



Honorable Governor Phil Scott
109 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05609

Dear Governor Scott:

The American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter, Vermont Medical Society and University of Vermont Children's Hospital respectfully call on you to veto S.22. We are unified in our opinion that condoning the use of marijuana without thought to the impact that increased consumption and availability of marijuana will have on our youth, workplace, health care system, and road safety is foolish and extremely poor health policy. This opinion was shared by your own Public Safety Commissioner at the May 8, 2017, Opioid Coordinating Council meeting.

The bill before you now, S.22, allows for marijuana to be grown at home and for families to have enough "personal" marijuana available in their homes for 25 ounces or 1375 joints (with possession of an ounce, and growing of two mature plants, which at a minimum yield $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound each). That is a tremendous amount of product on hand for "personal consumption" without strong guidelines around safe storage or funding for education countering the "marijuana is safe" message that legalization will inevitably give to youth.

Over the past two years, legislators have heard from teachers, pediatricians, substance abuse counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, and the police – all professionals who have daily experience with the hazards of marijuana use – and all advise against this bill and recommend caution when moving toward legalizing marijuana. Vermont should learn from other states' mistakes, so that we can make wise decisions about marijuana policy. In a recent American Academy of Pediatrics article, Dr. Wang, an assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus writes, "The state-level effect of marijuana legalization on adolescent use has only begun to be evaluated. As our results suggest, targeted marijuana education and prevention strategies are necessary to reduce the significant public health impact the drug can have on adolescent populations, particularly on mental health."¹

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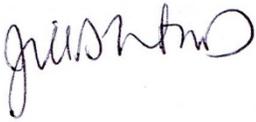
According to the 2016 VT Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Report, 2016 became the first year that drug-related automobile deaths outnumbered alcohol related automobile deaths. When coupled with the fact that there is currently no additional support or roadside test available for our police to help make roads safer from impaired drivers, that is a very disheartening trend.

¹ [ER Visits for Kids Rise Significantly After Pot Legalized in Colorado](#) (NBC News); [Emergency visits related to marijuana use at Colorado hospital quadruple](#) (AAP News)

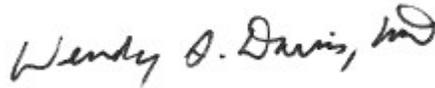
At our Pediatric Grand Rounds at the Vermont Children's Hospital last October you addressed child health issues including the impact of marijuana legalization on our health care system. A key difference between you and the other candidates was your pledge to oppose legalization of marijuana. This most likely played a significant role in of how physicians voted last November.

In closing, on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter, Vermont Medical Society and the University of Vermont Children's Hospital, we hope that you will stand by your campaign promise to keep marijuana from affecting the health of our state's children and the safety of our Vermont roads by vetoing S.22. This bill will not improve the lives of families and children in Vermont, and in fact will put them at much greater risk.

Sincerely,



Jill Rinehart, M.D., FAAP
AAPVT Chapter President



Wendy Davis, M.D., FAAP
VMS President



Lewis First, M.D., FAAP
UVM Children's Hospital Chief