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## The Gazette

### — PART 2 —

# 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***

... “We’re mortgaging our future for the almighty dollar,” said Kevin Sabet, a former senior White House drug policy adviser who teamed with former Democratic U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy and political pundit David Frum to start Smart Approaches to Marijuana, a national, nonprofit group that advocates for marijuana policy reform but does not support the drug’s legalization. **“Make no mistake,” Sabet said. “Legalization is about cranking up the number of heavy users, targeting the most vulnerable — as every industry selling an addictive drug does — and making money. That’s it. If it were about getting people out of prison or increasing science-based prevention, there are myriad ways to do those things without ushering in Big Tobacco 2.0.”**

**In December, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health delivered more troubling news reinforcing the cacophony of late-night jokes that Colorado has a drug problem and plenty of enablers. Pick a substance — alcohol, abused prescription painkillers, cocaine, heroin, marijuana or tobacco — and the state ranks above the national average.**

**But it is marijuana use that Colorado works hardest on these days. The need to explain spiking drug-use rates while implementing legalization of retail marijuana sales is increasingly pressing: The state’s 2013 past-month marijuana use rate was the nation’s second highest, coming in at 12.7 percent of Coloradans age 12 and older. That is up from 10.41 percent in 2012, when voters sanctioned recreational marijuana use, and from 7.8 percent in 2000, when they sanctioned marijuana for medical use. With the January 2014 rollout of retail marijuana, Colorado usage rates are likely to increase.**

Use of alcohol and nonmedical painkillers also increased in Colorado between 2012 and 2013. While marijuana legalization’s impact on the consumption of other drugs is the subject of heated debate among economists and drug-policy advocates, the connection is much more straightforward for Kaleb. ■

*Continued in next The Pot Hole*

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**OPPOSE the Decriminalization of Marijuana SB 753 & HB 218**

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