



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daphne Jordan

Statement from Senator Daphne Jordan in opposition to legislation legalizing recreational marijuana

SEN. DAPHNE JORDAN March 30, 2021

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“During our Senate Session today, I voted against Senate Bill S.854A, legislation that would legalize the use of recreational marijuana. I voted against this controversial bill for many good reasons.

Recreational marijuana poses a serious public safety risk, especially in the critical area of traffic accidents where impaired driving is an issue. According to the Journal of the American Medical Association (Internal Medicine), traffic fatalities rose in Colorado since it legalized the use of recreational marijuana. Since Colorado legalized recreational marijuana in 2014, there have been an additional 75 deaths resulting from traffic accidents, on average, annually.

In states such as Oregon and California, the biggest challenge after marijuana was legalized has been roadway safety and how to properly hold accountable people who endanger themselves, and others, while driving impaired by marijuana. Studies show that marijuana adversely impacts reaction time, hand-eye coordination, depth perception, and increases sleepiness – and accurate roadside scientific tests do not exist yet.

Law enforcement has also shared that other states have seen increases in violence and crime since legalizing marijuana and that it's also spurred illegal black-market activity.

Recreational marijuana could also potentially become a gateway drug that opens the door to other forms of substance abuse.

This legislation ignores input from law enforcement and district attorneys and fails to effectively address the issue of people driving while impaired, potentially placing lives in danger in every community across the state.

This bill will dramatically increase the chances that young children will be exposed or have access to marijuana, a fact that has been demonstrated in other states that have legalized marijuana.

The bill also fails to include adequate safeguards to ensure workplace safety.

I'm not alone in expressing these serious concerns. The New York State Sheriff's Association, the New York State Parent Teacher Association, the Medical Society of the State of NY, and many other organizations, oppose legalizing recreational marijuana and have said that this harmful legislation is counterintuitive.

Supporters of this bill point to the tax revenue expected to be generated by recreational marijuana sales. To that, I say: What is the price of negatively impacting public health?

It's for all of these reasons that I voted for public health and public safety by voting against the legalization of recreational marijuana."

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