

## Where is the Local Protection?

In 2014, the statewide voters narrowly passed the ballot proposition that they thought would legalize marijuana. That proposition did almost nothing for legalization since we already had RAVIN, the Alaska Supreme Court decision allowing personal use and possession of marijuana. What it did do was bring in big-money commercial marijuana. By doing this, as we've seen in Colorado, this only increased usage, and didn't even make enough money for the state to pay for the cost of regulation and increased hospital costs. There were a lot of people in Alaska who voted for that proposition because they thought it would get rid of penalties for marijuana use, which were exaggerated by the proponents, but they thought that government would regulate that illicit industry appropriately and protect their neighborhoods. This didn't happen.

So far the Councils, Planning Commission and Borough Assembly have approved every single establishment, even when it's in a residential neighborhood, even when the residents plead for it not to be put there, even when the establishment breaks state law. We have incredibly weak zoning regulations that have already been modified once to allow more marijuana business near sensitive uses (schools, churches, youth centers). The State Marijuana Control Board, due to Governor Walker's appointments, is industry-controlled, to the point where they have not only approved sites that violate the regulations they put in place, but they are soon to approve regulations no other state has allowing onsite consumption. With onsite consumption, the users can drive to a pot shop, get stoned, and then somehow get home. How exactly do you have a designated driver in a smoking facility?

Currently two more of these establishments are being put in residential neighborhoods out off of Badger Rd. They go in front of the Planning Commission this next week. There's one that was approved last year in a residential neighborhood off of Chena Hot Springs Rd that the residents had testified against. Now one year later they are bringing up the fact that the whole neighborhood smells like pot, something that's been brought up time and again in Colorado.

How do you think this will affect property values in these neighborhoods? In Colorado where housing prices have been increasing due to population growth, it's been found that neighborhoods with grow houses have prices 8.4% lower than the average. Do you want to live in a neighborhood that always smells like pot? I've had two real estate agents talk to me this week about migration from these types of neighborhoods and the hit on property values.

Another issue is security, in Denver the first year there was a 50% burglary rate. In Las Vegas marijuana became legal on July 1<sup>st</sup> and in the first month there have already been nearly a dozen break-ins. Why would you want that type of thing happening in your neighborhood?

The 2014 proposition allowed every local community to decide for themselves if they wanted to allow these businesses. This is exactly like every other statewide marijuana law in the U.S., in fact 70% of Colorado local governments have prohibited these establishments. In Fairbanks, we have two initiatives on the ballot, Prop 1 in the Borough outside of the cities and Prop A in the City of Fairbanks (the City of North Pole passed it this last year).

These do not stop use, growth, possession or transport; they do not roll back legalization. While the big industry opposition is putting out a deceptive message that it will take us back to making pot illegal, this just isn't true. The ONLY thing this initiative will do is prohibit the businesses.

These initiatives are your one chance to protect your neighborhoods, your property values and your families from the hours (can be open very late into the night), noise, lighting, smell, security, normalization and drugged driving that follow these establishments. Please get out and Vote YES on 1 or A on Tuesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>. It's probably the most important election for your neighborhood that has happened locally.