



Shooting death of Olivette honor student reignites debate over marijuana legalization

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An Olivette family is increasing the reward in hopes of getting answers and an arrest in their son's murder.

Investigators said Ethan Sandhu was found shot inside a car at 2:50 p.m. on June 1 near the intersection of North 22nd Street and University Street. Sandhu's mother, Mary Kay Sandhu said her son had just graduated from Ladue High School days prior. She said he juggled school while working as a host at Olive + Oak restaurant in Webster Groves. Ethan Sandhu earned an academic and music scholarship to Webster University where he was planning to attend school this fall.

"Just the kid that went out of his way for the lonely or people the fringes to help them feel welcome and included," Sandhu said. "He was sensitive, he saw people and cared for people and believed in equality."

Sandhu said her son didn't support carrying firearms. She said he had a medical marijuana card and said it's possible he was meeting with someone to buy weed the afternoon he was killed.

"I do wonder if marijuana as legalized in Missouri if his death could have been avoided," Sandhu said.

Abrahama Keys works with NORML, The National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws in the Greater St. Louis Region. Keys has spent time working to make recreational marijuana legal in Missouri, taking a state by state approach. She believes legalizing it would help cut back on gun violence.

"I definitely think it has the potential to cut down on violent crime," Keys said.

However, St. Louis County Councilman Tim Fitch disagrees. Fitch is a retired police officer and doesn't believe crime has decreased in states where the recreational use of marijuana is legal.

"The competition is even more fierce between those who sell it on the street corner because what they're doing is selling it for a lot less than what you can buy it through the legal means through the state," Fitch said.

Right now, recreational marijuana is legal in 19 states for those over the age of 21. According to a recent study by the Cato Institute, overall crime hasn't increased or decreased since laws went into effect.

The Sandhu family is offering an additional reward of \$20,000 for information leading to an arrest in their son's killing, bringing the cash reward to a possible \$30,000. If you have information, you're asked to call CrimeStoppers at 1-866-371-TIPS. A tip can be left anonymously.