

**Kevin Haggerty** of the Social Development Research Group participated in a press conference to sustain I-502 dollars for prevention and research along with **Alison Holcomb** (National ACLU), **Mike Graham-Squire** (Neighborhood House), **Kim Brackett** (Science And Management of Addictions Foundation), **Elaine Ishihara** (Asian Pacific Islander Coalition Advocating Together), and **Derek Franklin** (Washington Association for Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention)



Alison Holcomb and Kevin Haggerty

## Prepared Comments

Good Morning, thank you for coming. I'm Kevin Haggerty. I've been conducting research in the area of drug abuse prevention since 1985.

I've been thinking a lot about this.....given what we know NOW about tobacco...do you think we would legalize it without an effective prevention and treatment approach?

Given what we know NOW about alcohol, would we legalize it without an effective prevention and treatment approaches?

Right NOW, the voters of Washington State know enough about marijuana to protect those who are most vulnerable, the youth of our state, and those who do become addicted. That's what voters approved in November, 2012.

56% of the voters in Washington State approved this New Approach. This NEW approach actually provided for a regulated, public-health-focused system with **new taxes** to fund drug treatment, prevention, education, and research.

Many people don't know that in Washington State we don't currently fund drug prevention with any dedicated state dollars. I-502 provides us with *a new resources to fund evidence based drug prevention approaches.*

It is important to know this: No marijuana tax dollars have yet been spent for public education or prevention programs from I-502 revenues.

These resources for public health and education programs are critical. Why? Because in a recent survey we conducted with a sample of 11<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents we found that only about 1/3 of parents knew: the legal age of marijuana use, how much someone can possess and whether homegrown pot is legal in Washington State.

More startling, only 20%--1 out of five 11<sup>th</sup> graders knew these three aspect of the I-502 law...2 years after its passage. This has dropped from 25% two years ago. In November 2012, voters approved funding public health and education programs with marijuana tax revenues.

We also know it's important to start early with prevention. Multiple studies have identified that the earlier a young person begins using marijuana, the more likely they will be become dependent later in life. In November, 2012, Washington voters approved funding for evidence based prevention to prevent early initiation. (SAMHSA, 2000, 2013, National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA).

It's also important to focus on the prevention of driving under the influence because a recent survey conducted with 18-24 year olds that found "Almost half of the respondents who used marijuana during the previous 30 days reported that they had driven within three hours after using, and 16% "drove under the influence" six or more times in the past month." (Center for Study of Health and Risk Behaviors at the University of Washington, March 2015)

The Washington State Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery along with the University of Washington have identified at least 13 prevention programs with marijuana specific outcomes focused on peers, family, school and communities. Yes we know that prevention really does work. These programs provide us with the best promise of protecting those most vulnerable to the change in the law, our youth.

Without the 1-502 marijuana fund revenues it will be difficult to increase the availability of evidence based programs to effectively prevent marijuana use among young people.

While we might not have known enough about tobacco and alcohol...when they were legalized....

We DO KNOW enough NOW to ensure that we provide NEW funds for evidence based prevention and treatment. We must retain the I-502 marijuana fund that voters approved in November 2012

April 21, 2015

**Re: Reallocation of Initiative-502 tax revenue in SSB 6062/SSB 5077 and  
2SHB 2136/SHB 1106**

Dear Lawmakers,

The undersigned organizations and individuals, representing Washington State's substance abuse prevention, treatment, and public health communities, along with the ACLU of Washington, are greatly concerned about legislation currently under consideration that seeks to reallocate earmarked tax revenue in Initiative 502 (I-502). Diverting these funds would directly contradict the will of Washington voters, who made it clear in passing I-502 that they wanted a well-regulated and public health-oriented approach to marijuana policy rather than just legalization without more. And these funds provide resources for substance abuse prevention and treatment programming, drug education for youth and adults, community health care services, academic research, and evaluation, all of which are currently grossly underfunded.

Reallocating money from I-502's original earmarks defies the will of Washington's voters. By eliminating the Dedicated Marijuana Fund, the relevant Senate proposals, SSB 6062 and SSB 5077, would effectively eliminate I-502's earmarks, ignoring the Initiative's intent to "[g]enerate[] new ... tax revenue for ... health care, research, and substance abuse prevention."<sup>1</sup> The House proposals, 2SHB 2136 and SHB 1106, are not as sweeping as the Senate's, but would still redirect money away from prevention programs to other non-marijuana-related programs. In moving forward with this cash grab, the legislature would be risking the interests and health of both Washington's youth and its adults—the former would not get the benefit of participating in evidence-based prevention programs, and the latter will not get sufficient education about risky marijuana use. Neither is a good outcome for Washington. I-502 won by a large margin, receiving almost 56% support, and won in 20 of Washington's 39 counties (including 5 east of the Cascades)—the legislature should respect the clearly expressed will of Washington's voters.

Using I-502-earmarked funds to fill a budget hole now is dangerously shortsighted and unwise from both a public health and a cost-benefit perspective. Reduced funding for prevention and drug education programs today means increased substance abuse tomorrow, which translates directly to lost productivity and more health care costs down the line. The increased costs of these outcomes in the years to come will make today's supposed savings pale by comparison. As the Washington State Institute for Public Policy has shown repeatedly, the benefits from evidence-based public health/prevention and substance programs far outweigh the costs.<sup>2</sup>

Washington voters also enacted a measure that was to have been robustly evaluated by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy.<sup>3</sup> Independent, reliable cost-benefit evaluation of the impacts of I-502 is critical to ensuring the legislature has solid data to inform future decisions about funding priorities that protect and promote public health and safety. SSB 6062 repeals the

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<sup>1</sup> Initiative 502 (2012), Part I – Intent – available at <http://www.newapproachwa.org/sites/newapproachwa.org/files/I-502%20bookmarked.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> WSIPP – Benefit-Cost Results – available at <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost>

<sup>3</sup> RCW 69.50.550

provisions mandating and funding these evaluations, which is unwise from a policy and public health perspective. Under the Senate proposal, funding for marijuana related research at the University of Washington and Washington State University would also be cut.

I-502 is still a new law and the general public is unfamiliar with its features—making this a crucial time for public education about the law. According to research from the University of Washington, “only 57 percent of Washington parents surveyed knew the legal age for recreational marijuana use.”<sup>4</sup> One of the study’s authors indicated it “convincingly points out that people don’t have good information about the new law.”<sup>5</sup> To combat this misinformation, the legislature must invest in prevention and drug education, which is known to work—for example, youth initiation of tobacco use was cut in half when tobacco litigation settlement dollars went to prevention programs. Now is not the time to cut funding for programs that prevent marijuana use and abuse by youth.

Lawmakers should not defy the will of the voters by reallocating I-502 tax revenue away from substance abuse prevention and treatment programming, drug education for youth and adults, community health care services, academic research, and evaluation. Please leave I-502’s critical earmarks intact.

Sincerely,

**Carolyn Bernhard**, Co-Chair, Prevention Works in Seattle Coalition

**Kimberlee R. Brackett**, President and CEO Science and Management of Addictions (SAMA)

**Julie Campbell**, Director, Ballard Coalition

**Mark Cooke**, Campaign Policy Director, ACLU of Washington

**Brittany Rhoades Cooper**, PhD Assistant Professor, Human Development, Graduate Faculty in Prevention Science, Extension Specialist, Washington State University

**Shelley Cooper-Ashford**, Executive Director, Center for MultiCultural Health

**Josh Daniel**, Content Inventions

**Norilyn de la Pena**, concerned parent, Federal Way

**Aileen De Leon**, Executive Director, WAPI Community Services

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**Derek Franklin**, Washington Association for Abuse & Violence Prevention (WASAVP)

**Tracie Friedman**, Youth Program Volunteer, Lau Khmu Association of Seattle

**John Gahagan**, Vice Chair, Science and Management of Addictions (SAMA) Foundation

**Mike Graham-Squire**, Washington Association for Abuse & Violence Prevention (WASAVP)

**Gary Goldbaum**, MD, MPH, Snohomish County Health Officer & Director

**Patrick Godfrey**, Chair, King County Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Administrative Board (KCASAAB)

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<sup>4</sup> UW Today, Deborah Bach, *Study Shows Teens and Adults Hazy on Washington Marijuana Law*, March 9, 2015, available at <http://www.washington.edu/news/2015/03/09/study-shows-teens-and-adults-hazy-on-washington-marijuana-law/>.

<sup>5</sup> Id.

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**Renee Hunter**, Executive Director, Chelan-Douglas TOGETHER for Youth  
**Elaine Ishihara**, Director, APICAT for Healthy Communities  
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