

Dear Pastor,

Children of South Dakota are coming under attack.

Initiated Measure 27 would legalize marijuana in South Dakota, and there is clear evidence that kids are impressionable and susceptible to addiction, suicide, psychosis, and depression from marijuana use.

Contrary to popular belief, marijuana is a harmful drug. And we don't want it in South Dakota.

**Jesus said, "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea."**

***Matthew 18:6.***

The facts are clear. The use of marijuana harms children.

We are asking Pastors in South Dakota to speak out against this measure and encourage their congregations to vote NO on Measure 27. Here are some key talking points for pastors:

- Marijuana has been proven to adversely affect its users, young people, our communities, our states, and our nation.
- There are more than 20,000 peer-reviewed research articles linking marijuana use to severe mental health outcomes, as well as consequences for physical health.
- Marijuana use among young people in "legal" states is alarmingly high and rising. In Colorado use among those ages 12 and older nearly tripled after it was legalized for adults.
- Marijuana companies specifically target young people through many means including social media.
- Companies market and profit from products that resemble candy and come in packaging and flavors that specifically appeal to youth.
- A 2021 study found that youth who began using marijuana before age 15 were at a greater risk of short and long-term memory deficits cognitive impairment, worsened academic performance, and reduced educational attainment.
- The National Institute of Health states that regular marijuana use can reduce IQ by eight points and may be irreversible.

**This is the time when we should be dissuading all drug use and NOT making a deadly product easier to acquire.**

Pastors, churches and parishes must take the lead in fighting the legalization of marijuana in South Dakota. Many of our church's children are at risk. Even more so are those kids who lack a solid foundation and need us as shepherds to protect them from those who would exploit them for profit.

Jesus urged us all to pray daily that we not be led into temptation. We must encourage South Dakotans not to open this door.

The wolves are at the door. It is almost certain that we will be outspent in this battle by big marijuana interests, wanting to profit off of our children. As a pastor, please do all that you can to inform your congregation and use your influence in the community for a NO vote on Measure 27.

In Christ,

Jason Yates

CEO, My Faith Votes