



ARIZONA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
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**ARIZONA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE BISHOPS' STATEMENT OPPOSING THE
LEGALIZATION OF RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA**

June 30, 2016

The Bishops of the Arizona Catholic Conference oppose the campaign to legalize the recreational use of marijuana in Arizona because it is harmful to both children and families in Arizona.

Legalizing the recreational use of marijuana sends a message to children and young people that drug use is socially and morally acceptable. As people of faith, we must speak out against this effort and the damaging effects its passage would have on the children and families of Arizona.

Studies have shown that adolescents who use marijuana have significant differences in brain structure and cognitive functioning compared to those who do not use marijuana and experience up to an eight-point drop in IQ. Furthermore, based on what happened in just two years after Colorado legalized marijuana, it is estimated that if Arizona passes this measure, tens of thousands of additional 8th graders here will smoke marijuana for the first time.

Marijuana-related traffic accidents and other problems are also likely to dramatically increase if recreational marijuana use is legalized. In Colorado for example, marijuana-related traffic deaths dramatically increased after recreational marijuana was legalized. Additionally, Colorado witnessed similar dramatic increases in hospitalizations and emergency room visits related to marijuana usage after recreational use was legalized.

In states that have legalized marijuana, there has also been an increase in the use of harder drugs like cocaine and heroin since marijuana was legalized, which only further increased societal costs.

For the reasons mentioned above, and others, it is anticipated that legalizing the recreational use of marijuana in Arizona will lead to more abuse by teens, more emergency room visits, more traffic deaths, and more societal costs. Accordingly, due to the detrimental effect it would have on children, families, and all of society, we strongly oppose this dangerous proposal.

Most Rev. Eduardo A. Nevares
Auxiliary Bishop of Phoenix

Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted
Bishop of Phoenix

Most Rev. James S. Wall
Bishop of Gallup

Most Rev. Gerald F. Kicanas
Bishop of Tucson