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POLICE DEPARTMENT

Town of Duxbury

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Statement of Chief Matthew Clancy

Potential Legalization of Recreational Marijuana

As Chief of Police in the Town of Duxbury I possess the authority and professional responsibility to opine publicly on matters of public safety which may affect my community of jurisdiction. I have been asked by my employer, The Duxbury Board of Selectmen, to provide my opinion on the upcoming ballot question which seeks to legalize recreational marijuana in the Commonwealth. I applaud the Board for taking up this very controversial matter. I am more than happy to provide my thoughts.

I am by no means an expert on the potential addictive qualities of the drug, nor am I an expert on the potential long term health effects on the body and brain created by regular ingestions of THC products.

I, like many, have relied on studies and research to gain a better understanding. I have attended several presentations delivered by physicians and other medical professionals who certainly do qualify as subject matter experts. One such presentation was delivered by Dr. Kevin Hill, an addiction psychiatrist at McLean Hospital and an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He made a presentation earlier this year at a Parent Connection-Duxbury FACTS event held at our Performing Arts Center in Duxbury. Dr. Hill discussed his clinical research showing the effects of today's potent and

unpredictable substances on the developing teen brain. Particularly marijuana. I came away with a new understanding of the hazards of marijuana. I learned that young adults risk permanent damage to their developing brain from regular marijuana use.

In addition to medical concerns, there are also social and economic issues to be considered. We don't have to look far to find data on actual experiences with the legalization of recreational marijuana. Colorado, as we all know, has legalized recreational marijuana. Colorado, while much larger geographically than Massachusetts, has a very similar demographic. Some of the data coming from Colorado over the last 2-3 years is noteworthy;

- Marijuana use by teens is up 20% there since legalization. Not surprisingly, Colorado is now the #1 state for teen marijuana use in the country.
- The homeless population in Colorado is markedly on the rise. The Salvation Army reported in 2014 that the homeless population they served had rise 33% from the previous year. They have reported that 30% of the new homeless, most of whom are young adults, had indicated they came to Colorado because of legalized pot. Other organizations operating independent shelters have reported increases as high as 500% in their facilities over the last 2-3 years. All report the main common denominator for these people to flock to Colorado was legalized marijuana.

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- The city of Denver is home to 117 traditional pharmacies. With the legalization of medical marijuana the same city is also home to 198 medical marijuana facilities. Read between the lines.
 - A January 2016 business profile of Colorado indicated the State, at that time, was home to 505 medical marijuana centers and 322 retail marijuana shops. In the same profile we learned that the State had 227 McDonald's restaurants. There are nearly 100 more retail pot shops than McDonald's in Colorado.
 - Colorado schools are reporting substantial increases in suspensions due to marijuana dealing within the schools there.
 - Police report that instances of impaired operation of vehicles has increased markedly since legalization.
 - Police also report that there has been no case load relief due to legalization. The black market which was supposed to drift away after legalization has not. It is alive and well.
 - Colorado is now finding that the tax revenues from legal marijuana do not cover the cost of regulatory efforts, enforcement, and treatment programs. There is no tax revenue windfall.

Proponents have cited the will of the people and the inevitability of legalization as a means to swing opinion. However, the data doesn't support this. Studies on

illegal drug use have been relatively consistent over the last decade in that no more than 10% of the population indulges in illegal drugs, meaning 90% of the population does not partake in legal drugs. Hardly the overwhelming will of the people.

Colorado's legalization nearly had deadly consequences right here in Duxbury earlier this year. We averted disaster when a troubled man drove through town one Sunday morning and decided to open fire randomly on passersby with a shotgun. Two people were shot and a third narrowly escaped being struck by gunfire. Your officers responded quickly and effectively and ended the rampage with a taser deployment after the man attacked them with a knife. What you don't know about that tragic night is that the suspect was traveling back to Maine from a trip to Colorado to purchase marijuana legally. Investigators seized a large quantity of marijuana in his car that night. All packed and labeled for retail sale in Colorado.

Proponents and those in opposition will be spending the next few months debating the science and the data. Proponents have described the initiative as a common sense approach to the regulation of marijuana like alcohol. I believe the ballot question has nothing to do about common sense and freedom of choice. It has to do with money. The list of wealthy and influential investors and promoters is growing daily and make no mistake, this is about profits with minimal regard for the consequences on community and families. This is a corporate effort to create big marijuana just as we saw big tobacco in years past.

There is a very pragmatic argument against this proposal that resonates very strongly with me. I don't think it takes an expert to understand that the

legalization of marijuana for recreational use will open up this drug to a new generation at a time when we are struggling to get a handle on addiction in the current generation. It is my opinion as a police officer and a father that this proposal at this point in time defies any common sense. Substance abuse in general has become a substantial issue here and throughout the region. People are losing their battle with addiction every day in our area. The opioid crisis is real. Communities and families are struggling to get a handle of this epidemic. Police and community partners are taking extraordinary measures to stabilize the current situation. It doesn't appear to me that there is any common sense in a proposal that seeks to legalize a gateway drug, particularly now with the ongoing crisis of substance abuse. As your police chief and as the father of 4 children I urge you all to reject this ballot questions.



Matthew M. Clancy