

Robert Viets

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NYS PTA ANNOUNCES OPPOSITION TO RECREATIONAL WEED, URGES ALBANY TO HIT PAUSE

(NEW YORK, NY) - Today, [Smart Approaches to Marijuana New York \(SAM-NY\)](#), the New York affiliate of Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM), applauded the NYS PTA for their recently announced opposition to recreational marijuana as part of this year's state budget. The statewide parent and teacher organization is the latest to join law

enforcement and medical associations in calling out the significant risks and costs of commercializing marijuana in New York. This move is crucial as just months ago another study based on [previous work](#) found that marijuana legalization [reduces students' grades](#).

"Parents and teachers understand better than anyone, that the last thing we want to do is create an environment where young people are endangered by increased drug use," stated Dr. Kevin Sabet, SAM-NY President and former Obama White House advisor. "Elected officials must heed the calls of the medical community, law enforcement, mental health professionals, and the NYS PTA and reject political pressure to rush through this decision. The costs do not outweigh the clear risks."

SAM-NY, the leading voice in opposition to the governor's effort to rush through legalized weed, is organizing people across the state to contact legislators about the realities of increased pot use including significant physical and mental health impacts on young people.

In a memo released in opposition, the NYS PTA said in part that recreational weed, "creates a public health threat and an open door with a mixed message to young people that using recreational marijuana is acceptable. With a current opiate epidemic in our midst, introducing recreational marijuana to the market is counterintuitive." The organization goes on to say, "NYS PTA agrees that disproportionate arrests and jailing of racial and ethnic minority groups is abhorrent, yet legalizing marijuana is not going to solve this systemic problem."

"Andrew Cuomo's flip-flop on marijuana commercialization may be welcomed by the pro-pot industry, backed by Big Tobacco, but the facts and science are clear that legal weed will have serious economic and health consequences without generating enough revenue to cover the staggering costs." Sabet said.

- Every major medical association in the U.S. has released studies or statements opposing the commercialization and expansion of today's ultra-potent marijuana.
- Research [announced in 2017](#) and studies from major medical journals found that regular marijuana users were more than twice as likely to move on to abuse prescription opioids.
- [Statistics](#) from the Colorado Department of Public Safety detailed that in the first two years of legalization, Hispanic and African American kids arrested for marijuana-related offenses rose 29 and 58 percent respectively. Every state that has commercialized marijuana has seen a multitude of public health concerns. These include increases in [addiction](#), [youth drug use](#), [motor vehicle accidents](#) and higher numbers of [minority arrests](#).
- Reports out of California and Oregon found high percentages of pot grown for commercial use there are laced with pesticides and other impurities like molds, metals, and bacteria.
- California, Washington and Colorado have missed revenue projections from legalized weed by as much as 50%.

"This is not about social justice. It's about money. Legislators and other elected officials now have to ask themselves this: do we want New York to follow Colorado's lead and have more pot shops in our communities than McDonalds and Starbucks combined, clustered in low-income, minority neighborhoods? States are failing to hold the industry accountable, young people are experiencing serious health issues and taxpayers have failed to see the financial windfall. It's time to hit the brakes on Big Pot."

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About SAM New York

[SAM New York](#) is a non-profit, 501(c)(4) social welfare organization dedicated to promoting healthy marijuana policies that do not involve legalizing drugs. SAM New York engages in high-impact political campaigns to oppose marijuana legalization and commercialization.

Evidence shows that marijuana - which has skyrocketed in average potency over the past decades - [is addictive and harmful to the human brain](#), especially when used by adolescents. In states that have already legalized the drug, there has been an [increase](#) in drugged driving crashes, [youth marijuana use](#), and costs that far outweigh [pot revenues](#). These states have seen [a black market that continues to thrive](#), sustained marijuana [arrest rates](#), and [tobacco company investment in marijuana](#).

Marijuana is not a harmless drug. View the [stories of its victims here](#).

www.sam-ny.org



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