

# PENNSYLVANIA FAITH LEADERS REJECT MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION FOR RECREATIONAL USE



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More than 200 Pennsylvania pastors and ministry leaders—representing over 2,000 churches and an estimated 200,000 parishioners—have signed an open letter to Gov. Shapiro urging him to oppose the push to legalize marijuana for recreational use.

TO: Governor Josh Shapiro, PA State Legislators, and State Officials

CC: Honorable Kim Ward, President pro tempore, Pennsylvania Senate  
Honorable Joe Pittman, Majority Leader, Pennsylvania Senate  
Honorable Jay Costa, Minority Leader, Pennsylvania Senate  
Honorable Joanna McClinton, Speaker, Pennsylvania House  
Honorable Matthew Bradford, Majority Leader, Pennsylvania House  
Honorable Jesse Topper, Minority Leader, Pennsylvania House

Dear Governor Shapiro,

We respectfully submit this letter in firm opposition to the legalization of recreational marijuana in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This statement is endorsed by over 200 Pastors and Leaders of the Christian Faith Community representing more than 2,000 churches and organizations that collectively reach an estimated 200,000 parishioners and individuals across multiple counties and political districts.

We urge you to consider the concerns outlined in this letter thoughtfully and to reflect on the potential negative consequences such legislation could have on the health, safety, and well-being of our communities.

As Church leaders, Pastors, and Ministry leaders from all across Pennsylvania, we are deeply invested in the well-being of our communities. We have witnessed firsthand how substance abuse can devastate families, derail promising futures, and burden our healthcare and social service systems. Our opposition to marijuana legalization for recreational use stems from a genuine concern for public health, a desire to protect our most vulnerable citizens, and out of love for our neighbors.

As leaders representing diverse churches and communities, we stand united in expressing our deep concern over the movement to commercialize the sale of marijuana for recreational use. While we recognize the complexities surrounding drug policy and criminal justice reform, we believe that legalizing recreational marijuana will have harmful consequences for individuals, families, and society at large.

The Scriptures teach us to uphold the dignity of every human life and to seek the well-being of our communities. We are called to advocate for policies that promote health, moral responsibility, and the flourishing of all people—especially the most vulnerable. The widespread availability and commercialization of recreational marijuana pose significant risks that should not be ignored.

Today's marijuana and THC-infused kid-friendly vapes, edibles, dabs, and more are dangerous drugs. A policy change to commercialize the sale of these drugs for recreational purposes would hurt Pennsylvania families and communities. There is substantial evidence that marijuana use is contributing to rising addiction rates and other serious harms, and commercializing its sale will make these issues worse.

### The Dangers of Legalization:

1. **Harm to Public Health** – Scientific studies have shown that marijuana use, particularly among young people, is linked to cognitive impairment, increased risk of mental health disorders, and addiction. The normalization of marijuana use sends a message that its use is safe and acceptable, undermining efforts to prevent substance abuse.
2. **Negative Impact on Families and Communities** – Families are the foundation of our society. Marijuana use can contribute to instability in households, impaired parenting, and increased substance abuse among minors. Our communities are already grappling with addiction crises, and legalizing another intoxicating substance will exacerbate these challenges.
3. **Increased Societal Costs** – The alleged economic benefits of legalization do not outweigh the long-term societal costs, including increased healthcare expenses, impaired workforce productivity, and traffic-related accidents. States that have legalized marijuana have seen a rise in emergency room visits and public safety concerns.
4. **Moral and Spiritual Concerns** – The Bible cautions against intoxication, emphasizing the importance of clarity of mind and self-control. The recreational use of marijuana fosters escapism rather than responsible living and personal growth. As faith leaders, we are concerned about the spiritual well-being of individuals who may turn to harmful substances for support rather than to faith, family, and community.

We urge lawmakers and citizens to seek opportunities that prioritize prevention, education, and rehabilitation rather than the legalization and commercialization of harmful drugs.

We call upon our fellow citizens, public officials, and community leaders to stand for policies that protect human dignity, public health, families, and moral responsibility.

Together, let us choose a path that upholds the common good, safeguards our youth, and fosters communities where individuals can thrive without the harmful effects of recreational marijuana.

For the well-being of Pennsylvania, we urge you to oppose this harmful policy that could lead to irreversible moral and societal consequences.

## **Signed:**

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