

Brown not sure legalized pot a good idea

By AP

Gov. Jerry Brown said he is not sure legalizing pot is a good idea in his state because the country could lose its competitive edge if too many people are getting stoned.

If pot smoking gains more legitimacy in the nation's most populous state, Brown said he worries it could have negative ripple effects.

"The problem with anything, a certain amount is OK. But there is a tendency to go to extremes," he said in a wide-ranging interview aired Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press." "And all of a sudden, if there's advertising and legitimacy, how many people can get stoned and still have a great state or a great nation?"

Californians voted to legalize medical marijuana in 1996. But Brown said he is watching closely to see how Colorado and Washington handle their new laws that go a step further by regulating the growth and sale of taxed pot at state-licensed stores.

"We have medical marijuana, which gets very close to what they have in Colorado and Washington. I'd really like those two states to show us how it's going to work," he said. "The world's pretty dangerous, very competitive. I think we need to stay alert, if not 24 hours a day, more than some of the potheads might be able to put together."

Brown, who was interviewed remotely from San Francisco, also discussed California's drought problems, climate change and his future political career.

Now, as he prepares to run for his fourth term as governor, Brown said that despite his progressive politics, the key to turning California's budget deficit into a projected multibillion-dollar budget surplus was exerting fiscal discipline.

"You've got to be tough on spending. No matter how liberal you want to be, at the end of the day, fiscal discipline is the fundamental predicate of a free society," he said.