



A Personal Note from Roger

Welcome to the new home of *Roger's Rant*! Since the Spring 2010 inaugural issue of the revived EDM Today, *Roger's Rant* has either entertained or annoyed countless EDM'ers. With the changing of the guard at EDM Today beginning with the Fall 2023 issue, I am no longer the Editor of the magazine, and it is no longer appropriate for me to promulgate my often controversial and politically incorrect opinions on its pages. Now that my primary focus is on EDM consulting, having acquired International Technology Professionals from EDM Today, LLC, I feel duty bound to continue the *Rant* tradition here on the ITP website. The only difference is that now the *Rants* will appear here on a monthly basis, instead of quarterly at the magazine. So, hold onto your hats as this train is now leaving the station.

The Retail Marijuana Debacle



Liberal Governments' Ultimate Hypocrisy

Opening Disclosure Note

Before I begin this *Rant*, I need to explain to my readers my personal feelings toward the drug issue.

While I staunchly oppose the non-prescription use of any mind-altering drugs of any kind, I have never believed that personal, recreational drug use should be criminalized.

However, I am passionate in the belief that those who sell mind-altering drugs for recreational use should be prosecuted and harshly punished (including the death penalty for selling such dangerous drugs as heroin, cocaine and fentanyl). In some other countries, they take illegal drug distribution far more seriously than we do in the U.S. The image below was taken at the arrival area of Chiang Kai-shek International Airport in Taiwan.



Of course, controlling our borders from smuggling (all of our borders, not just with Mexico) is a potentially costly, but necessary endeavor that I heartily endorse.

The *Rant* Begins...

The movement to legalize recreational marijuana languished for many years until a new dynamic entered the picture. That dynamic was the emergence of the inclusion and equity movement which latched onto the marijuana legalization movement, as its proponents purported that socially and economically “disadvantaged” persons (primarily “people of color”) were disproportionately (based upon that group’s percentage of the total population) prosecuted for drug offenses.

In the name of “equity,” this proposal gained rapid support amongst legislators in liberal states in spite of the deleterious consequences predicted by medical and law enforcement professionals:

- Increased marijuana addiction
- Brain development issues for users under twenty-five
- Increased traffic accidents and deaths due to DUI
- Problematic DUI enforcement due to a lack of reliable drug intoxication detection technologies
- Poisoning of children using marijuana edibles
- Increased lung cancer deaths due to smoking dope
- Lower workplace and school productivity

A number of liberal democratic states adopted laws decriminalizing marijuana (even though it is still considered a Class A narcotic by the federal government), much to my chagrin.

Okay, we can all debate the subject up to this point, but in the legalization legislative debates two new ideas crept in:

1. The state governments should license retail marijuana establishments and levy a substantial tax on the sale of cannabis products.
2. To compensate for past alleged targeting of “disadvantaged” groups, people convicted of drug offenses should be given preference when considering licensing of new cannabis dispensaries.

The first of these ideas held immense appeal for revenue hungry state governments. Government is only too happy to collect “sin” taxes.

One would have thought the second of those ideas would have received substantially more scrutiny, given that giving convicted felons preference in opening drug dispensing establishments might not be the most sensible of ideas.

Once the legislations were enacted, another problem arose: “Disadvantaged” groups, especially people convicted of drug offenses, could not possibly raise the substantial capital required to pay the exorbitant state licensing fees, let alone possess the capital necessary to start a new business.

Again, liberal legislators came to the rescue. Regulations were enacted for the states to loan taxpayer money (or guarantee the loans) to those “disadvantaged” individuals starting cannabis dispensaries. In some cases, these loans turned out to be outright grants.

So, these state governments entered the drug sale business big time.

Ah, but now a new problem emerged, which the “progressive” legislatures never anticipated: Based upon the high costs of licensing, procuring legally grown weed and the high state tax on the product, many customers have decided that they would prefer to buy their weed from illegal, unlicensed sources. Hmmm.....legalization of marijuana was *supposed* to wipe out illegal drug sales activities and the crime associated with them. It is estimated that approximately 50% of marijuana sales in California are from unlicensed, illegal marijuana outlets.

Okay, so there is a lot of stupidity here, but where is the hypocrisy?

Here it Comes!

So, what to do about this?

Liberal New York Governor Kathy Hochul has the answer. (Mind you, this is the same feckless Kathy Hochul who, in an effort to ingratiate herself with Jewish constituents, took a two day junket to Israel to *advise* the Israeli Defense Force on how to free the Hamas hostages. I'm certain they were in awe of her military and hostage negotiation expertise, or at least they pretended to be or face the risk of diminished support by the U.S. government.)

In response to this new marijuana "crisis," Governor Hochul has formed a state law enforcement task force to crack down on illegal marijuana dispensaries and prosecute those miscreants who operate them. It should be noted that many of said miscreants are those same "disadvantaged" individuals who were recently released from jail and had their conviction records expunged. So now we have come full circle.

The much maligned war on drugs, which allegedly targeted "disadvantaged" individuals, has been reinstated. Equity can be righteously sacrificed when it impinges on the government's revenue stream.

One more thing: There is currently a proposal in Canada to legalize heroin use and control its distribution by means of government regulated dispensaries. Now that marijuana is legalized, they've moved on to the next progressive cause. It's only a matter of time that it happens here...if you don't pay attention and allow it to happen.

Hypocrisy indeed!