

# THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC



## Pot is hurting kids? Oh, go take a puff

January 12, 2015

The Saturday Viewpoints centerpiece on marijuana picks some facts and ignores others ("[Why 'Big Marijuana' must be stopped](#)"). That's neither smart nor accurate.

California leads the way. In October 2010, voters passed a law decriminalizing marijuana use. Possession of up to an ounce is treated like a parking ticket, with a maximum \$100 fine. The result? Overall youth crime is down by nearly 30 percent.

And it didn't lead to any of the harms prohibitionists predicted. Quite the opposite: Since the law passed in 2010, the rate of both high-school dropouts and youth drug overdoses are down by 20 percent. Non-marijuana drug arrests for California youth are also down 23 percent, fully debunking the gateway theory.

Even in Colorado pot use itself has hardly budged. A working paper released in October by a Cato Institute professor reveals that essentially none of the harms that opponents claimed would accompany legalization have materialized.

Instead of spreading hysterical fear about marijuana, why not take a puff, kick back and chill?

— **Larry Brophy**, *Payson*