The Phyllis Schlafly Report

POTUS Trial Balloon on Pot

By John and Andy Schlafly

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On Monday, President Trump floated a trial balloon to downgrade the federal ban on marijuana, and cannabis stocks skyrocketed by 25-40% on the news. This pro-marijuana change is something that the pot industry had hoped Biden would do for them, but never expected it from the Republican side.

Last November, 4 out of 5 Republican states defeated heavily funded ballot initiatives to legalize marijuana, with more than 75% of Trump's supporters voting against the drug. Someone is giving Trump bad advice by encouraging him to give a shot in the arm to cannabis, which is the name preferred by marijuana dealers.

Marijuana farms are magnets for illegal aliens, and also exploiters of forced child labor. Last month a raid by Homeland Security at two of these farms in California netted the arrest of 361 illegal aliens, who included criminals convicted of rape, serial burglary, DUIs, and hit-and-run.

Federal law enforcement agents had to overcome more than 500 rioters who tried to block these arrests, one of whom shot at the agents while other protesters damaged vehicles. A total of 14 children were found working at these two locations.

The marijuana farms had licenses to operate, but there are many thousands of illegal marijuana farms today. In California, most of the licenses granted to grow marijuana have gone inactive, as the illegal grows run by criminal gangs have infiltrated the supply of pot.

Despite the proliferation of crime, much of it by illegal aliens, Trump is being pressured to reclassify marijuana as a less harmful Schedule III drug, like steroids or Tylenol with codeine. Currently marijuana is classified by the federal government in Schedule I, which is the category of drugs including cocaine that are prohibited for any purpose.

This reclassification by the federal government would enable marijuana sellers to take tax deductions for their business expenses, such as television and internet advertising. IRS Code Section 280E prohibits Schedule I drug dealers from deducting business expenses other than the cost of goods sold, and if this changes then pot promotion will become pervasive.

The potency of marijuana has sharply increased since a generation ago, as its THC content grew by 21% between 1995 and 2015 alone. A 2022 study found that 12% of drug-related emergency department visits were due to marijuana, most often for cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome, which is severe stomach pain and vomiting that afflicts long-term consumers of the drug.

The CDC warns that 30% of marijuana users develop cannabis use disorder, which includes an increased likelihood of "problems with attention, memory, and learning" and reckless car-driving while under the influence of the drug. Like many addictions, there is a never-ending increased craving in desperation by marijuana users for more to attain the same "high" as before.

Voters in Oklahoma rejected legalizing marijuana for recreational use in 2023, while the state has been overrun by 3,000 illegal farms controlled by Chinese gangs, to export this weed to other states. Two months ago Oklahoma's Attorney General announced a drug bust of 40,723 marijuana plants and more than 1,000 pounds of processed marijuana.

While there has been talk about prohibiting the purchase of American farmland by China, the expansion of marijuana farms is a greater problem. In addition to Oklahoma, the States of California, Maine, Massachusetts, and Oregon all have a problem with Chinese gangs controlling marijuana operations.

Legalizing or downgrading the classification of pot was not a campaign promise by Trump, but was instead an idea raised by a donor at a fundraising event in Bedminster, New Jersey, one of the liberal states that has legalized this harmful drug. Trump's NJ country club is not surrounded by the pot operations and their foul odor that have driven people away from California, Oregon, and Colorado.

Californians complain about the "sewer-like" smell of marijuana as it has taken over the Golden State in the last decade, without any redeeming benefits. Earlier this year the Cathedral City town council adopted a moratorium on any expansion or new opening of a cannabis business because the "disgusting" odor has diminished the quality of life for residents and harms the environment.

The proliferation of illegal cannabis farms, which become impossible to stop once marijuana is embraced, has led to rampant use of harmful pesticides and chemicals that are unlawfully dumped directly into the environment to contaminate groundwater. Yet liberal environmentalists are mostly silent about this.

Two weeks ago, New York City announced that it would refuse to renew the licenses of more than 100 marijuana dispensaries that are illegally operating within 500 feet of a school. By April, D.C. authorities had closed 50 illegal dispensaries in its pot market exceeding $4 million in monthly sales, and these drugs may have worsened its crime epidemic.

John and Andy Schlafly are sons of Phyllis Schlafly (1924-2016) and lead the continuing Phyllis Schlafly Eagles organizations with writing and policy work.