



The Gazette

— PART 1 —

TEEN: COLORADO VOTERS WERE DUPED INTO LEGALIZING RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA

“The weed, not alcohol or tobacco, came first, and the more I used, the more I drank, and the more pills I eventually popped. That doesn’t happen to everyone who uses weed, but it happens to enough of us. It’s a gateway.” — Kaleb, 19, a former addict

Nineteen-year-old Kaleb is 41 days and seven hours sober when he sits down for a long conversation about his marijuana addiction.

Two more months, his treatment providers tell him, and he’ll likely be able to deliver his first clean drug test in many years showing no presence of THC, the active ingredient in cannabis that produces a euphoric high and can affect the mind and body for weeks after use — especially if you’re like Kaleb, who was getting high every day along with about 6 percent of American high school seniors. This according to the federally funded Monitoring the Future, one of the United States’ most extensive and longest-running surveys of students’ drug use and attitudes toward substances.

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And when he’s healthy and confident enough, **Kaleb also wants to work to stop the United States’ burgeoning marijuana industry and to reverse what he calls “clueless and dangerous” cannabis laws.** Kaleb’s story suggests a state at risk of triggering a public health crisis that will hit youths especially hard because they are caught in a lot of the same social dynamics Kaleb said he found in his high school’s cafeteria.

“It’s [marijuana industry] all so misleading, and there’s a lot of trickery going on because there are big money and politics in this and not enough people standing up to do the right thing because they’re afraid of losing something — like money, power, privilege or image,” Kaleb said. “I compare it to Big Tobacco and bogus 1950s ads pushing everyone to smoke cigarettes — you know, as an expression of personal freedom and with a mythical 9 out of 10 doctors saying it’s all right. Only this time, it’s not just a buzz from some nicotine we’re talking about. **Weed is a psychoactive, mind-altering substance. It is addictive. And I don’t care what anyone says; it is being marketed to kids.**”

“People are voting without the knowledge,” Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, told hundreds of people gathered in February 2014 in Washington, D.C., for an annual meeting of the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America. “We have to counter investments of individuals wanting to change the culture and (promote beliefs that) it (marijuana) is a safe drug.” ■

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OPPOSE the Decriminalization of Marijuana SB 753 & HB 218



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