

WHY I WON'T VOTE FOR PROP. 64

By Ron Deziel

AUMA TAKES AIM AT OUR MEDICAL MARIJUANA SYSTEM

AUMA states that marijuana is a dangerous drug like alcohol and tobacco. A drug it is – which argues against its use for recreation – but dangerous it is not. There are no reported deaths from MJ use or abuse. Moreover, alcohol and tobacco are both highly addictive, but mj is not. Marijuana is medicine; alcohol and tobacco are toxins.

Prop. 215, the Comp Use Act, gives qualified patients with a doctor’s recommendation the right to cultivate as much medicine as they reasonably need. This is a right that cannot be restricted by the legislature except through another initiative approved by the voters in a subsequent election.

AUMA GIVES BALLOT-INITIATIVE STATUS TO MCRSA

MCRSA is legislation passed last year which re-issues CUA rights as revocable legislative grants. For this hijack to withstand challenge, AUMA – as ballot initiative – renames the MCRSA Director as the Director of the Bureau of MJ Control and gives initiative status to all of MCRSA’s provisions, including its re-issuance of CUA rights as revocable legislative grants. If AUMA is approved by the electorate next month, MMJ patients will not have a leg to stand on. All its assurances of protecting MMJ patients are spurious or irrelevant in the context where they are mentioned. These assurances are smokescreens because the fact remains: CUA rights from a ballot initiative were re-issued as revocable legislative grants in the MCRSA.

AUMA/MCRSA IS ANTI-LABOR

Marijuana is classified as an agricultural crop. Cultivators are designated as agricultural workers. Cultivators must enter into Labor Peace Agreements which prohibit strikes or work stoppages. MCRSA, thus AUMA, implicitly, gives workers protections to campaign to join unions, but these are hollow, because such rights are already in the state and federal labor codes. Unions have been silent on this aspect of AUMA because of a gentleman’s agreement that transport licenses under AUMA will be given to Teamsters. I cannot say what the United Farm Workers Union or La Collectiva understand about MCRSA and AUMA

AUMA IS REDUNDANT

The new Bureau of MJ Control takes over all things MJ: medical, recreational and industrial. But MMJ has been legal since 1996, and is now systematically controlled by the legislature’s newly established Bureau of MCRSA. Industrial hemp is already legalized by the 2013 Industrial Hemp Farming Act (SB 566). Recreational marijuana use has been decriminalized in CA since 2014 when mere possession was reduced to an infraction payable with a \$100 fine like a traffic ticket, and enforcement was put at the bottom of police priorities. Proposition 47, the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act, passed in 2014, reduced certain non-violent criminal penalties and set in motion the early release of scores of non-violent prisoners.

AUMA RAISES MILLIONS IN TAXES: NONE TO THE GENERAL FUND

Everything, from wholesale purchase of seed to the final retail sale to consumers, is taxed. From the 99% to the 1%. Who benefits? Not one cent of this money goes into the general fund, except some crumbs arising from court actions against the small time offender. All of the proceeds are designated. The largest portion goes for the new MJ bureaucracy. The rest is designated for program areas. Within these areas, though, the expenditures are at the discretion of the MJ Director, who is appointed by the Governor. IN effect, an enormous slush fund is created at the service of the governor. None of the disbursements go through the state’s Fund Allocation Process.

EARMARKS TO THE CHP: POTENTIAL FOR BRIBERY

AUMA names \$3 million annually to the CHP for the initial five years to develop protocols and programs. Buried much deeper are provisions providing additional CHP funding at \$10 million and \$40 million. AUMA stipulates that these allocations cannot be used to replace CHP's regular funding, but are intended to augment. Moreover, AUMA declares that the legislature cannot change these two amounts. Finally, they cannot be reduced after July 1, ~~2018~~,²⁰²⁸ no matter what the balance in the tax kitty might be.

AUMA IS PHONY

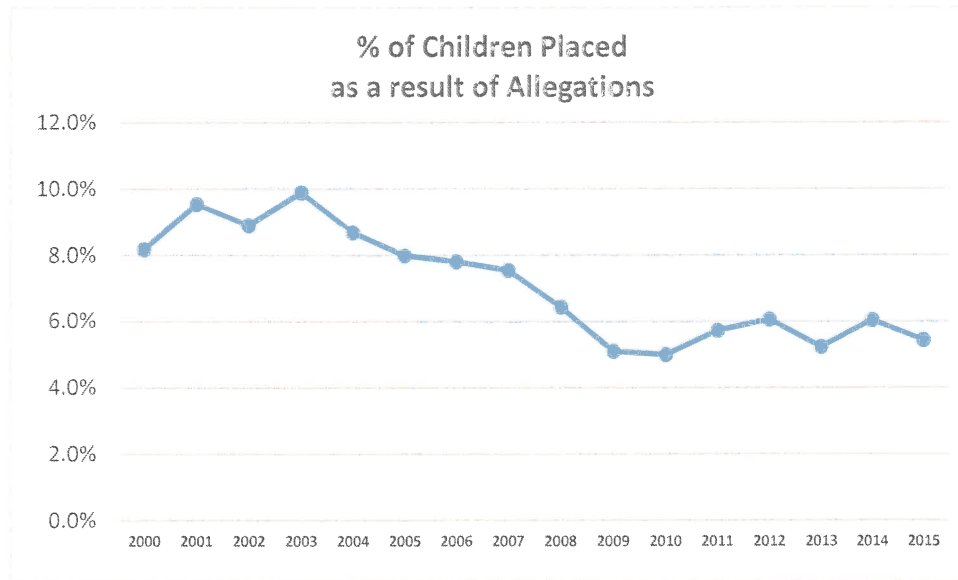
In its findings and declarations establishing the need for its adoption, AUMA claims that the medical system is rampant with healthy people abusing the system. This is unproven. Just because someone is "asymptomatic" does not mean they are pretending, or that they do not have legitimate medical issues that can be treated properly with marijuana. AUMA legalization will not end the black market. In fact, AUMA taxation is likely to drive people deeper into the illegal traffic. AUMA controls on the potency of legal pot will further drive people into cartel business.

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The Reduction of Service to Abused and Neglected Children In Contra Costa County 2000 to 2015

A review of placement of children to foster care as a result of allegations of abuse¹ shows the following: Placements have dropped from 9.9% in 2003 to 5.5% in 2015.



It has been argued that this decline in placements was intended to reduce the number of children ending up in institutional care. Unfortunately, from the point of view of agencies referring to protect the child², it now looks more like institutional dumping.

It has been argued that this process of simply not admitting is a way of increasing the “efficiency” of the Employment and Human Services Department, but this too is a false analogy. Efficiency occurs when a provider shows an improved output with reduced effort. This output has resulted in multiple referrals and increased trauma, before the abuse is actively stopped. On the contrary, admissions to placement are now characterized by increasingly dysfunctional children. Mortality statistics from this policy are not presently available, but we are concerned that deaths of children who were reported as abused may have increased.

This decline in placements also parallels the 2008 reduction of Social Work staff available to manage the caseload.

¹

California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP)
University of California at Berkeley
http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/RefRates.aspx

² The Northern California Family Center has been managing runaway cases in Contra Costa since 1996. Runaways from CPS have been consistently 600 % above the national average.