

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

Legalizing the Recreational Use of Marijuana: Unintended Consequences?

August 2016

Public Policy Notes

In 2002, Colorado legalized the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes and in 2014 expanded that access to include recreational use. At that time, researchers predicted that the increased availability of marijuana would have an impact on the number of children that the state's poison control centers and hospital emergency rooms would see. Because these products are often packaged in edible forms, such as cookies or brownies, the marijuana laced edibles are attractive to young children.

In an article published in *JAMA Network Journals* in July, the authors provided data from 81 children seen in a hospital and 163 marijuana exposure calls to a regional Colorado poison center that bore out their earlier predictions. The median age of these children was 2.4 years for the hospital and 2 years for children in the poison control centers.

The authors reported these findings:

- ◆ The average rate of marijuana-related visits to the hospital doubled from 1.2 per 100,000 population two

years prior to legalization to 2.3 per 100,000 two years after legalization.

- ◆ Annual cases at the poison control centers were 5 times higher, increasing from 9 in 2009 to 47 in 2015.
- ◆ Sources of marijuana were a parent, grandparent, neighbor, friend, babysitter or other family member.
- ◆ Most pediatric marijuana exposures involved infused edible products.
- ◆ Many exposures happened because marijuana products weren't in child-resistant containers, there was poor child supervision or product storage issues.

Source: The *Jama Network Journals*, "[Marijuana exposure in kids rose after recreational use legalized in Colorado.](#)" *Science Daily*, 25 July 2016

As the problem grows in size, researchers at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health have made recommendations about [Keeping Legalized Marijuana](#)

[na Out of Hands of Kids.](#)

According to the researchers, "*The early days of marijuana legalization present a unique window of opportunity to create a regulatory environment that minimizes youth access.*"

Strategies include:

- 1) Use tax policy to keep prices high.
- 2) Tightly regulate retail availability of marijuana.
- 3) Regulate the appearance of foods containing marijuana to prevent accidental ingestion by children and reduce the amount of THC in these foods. Child proof packaging can also prevent ingestion.
- 4) Restrict the marketing of these products. Washington state banned cartoons, toys or other pictures that appeal to children on packaging.

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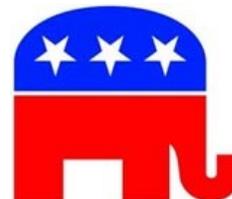
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Lessons Learned from Colorado?

As SECA states consider whether to legalize marijuana, what should children's advocates be contributing to the debate?

- ⇒ If legalization occurs, have any considerations, such as child proof packaging, been given to ensuring restricted access by young children?
- ⇒ Will a parent education campaign be needed to ensure the safety of young children?

The Republican Party Platform 2016



With the conclusion of the major party conventions and the nominations of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, the stage has been set for the November elections. One of the outcomes of the conventions was the formal approval of the party platforms...statements of philosophical and political ideas that will set the stage for the candidates to campaign.

Let's take a look at the Republican Platform.

The Platform Principles

- ⇒ “We believe in American exceptionalism.
- ⇒ We believe that the United States of America is unlike any other nation on earth.
- ⇒ We believe America is exceptional because of our historic role...first as a refuge, then as defender, and now as exemplar of liberty for the world to see.
- ⇒ We affirm—as did the Declaration of Independence: that all are created equal, endowed by their creator with inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.
- ⇒ We believe in the Constitution as our founding document.
- ⇒ We believe the Constitution was written, not as a flexible document, but as our enduring covenant.
- ⇒ We believe our constitutional

system—limited government, separation of powers, federalism and the rights of the people must be preserved uncompromised for future generations.

- ⇒ We believe political freedom and economic freedom are indivisible.
- ⇒ We believe that people are the ultimate resources—and that the people, not the government are the best stewards of our country's resources.

The Platform contains six (6) sections and one section, *Great American Families, Education, Healthcare, and Criminal Justice* (pp. 31-40) provides a window into the educational philosophy of the party.

Major Points in the Platform

1. Support the traditional marriage structure, as defined as that between a man and a woman.
2. Restructure poverty programs to create a “culture of hope.”
3. Recognize the role of parents as a child's first teachers.
4. Provide a broad range of educational choices for families.
5. Eliminate national educational standards.
6. Implement choice-based, parent-driven accountability.
7. Allow the use of the Bible as

literature curriculum in elective classes in high school.

8. Utilize the English First approach to ensure that all students have access to the mainstream of American life.
9. Replace family planning programs for teens with sexual risk avoidance education.
10. Support the original meaning of Title IX.



Fallin

11. Decouple accreditation from federal financing for higher ed.



Fox

Governor Mary Fallin of Oklahoma and **Representative Virginia Fox of North Carolina** served as co-chairs of the Platform Committee. Subcommittee Chairs from the SECA States included:

Restoring the American Dream: Joe Gruters (FL) and Delbert Hosemann (MS)

A Rebirth of Constitutional Government: Rayna Casey (GA) & Leslie Rutledge (AR)

Great American Families, Education, Healthcare and Criminal Justice: Carolyn McLarty (OK)

America Resurgent: Jim Carns (AL)

To read the full text of the platform, [click here](#).

The Democratic Platform 2016

The Democratic Party Platform was approved on July 21, 2016. It varies significantly in content and tone from the Platform adopted by the Republican Party.

The Platform Principles

- ⇒ Democrats believe we are stronger when we have an economy that works for everyone—an economy that grows incomes for working people, creates good paying jobs, and puts a middle class life within reach for economic growth, which will create good paying jobs and raises wages.
- ⇒ We believe a good education is a basic right of all Americans, no matter what zip code they live in. We will end the school to prison pipeline and build a cradle to college pipeline instead where every child can live up to his or her God-given potential.
- ⇒ We believe in helping Americans balance work and family without fear of punishment or penalty. We believe in at last guaranteeing equal pay for women.
- ⇒ Democrats believe we are stronger when we protect citizens' right to vote, while stopping corporations' outsized influence in elections.
- ⇒ Democrats believe we are stronger and safer when America brings the world together and leads with principle and purpose.

⇒ We believe in protecting civil liberties and guaranteeing civil rights and voting rights, women's rights and workers' rights, LGBT rights, and rights for people with disabilities.

Major Points in the Platform

The majority of the platform consists of proposed strategies and initiatives to address the issues outlined in the principles on which the Platform is based. We'll give you a brief idea of the major points; however, you will need to access the full document to determine how each strategy or initiative will fit into the overall picture of the proposed Democratic governance.

1. Raise workers wages, including raising the federal minimum wage over a period of time to \$15 per hour.
2. Protect workers fundamental rights, including the right to organize and join unions. The platform also makes the statement that "right to work laws" are wrong.
3. Provide equal pay for women and protect women's rights.
4. Pass a national **paid** family and medical leave act.
5. Increase investments in quality childcare and boost wages for child care workers and those who care for aging adults.
6. Protect and expand Social Security.



7. Revitalize the national postal service.
8. Embark on a program to build 21st century infrastructure throughout the country.
9. Pursue an innovation agenda: Science, Research, Education & Technology.
10. End systemic racism and close the racial wealth gap.
11. Reform the criminal justice system.
12. Invest in rural America.
13. Promote the arts and culture.
14. Honor indigenous tribal nations.
15. Provide debt-free college and relief from current student debt.
16. Guarantee universal pre-K.
17. Guarantee universal health care.
18. Reduce prescription drug costs.
19. Provide American leadership in the world.

This is not a complete list but hits the "high points" in the document.

To read the full text of the platform, [click here](#).

Southern Early Childhood Association

1123 S. University, Ste 255
Little Rock, AR 72204

Phone: 800-305-SECA

Fax: 501-227-5297

E-mail:

info@southernearlychildhood.org

www.southernearlychildhood.org

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"A Voice for Southern Children"

How to Use Public Policy Notes

If you're interested in advocacy, one of the most effective tools that you can have is access to information. This newsletter is provided as a service to locate and share information that we think will be helpful to you in your work at the state level and to keep you updated on what's happening in public policy.

You'll find information that:

- **Compares your state to other SECA states**—how you're doing, what issues you have in common, what the hot topics are in your states.
- **Brings the national scene to your fingertips** and gives you a perspective on how national events might impact you... You'll also receive information about where to find additional information.

We hope you'll find it helpful. Children need you to be their "voice" in your community and state.

This monthly newsletter is produced by Glenda Bean, SECA Executive Director.

SECA strives to provide non-partisan and non-biased information that is of interest to early childhood educators. Sign up at

<http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/public-policy/public-policy-notes/>

to receive notice of its availability each month.

News to Note



Beginning in 2017, **Louisiana** will require students to learn **curative writing**

in 3rd grade and the instruction will continue throughout their years in school. This [law](#) (SB 275), signed by Governor John Bel Edwards in June, applies to both public and charter schools.



The state of **Texas**, along with a dozen other states, sued in May to block the federal directive meant to expand restroom access for

transgender students in the nation's public schools. A federal judge in Texas has temporarily blocked the directive and prohibited the federal government from enforcing it as the lawsuit proceeds. The judge issued a 38 page opinion this month.



Country star Brad Paisley helped kick-off an effort in West Virginia in his home state to assist homeowners

who were left homeless after the devastating floods in June. [Homes for West Virginia](#) is a partnership with local stakeholders and New Orleans-based [SBP](#), a disaster recovery non-profit group founded after Hurricane Katrina.



SBP has now created a [disaster response program for South Louisiana](#).

New Report

The American Institutes for Research have produced a new report, [Primary Early-Care and Education Efforts and Achievement at Kindergarten Entry](#). This report provides new data showing that a growing percentage of children attend center-based care in the year before they attend kindergarten.

Another Article of Interest from AIR: [Children Who Primarily Attended Early Childcare Centers Before Kindergarten Start School With Higher Math and Reading Scores, AIR Researchers Find](#)