



Citizens for a Safe and Healthy Texas

Dear Texans,

Please [read this impactful article below, written by Dr. Matt Poling](#) of College Station, Texas. Then share this article with the Senate [Committee on Water, Agriculture & Rural Affairs](#) and insist they oppose [HB 1805](#).

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Republicans Should Be the Party of Mental Health, Not Marijuana

BY [MATT POLING](#), MAY 8, 2023

<https://sanangelolive.com/news/live-thought/2023-05-08/republicans-should-be-party-mental-health-not-marijuana>

OPINION — When the Texas legislature approved “Compassionate Use” of low THC cannabis products in 2015, it was apparently under the false assumption that there was something in the magic plant other than the addictive, brain damaging THC which the medical marijuana industry might deliver. But HB 1805 makes it abundantly clear that THC is exactly the substance they want to introduce to more Texans. Versions of the bill include no cap on daily THC prescribing and a quintupling of the THC potency to 5%, which is more THC than was in the pure plant prior to its industrialization in the past two decades.

“Medical marijuana” is just a Trojan horse to open our gates to full legalization, normalization and commercialization of an addiction-for-profits, THC-delivery scheme which is devastating other states. It differs from the tobacco industry’s scheme only in the fact that nicotine didn’t cause impaired driving, depression, suicidal thoughts . . . or schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia is the most devastating of all psychiatric diagnoses. It primarily afflicts young adults, usually rendering them dependent on government services for life. Just last week, a large bombshell study on the impact of the recent increased use and potency of cannabis was published in a major journal which shocked the medical world. It estimated that as many as *30% of new schizophrenia cases in young men are now caused by THC exposure*.

As a primary care physician who is increasingly seeing addiction and psychiatric injury from today’s high THC potency marijuana products, I was shocked to see the medical marijuana industry’s HB 1805 fly through the house without any serious debate. I have personally seen patients prescribed THC from such potpreneurs for medical conditions for which it has no proven benefit and has instead worsened their symptoms.

Cannabis is not a proven treatment for several of the conditions which are unfortunately already allowed under “Compassionate Use”. But now the industry wants to massively expand their THC market to include those reporting “chronic pain”. But *no pain society endorses this*, as the latest evidence shows cannabis works no better than placebo. Further, it is not an opioid harm reduction strategy, as cannabis use appears to increase rather than decrease the risk of developing nonmedical prescription opioid use and opioid use disorder.

The American Psychiatric Association states “*there is no current scientific evidence that cannabis is in any way beneficial for the treatment of any psychiatric disorder*” and that there is “*a strong association of cannabis use with the onset of psychiatric disorders.*” Further, the organization advises that any proposed treatments should be evidence-based *and FDA-approved*.

The National Academies of Sciences has also debunked many of marijuana’s other touted medical benefits and found evidence of “*problem cannabis use,*” priming for other addictions and adverse

mental health outcomes. It warned that there is “*substantial evidence*” that marijuana use increases the risk of developing suicidal thoughts, schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders. Since then, more prospective studies have shown an increase in psychotic illnesses of 3 to 10-fold depending on the age of first exposure, *THC concentration*, and length of use.

If the medical marijuana industry is allowed to quintuple the THC potency of their product and simultaneously vastly expand its customer base, it will promote psychosis and some of those afflicted are going to kill. Maybe just themselves, as it promotes suicidality and is now the number one substance found in teen and young adult suicide victims in Colorado. Maybe other drivers, as Colorado saw a doubling of THC related accidents. Maybe their children, as here in Texas the 2020 Department of Family and Protective Services report, showed the substance most likely to be actively used by the perpetrator of abuse or neglect fatalities was marijuana with 84 marijuana-related incidents. By comparison, the number for alcohol was 25, and opioids just four.

Or maybe they will be perpetrators of “inexplicable” acts of mass violence at a church, school, or a parade. *The New York Times* reported (then removed from the internet) that one of the conflicts Salvador Ramos, the identified mass murderer of 19 kids and two school teachers at Robb Elementary in Uvalde, had with the grandmother who he shot in the face was that she “did not let him smoke weed” under her roof. While no single factor fully explains our decade-long spike in such violence, Ramos, Sutherland Springs church shooter Devin Kelley, and Eddie Ray Routh, the murderer of American hero Chris Kyle are more the rule than the exception as marijuana-using psychotics.

So why haven't you heard more about the connection between the increase in marijuana use and potency and the increase in “random” acts of violence? For one, the news media would rather (selectively) focus on the ideologies of the psychotic perpetrators. Of course, they don't actually have coherent political ideologies, but that won't stop them from trying to fit it into their narrative.

They also want to keep the focus on guns and away from the substance that most Democrats believe is “recreational” or even “medicinal”. But unlike marijuana use, gun ownership has been part of our nation's culture for centuries and gun technology hasn't changed

in decades. By contrast, THC use and potency has exploded in the past decade in lockstep with such violent acts.

So why are some Republicans helping them smokescreen the issue? Instead of following the science, they seem to be following anecdotal testimonials provided by the medical marijuana industry. Why is such an important bill for the health and safety of Texans in Senator Charles Perry's Committee on Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs? And why is Senator Perry, by all reports a sensible and solid Christian conservative representing San Angelo and west Texas, even carrying the water for marijuana in the first place?

So if this massive expansion of THC potency and use becomes law, don't blame the doctors and researchers who warned you. Don't blame the greedy marijuana companies either. No doubt, they believe in their product as much as Purdue Pharmaceuticals or Phillip Morris did. As Thomas Sowell observed, blaming greed is like blaming gravity for plane crashes. Blame your Republican Senators who ignored the science and instead listened to a small special interest group monkeying around with their own nefarious agenda. If we won't say no to them now, how will we later when they've been allowed to grow into an 800-pound gorilla?

Due to an effective propaganda campaign and a complicit news media, large gaps remain between the public's perception of cannabis and the scientific realities. But as Sowell is more famous for saying, "Facts are stubborn things," as the marijuana movement is discovering in their many recent failures to hook additional states. Anyone thinking that this medicalization of an addictive, brain-damaging substance is progress may soon discover that when headed in the wrong direction, the one who turns back first is the *true* progressive and, like with the tobacco and pharmaceutical industry, live to regret that relationship.

The Texas Senate needs to protect the health and safety of Texans by killing the marijuana industry's HB 1805--before it kills Texans.

About the Author: *Matt Poling received his bachelor's degree in biomedical science from Texas A&M University in 1991. During his time at A&M, Matt was the commander of the Corps of Cadets and was awarded the Brown-Earl Rudder Outstanding Graduate Award for the 1990-91 graduating class. Upon graduation, Matt attended the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, where he was class president from 1991 to 1992. He then completed the Waco*

Family Practice Residency Program, where he was chief resident from 1997 to 1998. Matt is a family practice physician at the Scott and White Clinic in College Station, as well as an assistant professor at the Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine. Matt was a physician in the U.S. Air Force from 1998 to 2003, with assignments to Colorado Springs and San Antonio as well as a deployment to Saudi Arabia. From 2009 to 2010, Matt and his family lived in Heidelberg, Germany, where Matt was a civilian family practice physician for the U.S. Army. Matt and his wife, Ashli Poling, met while working at a Kanakuk Camp in the Ozarks during the summer of 1991 and were married in 1995. Ashli, from Arkansas, graduated from Baylor in 1993. Upon graduation, Ashli became a high school math teacher. Ashli now stays at home with their four children. Matt is on the Board of Directors for the Rudder Association of Texas A&M and a medical advisor for Every Brain Matters. He and his family are members of Grace Bible Church in College Station.

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