

## WHAT IS IT

Marijuana is a product of the hemp plant, a crop which has been harvested for thousands of years and whose fibers have been used to make rope, canvas and paper. Marijuana derives from the sticky resin of the flowering tops of the plant.

## WHERE IS IT GROWN

Most marijuana consumed in this country is grown in Mexico, Colombia and Jamaica. The amount grown in this country, however, has increased in recent years, and now accounts for about 20% of the entire U.S. market. Marijuana is the largest cash crop in the U.S. Earnings from marijuana are estimated at \$32 billion per year, far outstripping corn (\$14 billion) and soybeans (\$11 billion). The highest quality marijuana is cultivated indoors on the West Coast, but the largest volume is grown in the Midwest, including Indiana. The Indiana National Guard, for example, eradicated almost 80 million marijuana plants in Indiana last year.

## WHAT IS THE LAW

Under federal law, it is illegal to buy, sell, grow or possess any amount of marijuana anywhere in the United States. Penalties for a first offense range from probation to life imprisonment, with fines of up to \$4 million, depending on the quantity of marijuana involved. Under civil forfeiture laws, real estate, cars, cash and any other property connected with a marijuana offense are subject to immediate seizure. The federal government need not prove that the property was bought with the proceeds of illegal drug sales, only that it was involved in the commission of a crime—that marijuana was grown on certain land or transported in a particular vehicle. There are state marijuana laws as well. In 1993 more than 380,000 people were arrested nationwide for violating marijuana laws; marijuana convictions in that year outnumbered those for heroin, cocaine and LSD combined.

## WHO USES IT

Close to 70 million Americans have tried marijuana at least once, according to a recent government survey. The number of regular users, however, is far smaller, perhaps around four million people, and overall marijuana use has declined from peak levels in the 1970s. Even so, marijuana consumption among American teenagers has been on the increase over the last three years. Thirteen percent of eighth-graders reported having tried marijuana at least once in 1994, up from 6.2% in 1991.

## WHY THE INCREASE

During the 1980s, increasing concerns about the dangers of marijuana and other drugs contributed to a sharp decline in use. That attitude is changing. More and more young people today believe that marijuana is not a dangerous drug—that, unlike cocaine for example, the drug is not addictive, does not kill people and does not produce violent behavior. Furthermore, marijuana is said to have certain medicinal properties, whether it is used by cancer patients to ease the pain and nausea associated with chemotherapy or by a recreational user to relieve stress. In this view, marijuana should be treated like tobacco and made legal.

## WHAT ARE THE HEALTH DANGERS

Numerous scientific studies have demonstrated that marijuana does in fact pose serious health dangers. It damages short-term memory, distorts perception, impairs judgment and complex motor skills, alters the heart rate, can lead to severe anxiety, and can cause paranoia and lethargy. It may not kill people by an overdose, but young marijuana users are more likely than nonusers to consume other illicit drugs, to

have car accidents, and to be arrested. In 1993, twice as many teenagers ended up in emergency rooms for marijuana use as for heroin and cocaine combined.

Contrary to popular belief, marijuana is also an addictive drug. More efficient agriculture—new methods of harvesting and processing marijuana plants—has made the drug about 20 times more potent than the marijuana on the street in the 60's and 70's. Marijuana is frequently mentioned by drug-control specialists as being a stepping stone or gateway to drugs such as crack cocaine and heroin. About 43% of young people who use marijuana before age 18 go on to use cocaine. Legalizing marijuana would almost certainly cause more young people to use—and become addicted to—marijuana and other drugs.

## WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL COSTS

There are numerous social and economic costs associated with increased marijuana use. First, its use can impair academic performance among young people. Marijuana is associated with increased truancy, poor attention span and under-achievement in school. Second, and more broadly, its use causes damage in our workplace. Few Americans realize that three-fourths of regular drug users are employed. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, employed drug users are 33% less productive than their colleagues. They are likely to incur 300% higher medical costs and benefits. Third, marijuana use has been linked to other crimes.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT THE PROBLEM

A key step to reducing marijuana use, particularly among young people, is to educate them to its dangers. It is critical to reach kids early, before they have begun to use drugs, with clear information about marijuana and with positive alternatives for their time. Children typically have very strong anti-drug attitudes, and most young people today don't use drugs. It's essential to reinforce these views.

Our message must be clear and consistent. The message in the 1980's was, "Just say no to drugs," and the message for the 1990's must be the same. Marijuana use is illegal, dangerous and unhealthy. It is not cool. It is not respectful of your body. If you use drugs, stop, and if you can't stop, get help.

We know that young people need to hear antidrug messages where they live, study, work and play. This education effort must be a group effort, involving the public and private sector, but particularly parents, teachers and neighbors.

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH ALVARADO  
AND LOU MARTINEZ

## HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 6, 1995*

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today and pay tribute to two celebrated community servants, Mr. Joseph Alvarado and Mr. Lou Martinez. On September 8, 1995, Joe and Lou will be honored for their contributions to northwest Indiana and the Hispanic community by the Northwest Indiana Hispanic Coordinating Council. This testimonial dinner will take place at the Casa Blanca Restaurant in East Chicago, IN.

We are all very fortunate to have dedicated people, like Joe and Lou, who are sincerely proud of their Hispanic heritage and have taken an active role in promoting the progress of the Hispanic community in Indiana's First Congressional District.

Joe Alvarado is a native of East Chicago, IN. He is also a fellow graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where he played varsity football for the Irish. He later received his masters degree in finance from Cornell University. Joe returned to East Chicago and started his career with Inland Steel Co. in 1976. Since that time, he has steadily risen through the ranks from the days when he was a finance trainee to his current position as president of Inland Steel Bar Co.

Lou Martinez, a classmate of mine at Andrean High School in Merrillville IN, has been with the United Way system since he joined the Lake Area United Way in Griffith, IN, in 1979. In my personal experience with Lou, I can say that he is one of the most dedicated and unselfish individuals I know. His desire to serve his community has allowed him to prosper in an organization like the United Way, whose focus is community service. As president of the Lake Area United Way, Lou has realized his leadership potential and he has played a big part in touching the lives of so many who are in need in northwest Indiana.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to these two very special men. Joe and Lou's large circle of family and friends, as well as the entire Hispanic community of northwest Indiana, can be proud of the contributions these prominent individuals have made. They have proven themselves to be distinguished advocates for the Hispanic community, and they have truly made northwest Indiana a better place in which to live.

A SPECIAL MEMBERS' PRAYER SERVICE ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, 313 2ND STREET, SOUTHEAST ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 1995 AT 9:00 A.M.

## HON. BILL EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 6, 1995*

Mr. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, the opening day of this Congress began, at the request of then Speaker-elect GINGRICH, with a Members' Prayer Service which was held at St. Peter's Church on Capitol Hill. It was a significant event in the history of this Congress and the House of Representatives. The many Members, Members-elect, and their families who attended, and the many Americans who viewed this Service on C-Span, found it inspiring and poignant.

As we return from our prolonged August recess it seems altogether appropriate that we pause and reflect again on the importance of keeping all our endeavors in perspective through our faith. It is in this spirit that I submit for the record the following transcript of this Members' Prayer Service.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN—"GUIDE ME O THOU GREAT JEHOVAH"

He will be our guide even to the end. Ps. 48:14  
Guide me, O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim  
through this barren land;  
I am weak, but thou art mighty; hold me  
with thy pow'rful hand;  
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven, feed me  
till I want no more, feed till I want no  
more.  
Open now the crystal fountain, whence the  
healing stream doth flow; let the fire