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What Would Legalizing Marijuana Cultivation Cost Georgia Taxpayers?

Executive Summary

National Families in Action just released a White Paper called “What Would Legalizing Marijuana Cultivation Cost Georgia Taxpayers? Here’s What It’s Costing Colorado Taxpayers.” It examines what marijuana cultivation costs Colorado and other states:

1. It could cost Georgia taxpayers \$4.50 for every tax dollar raised from the sale of cultivated marijuana products. That’s what it’s costing Colorado taxpayers. (p1)
2. Marijuana use among adolescents and young adults is double or nearly double that of Georgia’s in the five states with the highest medical or recreational use. (p6, 7)
3. Calls to Colorado Poison Control Centers quadrupled since the state allowed cultivation for medical use in 2000. (p8)
4. Marijuana-related hospitalizations increased six-fold. (p8)
5. Violent crime in Colorado rose 26 percent between 2008 and 2017. Violent crime fell 14 percent in Georgia during that time. (p3)
6. Weapons law violations in Denver are up an astonishing 488 percent, from 266 in 2009, when Colorado commercialized cultivation for medical use, to 1,564 last year. (p3)
7. About half of driving fatalities are tested for marijuana. Colorado marijuana-related driving fatalities in those tested increased by 153 percent between 2013 and 2017. (p3)
8. Patients don’t need it, so why go to the expense? Doctors can prescribe FDA-approved CBD and THC medicines that pharmacies sell and insurance covers. (p11)
9. FDA has approved only one CBD product. The rest can contain mold, mildew, pesticides, and other contaminants that can make sick people even sicker. (p9)
10. Congress just legalized hemp, which is marijuana containing less than 0.3 percent (three-tenths of one percent) THC. This means growers can cultivate hemp in Georgia, make CBD products from it, and sell them here and in other states.
11. An Atlanta-based, \$100 million marijuana company named Surterra, that has a medical marijuana business in Florida, is contributing to Georgia politicians. Its former president served on the Joint Study Commission on Low THC Oil Access. It’s chairman and CEO says Surterra plans to expand to the recreational marijuana market. (p12)
12. Every state that has legalized recreational marijuana cultivation legalized medical marijuana cultivation first. (p1)