

**LEGALIZE POT, from page 3**

this bill that could get a first class prevention program. It's federal block grant money that's going to prevention. By itself it's a lot of money, but spread it across the state, and most communities realize they have to supplement it with county money or private money. There are no consistent statewide programs. This measure would allocate money to treatment and prevention where they don't exist today

*J.T.: As a founder of Central City Concern and someone who has worked with people with mental health issues and addictions, how will legalization affect these populations?*

**R.H.:** During the time I was working there and as state health director, I wouldn't come out and say legalize it. But I've been out of those jobs and thought about it. Criminalization is the wrong approach, so all that stuff is easier to talk about because I don't have responsibility for people who think the sky will fall if you legalize it.

Most treatment programs operate on a principle that if you're addicted to alcohol and you use any addictive substance, it will trigger your conditions. It's the principle of the slippery slope.

The principle of treatment and recovery is just to be abstinent. In the world of treatment and recovery, you can't dabble in other drugs and expect to recover.

For people who have addiction problems, it's not a good idea to start smoking dope, and that's why people in treatment programs aren't going to come out and say we should decriminalize this.

*J.T.: What would an effective prevention program look like?*

**R.H.:** If you look at the way tobacco prevention has been put together, it has to be targeted to individuals. People have to hear how they manage the problem, and you have to make general education activities available. For instance, smoking rates among homeless people are high and people with mental illness are over the top. So it would deal with medication and isolation when they use tobacco to cope with the world. Peer groups would help with people with mental illness.

Kids would really get peer-to-peer messages. Those are the most credible models and those are certainly possible to do here. Some of those are going on with drug prevention but they are isolated.

*J.T.: So what would that look like with marijuana prevention?*

**R.H.:** Most of the literature tells you right now that marijuana used responsibly, not using it while driving, is OK for adults. For kids, the message would be, your brain is still developing and you don't want to be using this drug or other drugs.

It's cautionary. It's not scary. What we have right now is moralistic, and you're a bad person and you'll die if you use it; so there's no credibility.

I was a manager at Hooper Detox for nine years, and we never detoxed someone for marijuana. So it's not the same level of danger that's occurring with other drugs. Right now the message is, it will make you sick or kill you, and it's not an effective message with adults. So you can't run

education and prevention programs that aren't credible.

*J.T.: A lot of subsidized housing prohibits the use of marijuana. So if it's legal, it will still be hands-off to a lot of people. Is this fair?*

**R.H.:** Lots of things in this life aren't fair. No, it's not fair, but the federal government has taken a stance on it.

But here's the deal: Who the hell checks? Will there be Section 8 police? It isn't a good policy. The federal government needs to change the law and they don't seem to be wanting to give up on it.

*J.T.: Are you confident that the treatment and education provided by the measure will be sufficient?*

**R.H.:** The way it's set up is that the Oregon Liquor Control Commission collects the revenue. Within the OLCC they are used to doing this; they've been doing it for years. The tax rate can be changed by the legislature. So that issue will have to be worked out over time.

The idea behind the current law is to make sure it's not as complicated as Colorado or Washington, to keep it simple with a tax low enough so that the price stays low so that it pushes on the black market. In Washington, the price is pretty high for taxes and there's a question if it will push out the criminal market.

**"It isn't a good policy. The federal government needs to change the law and they don't seem to be wanting to give up on it."**



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Presents a Free Screening to  
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