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Letter: Detriments of pot well-documented

EDITOR:

Alan Dean Foster's column printed in the Courier is typical of what happens even when intelligent, educated people defend this drug. They say things that are provably untrue.

Foster doubts marijuana's impact on adolescent brain development and school performance. Dozens of studies have shown that teenage marijuana users do worse in school, drop out at higher rates, and underperform for the rest of their lives. They earn less as adults and are less satisfied with their careers and relationships.

Recent research shows the permanent damage is found in those who start using marijuana before age 16, or maybe 17 or 18. Even if they quit using, they have lower IQ, less impulse control and can't problem-solve as well. And MRI studies show their brains work differently.

Ten percent of teens smoke marijuana daily. They have the worst problems, and teachers do see this. As one English teacher told me, "Pot-smoking students are the worst. The only good thing about them is that papers that aren't handed in don't have to be graded."

Foster says legalization couldn't make things worse. First of all, we're here because of "medical" marijuana laws, which are a form of legalization. They're phony laws that pretend to be medical while making marijuana legally available to everyone; the typical "patient" is a young male with a history of drug abuse. States with these laws have much higher rates of teenage marijuana use.

Legalizing recreational use would mean a marijuana industry advertising and promoting the drug to kids, just like the alcohol and tobacco industries do. Teen use would go even higher, as is already happening in Colorado.

Foster's column is evidence for one thing, however - that even an intelligent, educated professional writer can't defend marijuana without saying things that aren't true.

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