

TOM DAVIS, VIRGINIA,
CHAIRMAN

CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, CONNECTICUT
DAN BURTON, INDIANA
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, FLORIDA
JOHN M. McHUGH, NEW YORK
JOHN L. MICA, FLORIDA
GIL GUTKNECHT, MINNESOTA
MARK E. SOUDER, INDIANA
STEVEN C. LATOURETTE, OHIO
TODD RUSSELL PLATT, PENNSYLVANIA
CHRIS CANNON, UTAH
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TENNESSEE
CANDICE MILLER, MICHIGAN
MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO
DARRELL ISSA, CALIFORNIA
JON C. PORTER, NEVADA
KENNY MARCHANT, TEXAS
LYNN A. WESTMORELAND, GEORGIA
PATRICK T. McHENRY, NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLES W. DENT, PENNSYLVANIA
VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA
JEAN SCHMIDT, OHIO
VACANCY

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
FACSIMILE (202) 225-3974
MINORITY (202) 225-5051
TTY (202) 225-6852

<http://reform.house.gov>

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA,
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

TOM LANTOS, CALIFORNIA
MAJOR R. OWENS, NEW YORK
EDOLPHUS TOWNS, NEW YORK
PAUL E. KANJORSKI, PENNSYLVANIA
CAROLYN B. MALONEY, NEW YORK
ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, MARYLAND
DENNIS J. KUCINICH, OHIO
DANNY K. DAVIS, ILLINOIS
Wm. LACY CLAY, MISSOURI
DIANE E. WATSON, CALIFORNIA
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, MASSACHUSETTS
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, MARYLAND
LINDA T. SANCHEZ, CALIFORNIA
C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER,
MARYLAND
BRIAN HIGGINS, NEW YORK
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT,
INDEPENDENT

March 14, 2006

Twenty-Five Year Longitudinal Study Affirms Link Between Marijuana Use and Other Illicit Drug Use

Dear Colleague:

I write to draw your attention to the most recent research demonstrating the fact that *marijuana is a gateway drug*.

Research¹ from the long-running Christchurch Health and Development Study at Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences² shows that regular or heavy marijuana use was associated with using a wider variety of other illicit drugs, and with abuse or dependence on other illicit drugs.

This new research found that “following tight statistical controls, *there is a clear tendency for those using cannabis to have higher rates of usage of other illicit drugs. This tendency is most evident for regular users of cannabis, and is even more marked in adolescents than in young adults.*”³

This is further confirmation of what we have long known: that marijuana use opens the door to additional illicit drug use and abuse. Far from being a “benign” substance, marijuana it is a dangerous, addictive drug that is frequently the first step into the abyss of lifelong drug addiction, especially for adolescents.

¹ D. Fergusson, et al., *Cannabis Use and Other Illicit Drug Use: Testing the Cannabis Gateway Hypothesis*, *Addiction* Vol. 101 at 556 (April 2006). Abstract available at <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2005.01322.x> (last visited March 14, 2006).

² Funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand, a 25-year longitudinal study of the health, development and adjustment of a birth cohort of 1265 New Zealand children, was the basis for these findings.

³ Press Release, “Illicit Drug Use Starts With Cannabis,” March 14, 2006, Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Otago. At http://www.chmeds.ac.nz/newsevents/illicit_drugs.htm (last visited March 14, 2006).

