphasized that its use is illegal under federal law.

Despite claims that it is harmless and makes people "mellow," Mary Cannon, professor of psychiatric epidemiology and youth mental health at the RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences in Dublin, Ireland, has cited studies that marijuana can lead to addiction and dependence, underachievement and a lower IQ, and mental health problems.

Her paper is titled "Analyzing the effects of using cannabis on youth mental health."

The paper "Marijuana Violence and Law," published in the Journal of Addiction Research & Therapy, documents through case studies how "Violence is a well-publicized, prominent risk from the more potent, current marijuana available."

In South Carolina, a man was sentenced to life in prison on June 22 after using a semi-automatic rifle to kill a mail carrier who failed to deliver his pot. He fired about 20 times into the back of her mail truck.

A legal opinion from Attorney General Merrick Garland cites studies that marijuana use "was associated with elevated risky decision-making" and caused "significant deficits" to "executive planning," while adversely affecting "general motor performance, sustained attention, spatial working memory, and response inhibition."

The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives has emphasized that marijuana users are barred from buying guns even in states where pot is legal.

Marijuana users jeopardize their own job prospects, especially federal jobs that require security clearances.

Dr. Vivek Murthy, the surgeon general, has expressed concern about how rapidly states have legalized marijuana without understanding the potency of the drug. "No amount of marijuana is safe for pregnant women or our youth," he said.

Yet, Maryland state Delegates Karen Simpson and Ken Kerr, as well as Debbie Streeton, manager of member services for the Frederick County Chamber of Commerce, were at a ribbon cutting at the Curaleaf store on July 1 when "adult use" sales began.

Legalization was implemented in Maryland under Gov. Wes Moore, a former investor and board member of a marijuana company.

Officials in Connecticut and Massachusetts are investigating Curaleaf for alleged undisclosed financial ties to Russian billionaire oligarch and Vladimir Putin ally Roman Abramovich.

The investigative news organization Forensic News reported that Curaleaf received hundreds of millions of dollars in financing from Abramovich during its early years.

Were these ties disclosed to Maryland and Frederick County officials?

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