

## Opinion: Rescheduling Marijuana would be dangerously premature



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A recent Wall Street Journal [article](#) revealed that President Donald Trump discussed reclassifying marijuana at a high-dollar fundraising event — a move that profit-driven cannabis corporations are aggressively pushing.

These businesses have poured millions into political campaigns, eyeing lucrative federal tax breaks and business advantages that rescheduling would unlock. Their goal is clear: expand profits and continue to advance the unfettered commercialization of ultrapotent products that can bear little resemblance to what many people think about as marijuana.

After 13 years in the trenches of marijuana policy, focused solely on protecting children from the harmful effects of THC, the chemical in marijuana linked to numerous health problems, my organization, One Chance to Grow Up, and I have seen firsthand why rescheduling the drug now would be dangerously premature.

Here's why.

Rescheduling the plant itself, rather than the amount of active ingredients in the finished products, would dangerously mislead the public. Today's new and different marijuana products can vary significantly in their chemical composition and should not all be treated the same. A nonintoxicating CBD gummy has little in common with a gummy containing high amounts of total THC. It's why poppy plant derivatives are found in three different drug schedules, from heroin (Schedule I) to Tylenol with a capped amount of codeine (Schedule III).

Of particular concern is that many marijuana products today contain extraordinarily high levels of THC with no legitimate medical use. These products have been linked to psychosis, schizophrenia, addiction, violence, suicide, and worsening mental and physical health. World-renowned researchers have questioned whether it is appropriate to even refer to these products as "marijuana."

Rescheduling would turbocharge the availability, marketing, and sales of these ultrapotent products, giving them a federal green light on safety that they have not earned but the public trusts. It would also lower

the perceived risks of using them, which research shows leads to increased use among both adults and youth.

After all, we've already had a preview of the dangers premature rescheduling can cause. Just look at how Congress's well-intended nonintoxicating hemp policies went off the rails.

After the 2018 U.S. Farm Bill legalized nonintoxicating hemp, industry players exploited the law to mass-produce and market psychoactive products as "hemp." Chasing profits and making products cheaply in the lab, unscrupulous industry players sidestepped federal potency limits and flooded communities with harmful, toxic products. They marketed these products in child-friendly forms, complete with false health and wellness claims, resulting in child poisonings, underage use, and widespread consumer deception.

On March 20, 2024, 21 state attorneys general, both Democrats and Republicans, sounded the alarm in a [letter](#) urging Congress to close this dangerous loophole.

"Hemp-derived intoxicants have proliferated across our states, posing a significant threat to public health and safety", they wrote. Regardless of Congress's original intent, "the reality is that this law has unleashed on our states a flood of products that are nothing less than a more potent form of cannabis—often in candy form designed to attract youth and children—with staggering levels of potency, no regulation, no oversight, and limited ability for our offices to rein it in."

Congress is now working to close this dangerous loophole. Yet industry players remain relentless in their pushback.

The lesson is clear: Today's THC businesses are not ready for prime time. Until the hemp intoxicant loophole is closed and marijuana can clearly and accurately be defined by finished-product potency and concentration thresholds based on intended use, rescheduling will greenlight dangerous products and harm far more lives.

The stakes couldn't be higher. Rescheduling now would reward corporate greed from companies that have repeatedly put profits over public safety and have shown an inability to meet the responsibilities such a sweeping policy change demands. But of far greater consequence, it would unleash serious, entirely preventable harm on our nation's children, young people, families, and communities across the country.

The Washington Examiner  
<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/3498895/marijuana-reschedule-would-be-dangerously-premature/>