

Dear County Commissioners,

I apologize that I cannot be there in person today. I wanted to give you my statement for your review.

I am a community volunteer with a Masters in Mental Health Counseling. I have made 6 trips to Tallahassee using my own funds to help prevent the devastation that has other states have experienced when legalized marijuana.

Our legislators are attempting to implement regulations for a drug that is addictive, is not supported by medical associations nor research, can be grown in backyards, is illegal under federal law and a cash product, IS NOT A PRESCRIPTION to say this is challenging is more than an understatement. Look at the many issues our state and families have with alcohol and prescriptions drugs. Both highly regulated and both highly abused.

The bills are being aligned as we speak. Zoning or limiting the number of dispensaries was briefly discussed. Regardless of the legislative outcome the marijuana industry is targeting the Tampa Bay area, Orlando and Miami. These cities have the densest populations and therefore the greatest potential for sales.

My property value will decrease if a pot dispensary locates next door or in close proximity. I already have camera and locked gate on my commercial property but believe I will need at least two full-time security guards. I am concerned about the new clientele wandering through our neighborhoods. As a small business owner, the increase security and insurance costs are going to greatly impact our profit and discourage us from expanding.

If transportation is an issue these patients have ample access with home delivery available 24/7/7. Plus the recommendations (not prescriptions) are written for 30-45 days supply. In other words patients do not need to travel to a dispensary every day.

We need to learn from other states mistakes not reinvent the smoke of devastation.

Concerns:

- Most states that have legalized medical marijuana [less than 5% use](#) it for truly medical
- PILL MILLS
 - Unlike the pill mills these marijuana dispensaries are a **cash only product** which has lead to crime at the store and surrounding neighborhoods as clients have access to both cash and drugs.
 - Floridians were blindsided when the pill mills infiltrated our neighborhoods. These dispensaries will be more difficult to shut down once opened. We don't need them and neighborhoods don't want them.
 - We want to avoid the potential for pill mills to advertise and undercut each other for customer sales (similar to "gas wars" of years ago or "happy hour" scenarios).
- [Increase in black market activity](#)- "Legalization was supposed to get rid of the black market – it hasn't done that – I would estimate that the black market has grown [20 fold since legalization](#)," said Gaasche, supervisor of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration office. flood of criminals – individuals and organized groups – are coming to Colorado to grow pot for transport to other parts of the U.S.
- After almost twenty years, [March 15, 2017](#)- The San Diego County Board of Supervisors Wednesday voted to ban all marijuana businesses in unincorporated county areas. The ban includes all medical and non-medical marijuana facilities, collectives, dispensaries, farms, growing and cultivation.
- [Opioid use increases](#) in states with legalized marijuana. "We found support for the synergistic effect on an individual level; people who tend to use more marijuana also tend to use more opioids," said Scott Novak, PhD, senior research scientist at RTI International, a leading research institute in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

- The 71% was the percentage of voters who voted not a percentage of eligible voters. 40% of **eligible voters** voted yes for amendment 2. (20% of registered voters did not even vote.)

We want to prevent what happened with Big Pharma from happening with Big Marijuana in Florida. We want to avoid the pill mill scenario we experienced several years ago. **Given the number of people dying in our state from opioid abuse be it heroin or prescription drugs we do not want to add fuel to this fire by inadequately regulating 'medical' marijuana dispensary zoning, licensing and locations.**

If Tampa Bay has the number of sick "patients" projected by the health department in need of marijuana you should consider budgeting for additional hospitals and rehabilitation centers too.

For these reasons, I support a limited number of dispensaries to 4 or less.

Sincerely, Teresa Miller tmiller@stoprxdrugabuse.org