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Florida Police Chiefs Association Opposes Constitutional Amendment 3 “Adult Use Of Marijuana”

Tallahassee, Fla. – The Florida Police Chiefs Association (FPCA) released the following statement today opposing passage of Constitutional Amendment 3 “Adult Use of Marijuana”. The statement may be attributed to FPCA president Chief Charles Vazquez, Tampa International Airport Police Department.

"The Florida Police Chiefs Association (FPCA) is composed of over 1,300 of Florida’s top law enforcement executives serving municipal police, airport, railroad and port authority police, college and university police, tribal police, and private business and security firms, as well as federal, state and county law enforcement agencies."

"As we represent the highest levels of law enforcement leadership in Florida, we believe that passage of Constitutional Amendment 3 “Adult Use of Marijuana” – otherwise known as recreational marijuana – will hurt public safety and ultimately cost Floridians tax dollars and lives. Among these impacts will be the growth of illegal markets and criminal cartels, impaired driving and traffic fatalities, homelessness,

and hospitalization as a result of marijuana use."

"The results speak for themselves. Already, twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have legalized recreational marijuana. While detailed data from all these states is not available, published reports show disturbing trends alongside broader law enforcement impacts."

"In Colorado, which legalized recreational marijuana in 2012, marijuana-related traffic deaths rose 140 percent from 2013 to 2019. Washington state, which also legalized the same year, saw fatal crashes involving drivers who tested THC-positive double by 2017."

"Nationally, the percentage of traffic fatalities involving cannabis more than doubled from 9% in 2000 to 21.5% in 2018, and during 2018, 12 million (4.7%) U.S. residents reported driving under the influence of marijuana in the past 12 months."

"Supporters of recreational marijuana claim that legalization will allow law enforcement to focus on more serious, violent crimes. Meanwhile in California, which legalized marijuana in 2016, 80 percent of cannabis sold still came from illegal markets in 2019. In response, Governor Newsom declared that illegal grows in Northern California were "getting worse, not better," causing him to pull a contingent of National Guard troops off the Mexican border and send them to pursue illegal cannabis farms instead. Legalization has increased the presence of drug cartels and gangs, and with them comes violent crime."

"The use of marijuana, just like with alcohol, is also a major risk factor for victimization, violent assaults, and deaths. Studies have shown alcohol and marijuana in similar percentages of homicide victims (37.5% and 31% respectively), with the prevalence of marijuana highest in younger victims (15-20 years, 46.8%). In addition, Black homicide victims had a considerably higher prevalence of marijuana (38%) than white victims (23.4%)."

"Based on the experience of other states, we know that law enforcement resources, as well as public health and other governmental services, will be taxed with new call volume due to the nature of marijuana impairment and its relationship to criminality, including victimization, and mental health."

"In closing, keeping Florida, its citizens, and its visitors safe is our highest priority. Advocates would have you believe that recreational marijuana is no big deal. It is in fact a big deal to the many who will profit from it, including criminal organizations. There is no doubt based on the experiences of other states, that recreational

marijuana will in fact have a negative public safety impact in Florida. Our business is keeping people and communities safe, so we stand in strong opposition to this amendment and to those organizations that think it is 'no big deal.'"

About the Florida Police Chiefs Association

The Florida Police Chiefs Association (FPCA) is the nation's pre-eminent law enforcement professional association, speaking for over 1,300 of Florida's top law enforcement executives, and providing guidance and leadership for the future of law enforcement and our communities. The FPCA serves municipal, airport, college and university, and tribal police departments, as well as private businesses and security firms and federal, state and county law enforcement agencies across every region of the state. For more information about the FPCA, please visit www.fpca.com.

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