Dear Representatives Singer, Hamner, and Senator Steadman:

Our campaign thanks you for your sudden interest and attentiveness to Arizona’s legislative process.

Because education funding is so complex, we are grateful for the opportunity to highlight the pot industry’s broken promises, specifically pertaining to funding schools.

Cherry Creek School Superintendent Harry C. Bull, Jr. put it best saying, “The only thing that the legalization of marijuana has brought to our schools has been marijuana.”

To address your citation of the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, any expert familiar with fair reporting and reliable surveys would recognize the following about the survey:

1. In considering survey results, response rates are important. The gold standard for government surveys and any work that deserves any attention should come in at roughly 70 to 85 percent response rate. The Healthy Kids survey comes in at almost half that, at about 46 percent. This is not a reliable survey.

2. Who was sampled? As Colorado legislators, you know best that some of the largest counties in Colorado were excluded: Douglas County, El Paso County, and Jefferson County. These excluded counties surround Denver – the city home to 70 percent of all retail pot stores in Colorado. Clearly the survey is not representative of affected populations.
3. Even if we were to assume some level accuracy in this survey, the disaggregation of data would still disprove your claims that teen use has not increased. In Denver, since the complete legalization of marijuana, regular marijuana use increased substantially among 11th and 12th graders, 29 and 11 percent, respectively. And statewide, 11th grade regular marijuana use increased 19 percent while 12th grade regular marijuana use increased by almost 15 percent. It’s important to review the full data set and not rely merely on headlines when drawing conclusions.

While flawed surveys may tell a creative story, they cannot change the reliable, firsthand accounts from real Colorado educators and civic leaders who are seeing the harmful effects of legal marijuana every day.

We have heard from a number of Colorado doctors, law enforcement officials, addiction and abuse specialists on the ground, lamenting in the disastrous impacts legalization has had in Colorado.

According to Dr. Steven Simerville, pediatrician and medical director of the newborn intensive care unit at Pueblo’s Saint Mary Corwin Medical Center, “In the first nine months of this year, 27 babies born at this hospital tested positive for THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. That’s on track to be about 15 percent higher than last year.” Additionally, “In the first 10 months of this year, 71 teenagers came into the emergency room at this hospital with marijuana in their system, which is on track to be about 70 percent higher than last year.”

This trend is supported by research from the federal Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) report showing that Colorado now leads the nation in teen marijuana use – at a rate higher than 74 percent than the national average.

Again, we are thankful for your interest in the ballot initiative process here in Arizona.

Unlike in Colorado, ballot initiatives that pass in the state of Arizona are only amendable with 3/4th of the legislature’s approval and only to further the purpose of the law. All the legislative fixes your state has been able to implement after recognizing the unintended consequences of recreational marijuana would not be permissible under current Arizona law. For this reason, it is extremely important for Arizona voters to understand the broken promises and risks involved with the complete legalization of marijuana.

Our campaign is supported by a broad coalition of bipartisan legislators, law enforcement organizations, medical associations, and business leaders throughout the state. And we are thankful that everyday citizens and current and former legislators from your state of Colorado are helping to share the tragic Colorado story with citizens in Arizona, standing up to the marijuana industry that has held so many Colorado cities and towns hostage since you legalized this drug.
It is understandable that you would be vocal in wanting to change Arizona’s marijuana laws to benefit the marijuana industry, given that you, the three legislators signed on to this letter, have accepted campaign contributions from the marijuana industry according to the Colorado Secretary of State’s office.

It is disappointing, however, that you are politicizing an issue that is ultimately about public health and safety. When Colorado has long-time law enforcement professionals, like Pueblo County’s Sheriff Kirk Taylor saying, “I can tell you the black market is alive and well and thriving. In fact, it’s exploding,” certainly this is more credible than the fabrications of Prop 205’s proponents.

The Coloradoans featured in our ads are sharing their stories, not ours. And so long as Colorado citizens would like to warn Arizona citizens of the Colorado experience of broken promises for schools and increased teen drug use, we will be happy to relay this message to the voters of Arizona.

Sincerely,

Adam Deguire
Campaign Manager