

Dear President Causey:

I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate the thoughtful invitation to attend the 80th Annual Meeting, extended to those of us who have completed 50 years of membership in the Virginia State Bar. Although I'm living out West these days and won't be attending, I know those of us who will be there will be grateful for the recognition received.

I'm particularly honored by an invitation from a legal aid colleague, having served in the Office of Legal Services, Office of Economic Opportunity at the beginning of the War on Poverty. Although the battle is not yet won, I know the struggle is in the good hands of warriors like you, having risen to the highest level of service to our profession.

Please carry on with my best wishes, and thanks again for remembering those of us who have had the honor of membership in the Virginia Bar.

Sincere regards,

J. Roger Detweiler
Bend, OR

Marijuana Legalization: Different Viewpoints

This communication is a response to Zach Mauldin's article, "Opinion: General Assembly Makes Welcome Gains on Marijuana Laws," appearing in the April edition of the *Virginia Lawyer*.

While I understand the logic of allowing marijuana to be medically utilized for pain, nausea or seizure control, I do not think that it is in the best interest of the citizens of Virginia to embrace a complete legalization of marijuana for recreational purposes. Such an action, in my opinion, is irresponsible, in as much as marijuana diminishes the thinking ability of any individual subject to its influence. Obviously, this can result in

intoxication, which can cause vehicle accidents with injury and/or death. More specifically, and as an adult parent and grandparent, it is clear that young individuals can be persuaded by friends to utilize marijuana for so called "joyful purposes." This type of action can result in young people undertaking actions which ultimately may become regrettable. In addition, legalization of marijuana invites potential illegal sale of said substance to underage juveniles. Again, this is not in the interest of the juvenile or their parents, given the prospect of injury or emotional distress resulting from marijuana use influencing poor judgment.

It is noteworthy that any attorney experienced in criminal defense actions knows that marijuana can be a gateway drug to other more harmful drugs and commission of other crimes. These

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phenomena augment the overall commonwealth expenses associated with law enforcement, prosecution activities, and court costs that come with every arrest.

Any commentary that complete legalization is merited in order to reduce costs associated with prosecution under the current law is not a substantial and meaningful basis for legalization of recreational use of marijuana. The wisdom of age is clearly more beneficial to the public and the citizens of Virginia than the commentary and promotion of marijuana legalization by the youthful thinking of Zach Mauldin.

Finally, I want to thank you for providing the opportunity to respond to the Mauldin article in the April edition of the *Virginia Lawyer*. With kind regards, I remain

Very truly yours,

Randall J. Trost
Lynchburg



The October 2017 *Virginia Lawyer* highlighted an article (“Taking Aim at Virginia’s Opioid Crisis through Changes in Public Health Law”) dealing with the opioid crisis, which has built to epidemic proportions thanks, in part, to the prescribing of drugs originally developed for use by the terminally ill only — and sold as being safe, legal “oxy” and its ilk. Here we go again.

Just six months later, the April 2018 issue (“Opinion: General Assembly Makes Welcome Gains on Marijuana Laws”) includes the lamenting of the commonwealth legislature’s incremental approach: medicinal marijuana oil for

anything, up from epilepsy alone, but first-time offenses will still be prosecuted for unpermitted possession of pot. Societal costs on both sides are noted, as well as the disproportionate arrest of black people — a thinly-veiled reference to racism. Virginia’s on the wrong side of history — again.

But wait. What’s wrong with baby steps, taking a wait-and-see approach and letting other states be the “go-with-the-flow” laboratories and their residents be the guinea pigs, until more controlled, longitudinal research is available? Who is the author trying to fool? Like the lottery and liquor, the legalization decision is about money and there are other ways to make it than poisoning the populace and priming it for a subsequent “problem” industry.

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Do we really need to add to the distracted and drunk drivers already on our roads? Or augment the numbers of the impaired, the substance abusing, and the addicted in general?

I think not: parallels and slippery slopes. How soon we forget...even before "Along Comes Mary!"

Karen DeLuca
Alexandria

Correction: In the April 2018 edition of Virginia Lawyer magazine, the article, "VSB's Katie Uston Leads the National Organization of Bar Counsel This Year" (page 46), misstated the authority of a committee chaired by Supreme Court Justice William Mims. The VSB's committee on lawyer discipline is the body considering a rule change aimed at allowing lawyers to avoid certain marks on their record.

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