

September 15, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise
Minority Whip
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Nadler
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
2141 Rayburn H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee
2056 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Oppose the Commercialization and Mass Marketing of High Potency Marijuana

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader Hoyer, Whip Scalise, Chairman Nadler, and Ranking Member Collins,

There have been reports that the House of Representatives may take up and vote on H.R. 3884, the Marijuana Reinvestment and Expungement (MORE) Act later this month. As Americans on the front lines in the battle against opioid and drug addiction, and on the side of treatment and prevention, we write to strongly oppose this bill.

This legislation is being touted as a social justice bill aimed at decriminalizing marijuana and expunging the record of low-level offenders. In fact, this bill as currently drafted would **not just decriminalize marijuana, but fully legalize and commercialize the drug**. This would allow major corporations like Altria (formerly Philip Morris, makers of Marlboro Cigarettes), vaping giants Juul and PAX, and Imperial Brands (makers of Kool Cigarettes) to deepen their existing investments into the marijuana industry and expand those investments to capture the United States market.

The latest research and science should bring us all pause:

- Recent research [published by JAMA](#) predicts 6,800 additional stoned driving deaths on the road nationally should federal legalization become reality.
- Illicit markets have thrived in every ‘legal’ state, such as Oregon, where illegal marijuana makes up [more than 70%](#) of the market.
- The for-profit marijuana industry targets kids, both offline and on social media.

- Marijuana is [addictive](#) and may cause mental illnesses, ranging from [anxiety](#) and [depression](#) to [schizophrenia](#) and [psychosis](#), and even [suicidal](#) thoughts, even more when initiated in youth.
- Marijuana use has an association with future substance misuse and addiction. Research has found users of marijuana are more likely to [misuse prescription opioids](#). Though the majority of those using marijuana won't go on to other drugs, more than 95% of those using heroin and cocaine started with marijuana.
- Marijuana use can severely [impact brain development](#) in youth, leading to lower IQ and worse mental health, academic, and professional outcomes.
- With a for-profit industry marketing in a variety of ways, more pregnant women than ever are using marijuana, and this has resulted in [severe consequences](#) for newborns.
- Marijuana use can also cause [cardiovascular harm](#), and may lead to certain kinds of [cancer](#).

The “MORE” Act contains virtually no public health guardrails. If passed, the bill would fully legalize unlimited potency marijuana products, including high potency flavored vapes in Juul-like devices and nearly any other product appealing to youth. Any form of advertising would be allowed, including on television and during events such as the Super Bowl.

Allowing a massive corporate takeover of an addictive drug with scientifically proven public health harms is not good for our nation as we continue to grapple with a global pandemic, along with a crippling opioid crisis. Should this bill pass into law, the FDA and USDA will not have the resources or ability to effectively regulate these products for the safety of consumers.

We urge you to reject this bill.

Sincerely,

Smart Approaches to Marijuana

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)

National Association of Assistant United States Attorneys

National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition

NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals

National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA)

National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference Connecticut

Family Policy Alliance

Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee

Family Research Council

Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation

National Drug Free Workplace Alliance

National Families in Action

Caron Treatment Centers

Drug Free Schools Coalition

Coalition of Public Safety Officer Support Services

Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)

International Faith Based Coalition

Institute for Behavior and Health, Inc.
Rosenthal Center for Addiction Studies
Drug Free America Foundations, Inc.
Save Our Society from Drugs
Resilient Futures Network, LLC
California Narcotic Officers Association
Florida Coalition Alliance
Greater New Orleans Drug Demand Reduction Coalition
Cannabis Industry Victims Educating Litigators
Marijuana Victims Alliance
Moms Strong
Parents Opposed to Pot
Every Brain Matters