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RE: Marijuana Dispensaries

Dear Mayor Fitch and Redmond City Council,

As the Redmond City Council considers allowing distributors of recreational marijuana within Redmond city limits, we believe concern for the youth and families of our city must be an important consideration in the decision-making process.

According to a recent study released by OHSU, school age calls to poison control centers regarding marijuana use have increased by **245%** in the last 20 years. Especially concerning is the spike between **2017** and **2020**. There is no coincidence in this data as the passing of Measure 91 in Oregon became active in 2015. The study suggests that these increased trends are tied to legalized marijuana and increased accessibility.

Anecdotal data for Redmond School District indicates that a primary source for obtaining marijuana for school-aged students is from the home and/or siblings. Increased accessibility is creating a pathway for illegal and harmful drug use for our students. Habitual and addicted teenage users create incredible hardship on families, friends and school systems. Completing high school, learning the skills for successful employment, and contributing to the Redmond community are all at risk with the increase in student marijuana use.

Using marijuana has adverse effects on student's health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, the teen brain is actively developing and continues to develop until around age 25. Marijuana use during adolescence and young adulthood has adverse effects on the developing brain which include: 1) Difficulty thinking and problem solving; 2) Problems with memory and learning; 3) Reduced coordination; 4) Difficulty maintaining attention; and 5) Problems with school and social life. Increased use through accessibility put continued pressure on all community systems: law enforcement, schools, treatment, and counseling options.

It is not enough to believe that it is "illegal" for teens to buy marijuana. Stores that cater to the sale of marijuana increase the potential sources of supply for illegal student use. These stores often sell products that are meant to be used in a "vape" type of device. Recently, the

Redmond School District joined a lawsuit against the Juul Corporation because of the damage that these types of devices have done to our schools. From 2012 - 2022 suspensions for drug related offenses have increased from 53 to 135 - **an increase of 255%**.

Based on these factual findings it would not be in the best interest of the community for the City of Redmond to allow dispensaries to open in our city. As elected officials tasked with making decisions that impact Redmond residents, we ask that you consider the health and well-being of our youngest citizens. The Redmond School District is committed to our mission of Thriving Students, Engaged Community, Ready Graduates, a mission that is made harder to achieve with students who are adversely affected by addiction and drug use. Restricting access by prohibiting dispensaries in our city is a critical step in keeping drugs out of the hands of young people.

We ask that you carefully weigh any perceived benefits of dispensaries with the very real impact that allowing the sale of marijuana in our town would have on the youth and families that Redmond School District serves.

As policy makers and community leaders, it is important that the City Council and the School Board work together toward a better future for all Redmond citizens. We look forward to being a part of the conversation regarding dispensaries in Redmond.

Sincerely,

Michael Summers, Chair
Redmond School District Board of Directors

Liz Goodrich, Vice Chair
Redmond School District Board of Directors

Alice DeWittie, Director
Redmond School District Board of Directors

Keri Lopez, Director
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