

# SLT's top cop blasts Calif. marijuana initiative

By Kathryn Reed

Control, Regulate and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Act is a misnomer, according to South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler.

He believes proponents of this ballot measure came up with the name as a way to mislead people. Uhler contends the initiative does the opposite of what the title says.

It will likely be before California voters in November.

Uhler spoke March 1 to the South Lake Tahoe Drug Coalition about the proposed legislation. He had nothing positive to say about it.

It will allow anyone to grow marijuana at their residence without oversight from local government officials. Today, South Lake Tahoe has an ordinance allowing indoor grows, but they must be permitted which entails having the electrical and other safety issues be monitored. The act would negate the local regulations.



South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler on March 1

speaks about a marijuana  
initiative he wants  
defeated. Photo/LTN

The act would also allow felons to get a marijuana business license. The proposal does not add dollars to the state's general fund.

Proponents say the act will "legalize marijuana for those over 21 years old, protect children, and establish laws to regulate marijuana cultivation, distribution, sale and use, and will protect Californians and the environment from potential dangers. It establishes the Bureau of Marijuana Control within the Department of Consumer Affairs to regulate and license the marijuana industry."

Uhler's contention is that children will not be protected because marijuana businesses will be allowed near schools as long as they are at least 600 feet away. He also believes the language regarding advertising is a joke.

The initiative says, "Any advertising or marketing placed in broadcast, cable, radio, print and digital communications shall only be displayed where at least 71.6 percent of the audience is reasonably expected to be 21 years of age or older, as determined by reliable, up-to-date audience composition data."

Uhler's belief is that definition means plenty of children will still be hearing and seeing adds for marijuana, even possibly on billboards because more adults are on the roads than kids.

The new level of bureaucracy the act will create is where the bulk of the money will go. For 10 years \$10 million will go to a public university to research and evaluate the effects of the act, for five years \$10 million will go to the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, \$2 million

annually is earmarked for UC San Diego for medicinal cannabis research, and \$3 million for five years will be allocated to the California Highway Patrol to establish and adopt protocols to determine whether a person is driving while impaired.

A CHP officer at Tuesday's meeting said the agency already has such a program and questions whether the money will actually be forthcoming.

If any money is left, it will be divided among youth education-prevention, environmental restoration, and local law enforcement.

Uhler stressed there is no money in the act for additional law enforcement officers on the street.

The UC San Francisco Center of Tobacco Control Research and Education said the act "is written primarily to create a new business and only include minimal protections for the public that are unlikely to prevent public health harms caused by the burgeoning marijuana industry."

Members of the local drug coalition expressed a desire to educate the public about what the act really does, which the police chief stressed is the opposite of what the name implies.