

## ARTICLES FOR 3-23-17 ROUNDUP

### Former California Attorney General John Van De Kamp Dies

By DON THOMPSON, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Former California Attorney General John Van de Kamp, a public-defender-turned-politician who became Los Angeles County's top prosecutor by defeating the man who sent Charles Manson to prison, has died after a brief illness. He was 81.

Philip Recht, his senior law partner and longtime friend, confirmed Wednesday that Van de Kamp died Tuesday at his home in Pasadena.

"He had just a storied and I think pretty unique career in law and law enforcement," recalled Recht, the partner in charge of Mayer Brown's Los Angeles office where Van de Kamp worked the last five years. "I don't know anybody who's been the leader first on the defense side and then the prosecution side."

Van de Kamp was California's attorney general from 1983 until 1991 and successfully pushed to pass the nation's first restrictions on assault weapons after a gunman killed five children at a Stockton school in 1989.

He ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1990, losing in the Democratic primary to then-San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein. She was defeated by Republican U.S. Sen. Pete Wilson in the general election.

Van de Kamp had the distinction of serving as the first Los Angeles-based federal public defender from 1971-1975 and then as Los Angeles County's top prosecutor from 1975-1982 during his long legal and political career. He also was the U.S. attorney in Los Angeles from 1966-67.

He won the district attorney's race in 1976 against Charles Manson prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi.

California's current chief law enforcement officer, Xavier Becerra, was among those who recalled Van de Kamp as a mentor.

"John Van de Kamp lived for the values of justice and opportunity that define the state of California," Becerra said in a statement. "I will forever be grateful for the confidence he showed in me from my earliest days of public service under his leadership at the California Department of Justice."

Van de Kamp, a Stanford Law School graduate, also served as president of the State Bar of California from 2004-2005 and more recently was the independent reform monitor for the city of Vernon as part of reform efforts there. He was a past president of both the California Historical Society and the Planning and Conservation League, reflecting what Recht called an extraordinary range of interests.

As attorney general, he defended a voter-approved initiative designed to limit insurance rate increases while building a track record as a consumer advocate. He ran for governor in part by promising to drain the political "swamp" at the state Capitol.

A long-time death penalty opponent, Van de Kamp backed unsuccessful ballot initiatives in 2012 and 2016 that would have ended capital punishment in the state.

He also challenged a November ballot initiative approved by voters. Proposition 66 is on hold while the California Supreme Court considers his lawsuit challenging the measure that would speed up appeals for criminals sentenced to death.

### ***TRAVEL BAN CASE UPDATE: HAWAII SEEKS CONVERSION OF TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER TO PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION***

Hawaii Attorney General Doug Chin announced today that the state of Hawaii has moved to convert the temporary restraining order issued last week by Hawaii federal judge Derrick K. Watson in the travel ban case into a preliminary injunction.

On March 15, 2017, Judge Watson issued a 43-page opinion enjoining the federal government nationwide from enforcing or implementing Sections 2 and 6 of a second Executive Order issued by President Trump. That Executive Order would have restricted immigration from Iran, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, and Yemen, and also temporarily suspended refugee admissions. The second Executive Order had been scheduled to become effective on March 16, 2017.

Attorney General Chin said, "Protecting national security and the safety of our state is critically important, but executive orders must not discriminate against people based on national origin or religion. President Trump during his campaign called for a Muslim ban. His comments in the last week indicate he still supports that policy."

In today's filings, Hawaii quotes from the following statement made by the President at a rally in Nashville, Tennessee on the evening of March 15 after the federal court had issued its temporary restraining order:

"The order [Judge Watson] blocked was a watered down version of the first order that was also blocked by another judge and should have never been blocked to start with . . . Remember this. I wasn't thrilled, but the lawyers all said, oh, let's tailor it. This is a watered down version of the first one. This is a watered down version. And let me tell you something, I think we ought to go back to the first one and go all the way, which is what I wanted to do in the first place."

Today's filings also describe a television interview later that night during which President Trump stated that it was "very hard" to assimilate Muslims into Western culture.

Under federal court rules, a temporary restraining order expires 14 days after entry, unless the court extends it. In contrast, a preliminary injunction will last as long as directed by the court.

A hearing on today's motion is currently scheduled before Judge Watson on March 29, 2017 at 9:30 a.m. The Court has advised that the hearing date and time may be changed or vacated upon review of the written briefs. The parties have also stipulated that Judge Watson's nationwide order of March 15, 2017 shall remain in place until such time as the Court rules on whether the TRO should be converted to a preliminary injunction or until otherwise ordered by the Court.

## **Wasden Announces Opinion on Proposed Sale of Lewiston Nonprofit Hospital**

The sale – which includes the creation of a new \$25 million healthcare endowment and independent foundation - may proceed to closing without objection from the Attorney General.

(BOISE) - Attorney General Lawrence Wasden today announced the release of his opinion regarding the proposed sale of St. Joseph Regional Medical Center, a nonprofit hospital in Lewiston, to a for-profit subsidiary of Tennessee-based RCCH HealthCare Partners. The opinion concludes the Attorney General's review of the proposed sale as required under the Idaho Nonprofit Hospital Sale or Conversion Act.

“My review of the proposed sale indicates the hospital and the public will benefit from this transaction,” Wasden said. “I therefore do not oppose the sale, and I encourage the parties to work cooperatively to quickly transition the hospital to its new management.”

Wasden also announced that his office has reached agreements with Ascension Health - the sole member of St. Joseph Regional Medical Center, Inc. - and RCCH HealthCare Partners to establish a \$25 million healthcare endowment. A new, independent foundation will administer the endowment to benefit the health and well-being of people in nearby counties in Idaho, Washington and Oregon. Ascension Health agrees to contribute \$23 million to the endowment and RCCH HealthCare Partners has generously agreed to donate \$2 million. RCCH HealthCare Partners has also agreed to transfer ownership of Carondelet House to the new foundation.

“The charitable mission of all Idaho nonprofit hospitals is providing free or low-cost healthcare to Idahoans,” Wasden said. “For nearly 100 years, St. Joseph Regional Medical Center has provided healthcare to residents in Idaho, Washington and Oregon. In return, St. Joseph Regional Medical Center has received millions of dollars in tax exemptions, along with the money, time and labor of people who have helped the hospital grow. This endowment will be a way to continue the purposes for which the assets have been created and used in the community.

“I insisted that the new foundation be independent and administered for the benefit of those in the Lewis Clark Valley. It is important to me that the community take charge of the foundation and the endowment it will administer. The foundation will also honor the Catholic principles that have long governed the hospital's activities.

“The negotiations to reach the agreement were lengthy and vigorous. I thank Ascension Health and RCCH HealthCare Partners for their diligence and cooperation throughout the review process.”

Idaho's Nonprofit Hospital Sale Act requires the Attorney General to review most nonprofit hospital sales or conversions to for-profit entities. In late October 2016, St. Joseph Regional Medical Center notified the Office of the Attorney General of its intent to sell the Lewiston hospital. The primary sale terms include a commitment from St. Joseph Hospital LLC, the purchaser, to:

- pay a \$109 million purchase price;
- invest \$57 million in capital improvements over the next five years;
- establish a local board to govern the hospital;
- continue the hospital's current level of charity care;
- continue to provide current community programs;
- retain employees at their current salaries and benefit levels; and
- continue operating under the Catholic Tradition.

The Nonprofit Hospital Sale Act includes six factors the Attorney General must apply to the transaction and the parties' actions. The process to assess each of these factors took several months to complete. It included reviewing thousands of documents, holding a public hearing in Lewiston, soliciting public comments and obtaining an independent business valuation of the hospital. The Attorney General's review revealed that the sale terms and the parties' actions substantially comply with all of the six factors under the Nonprofit Hospital Sale Act:

**Fair Market Value:** The \$109 million purchase price exceeds the hospital's estimated fair market value.

**Party Actions:** The parties have not acted to decrease the fair market value of the charitable trust assets.

**Charitable Assets:** The settlement reached with regards to the hospital's charitable assets upholds charitable trust principles and is also in the community's interests.

**Due Diligence:** The board of directors exercised adequate due diligence in finding a purchaser and negotiating the sale terms.

**Private Benefits:** The parties will not receive unlawful private benefits from the sale.

**Contracts:** The negotiated contracts appear reasonable.

To help the public better understand the Attorney General's opinion, the office has posted answers to frequently asked questions on the Attorney General's website. Members of the public also may submit comments to the Attorney General through the online email form. Finally, the Attorney General's opinion and the parties' agreements may be found here.

## **AG Rosenblum Settles with Vitamin Shoppe over Dietary Supplements**

Vitamin Shoppe will pay Oregon \$545,000, ban DMAA, Picamillon and other illegal supplements from Oregon stores

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum today announced a \$545,000 settlement with the nutritional supplement chain Vitamin Shoppe Inc. that will prohibit the company from selling dietary supplements with illegal or unsafe ingredients. Under the settlement, Vitamin Shoppe is prohibited from selling any dietary supplement after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued written notice that the product contains an ingredient that is unlawful or unsafe. In addition, Vitamin Shoppe may not sell DMAA, picamillon, and other unlawful ingredients in Oregon.

“The nutritional supplements that Vitamin Shoppe was selling have the potential to do a lot of harm. Continuing to sell a purported dietary supplement after the FDA warned it was unsafe or unlawful is unacceptable,” said Attorney General Rosenblum. “This is the first agreement of its kind that holds a retailer financially responsible for selling products manufactured by a third party that they knew or should have known were not safe or not lawful.”

The Assurance of Voluntary Compliance filed in Multnomah Circuit Court resolves allegations that Vitamin Shoppe sold products with unsafe or unlawful ingredients. Oregon alleged that Vitamin Shoppe sold products containing DMAA, an amphetamine like ingredient, even after the FDA determined the ingredient was unsafe or illegal. Despite warnings from the FDA, Vitamin Shoppe continued to sell the product containing DMAA in Oregon. The State also alleged that Vitamin Shoppe sold products in Oregon containing picamillon, an unlawful dietary ingredient sold in other countries as a drug to treat psychiatric disorders.

Under the terms of the settlement, if the FDA, or any other governmental entity in the U.S., Britain, Canada, the European Union or Australia brings the safety or legality of a dietary supplement sold by Vitamin Shoppe into question, Vitamin Shoppe must conduct an independent investigation to confirm whether the product is safe.

The settlement requires Vitamin Shoppe to pay \$545,000 to the state of Oregon to be used for consumer protection and other purposes.

In May, 2015 the Oregon Attorney General settled with Vitamin Shoppe to permanently ban in Oregon stores dietary products that contain BMPEA, a powerful stimulant, which was sometimes contained in weight-loss drugs.

## **CVS Health Launches Reduced Rx™ Savings Program to Give Patients Access to More Affordable Medications**

CVS Health (CVS) today announced the company will launch Reduced Rx™, a prescription savings program that will offer discounts on certain medications – through CVS Health's pharmacy benefits manager, CVS Caremark – directly to patients. The program will help patients with high out of pocket costs afford essential medications. Novo Nordisk will participate in the prescription savings program. Through this program, CVS Health and Novo Nordisk will offer Novolin R®, Novolin N® and Novolin 70/30® human insulin at a cost of \$25 per 10ml vial, which reflects a potential savings of as much as \$100 for cash paying patients.

The Reduced Rx launch follows another affordability announcement made earlier this year by CVS Health. Working with Impax Laboratories, CVS Health announced in January that it has made the authorized generic for Adrenaclick, an epinephrine auto-injector for patients with allergic reactions, available at all CVS Pharmacy locations at the lowest cash price in the market, \$109.99 for a two-pack. CVS Health collaborated to create both the generic Adrenaclick offering and the Reduced Rx program in response to consumer need for low cost options.

"We developed the Reduced Rx prescription savings program with Novo Nordisk because we both recognized a need and an opportunity to make critical medications more affordable for patients," said Jonathan Roberts, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, CVS Health. "This savings program will leverage CVS Caremark's expertise in providing lower cost prescription drugs and fulfill our company's purpose of helping people on their path to better health."

"This program underscores how important collaboration is to addressing the affordability challenges patients face in certain health plans or who remain uninsured. We all have a role to play and that's why we welcomed the chance to work with CVS Health on this program," said Doug Langa, senior vice president and head of North America Operations, Novo Nordisk. "We're committed to developing sustainable solutions with customers and will continue to pursue opportunities to ensure that patients have access to insulin that is affordable."

"With nearly ten percent of the U.S. population living with diabetes, ensuring patients have access to affordable insulin is more important than ever," said Troyen Brennan, M.D., Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, CVS Health. "We're pleased that our Reduced Rx prescription savings program can help assure that effective medications are also affordable."

Reduced Rx will allow patients to purchase medications at a reduced cost at any of the more than 67,000 pharmacies in the CVS Caremark retail network, including the more than 9,700 CVS Pharmacy locations throughout the U.S. Patients using the Reduced Rx prescription savings program will need to pay the cost of the medication out of pocket; the program cannot be used with any prescription drug insurance coverage. Patients can learn more about the Reduced Rx savings program at [www.ReducedRx.com](http://www.ReducedRx.com) or by calling toll free 1-844-379-1668. Patient enrollment in the program will begin in May 2017. Following its initial offering with Novo Nordisk, CVS Health intends to expand the Reduced Rx prescription savings program to other medications and to address other conditions.

## **AG Paxton Challenges Federal Government's Defiance of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act**

AUSTIN – Late yesterday, Attorney General Ken Paxton filed a lawsuit against several federal agencies for violating the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA). Since the NWPA's enactment in 1982, the federal government has wholly failed to complete the licensing process for a permanent nuclear waste storage repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada.

The lawsuit, filed directly in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit, seeks to force an up or down vote by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on the licensing of Yucca Mountain and to stop the Department of Energy from spending tax dollars on "consent-based" siting. A 2012

court-ordered deadline for a final decision on licensing Yucca Mountain was wholly ignored by the federal government. The Obama administration ignored Congressional requirements, withdrew funding from the Yucca Mountain licensing process, and formed an unlawful Blue Ribbon Commission to identify alternative methods of nuclear waste storage.

“For decades, the federal government has ignored our growing problem of nuclear waste,” Attorney General Paxton said. “The NRC’s inaction on licensing Yucca Mountain subjects the public and the environment to potential dangerous risks from radioactive waste. We do not intend to sit quietly anymore.”

Because the federal government has failed to provide a permanent repository for the nation’s nuclear waste, taxpayers have been tagged with the costs of temporary, above-ground storage of nuclear waste. To date, the federal government has expended \$5.3 billion in taxpayer monies to pay for temporary storage of nuclear waste at reactor sites, and recent estimates suggest the Department of Energy’s remaining liabilities will total \$23.7 billion, all at taxpayer expense. In the meantime, over \$40 billion sits idle in the Nuclear Waste Fund.

## **ATTORNEY GENERAL LAXALT ISSUES STATEMENT ON YUCCA MOUNTAIN**

Carson City, NV – Today, Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt issued the following statement on today’s announcement regarding Yucca Mountain:

“In the coming years, I will continue to battle the poster-child for federal overreach – a battle over an unwanted nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain in our beloved Nevada. My Solicitor General’s Office, senior staff and outside experts, working in conjunction with the Office of Nuclear Project’s staff and technical experts and the Governor’s Office, have been preparing for a resumption of attempts to license Yucca Mountain to store high level nuclear waste since a federal court issued its restart order.”

“Today’s announcement that the president is requesting \$120 million in nuclear waste funding, part of which would be used to restart licensing activities for the Yucca Mountain repository, comes as no surprise to this team. Together, we have submitted two separate budget requests for a combined total of \$3.6 million per year for the next two years (State of Nevada FY 2018-2019 biennium) to represent Nevada’s interests in the licensing proceeding. That request was based on an anticipated federal restart budget in the range of \$100-150 million over the coming year, placing today’s announced federal request in line with our planning assumptions. If more funds are required, we will request additional funding from the Legislature.”

“Nevada will continue to litigate this matter aggressively and fully. We have many strong claims against the proposed nuclear repository. If the Trump administration continues along this path, we expect many years of protracted litigation in which we are confident we will ultimately prevail.”

**State attorney general targets student loans, other consumer protections**

If you think you are seeing the state take more businesses to court than in the past, you're right, according to Washington state Attorney General Bob Ferguson.

There was just one consumer protection trial in the 17 years before he took office, he told the Herald editorial board Tuesday during a visit to the Tri-Cities.

He's also bringing nearly twice as many cases forward as two years ago, he said.

"The reason for that is not because there are more bad actors out there — I think that is relatively constant. We simply have put more resources in it," he said.

When he was elected attorney general, the office had eight attorneys devoted to consumer protection. That's grown to 22, with two more being hired, he said.

The increase has come despite a dramatic drop in recent years in funding for consumer protection from the state's general fund.

Ferguson's first priority is to recover money for consumers who have been harmed.

Additional money from settlements or court cases won go into the state general fund, and in some cases are reinvested in the consumer protection program to grow the program and pay the costs of bringing cases, he said.

The litigation comes at a risk. Under Washington law, the state pays the cost of the winning side if the state loses its consumer protection lawsuit, Ferguson said.

But if the state does not sue, it sends a message to businesses that the Attorney General's Office will always settle, which means less money for the state.

"If you go to trial and start winning, people get the memo on that," Ferguson said.

Last month, after a three-week trial, a King County judge awarded the state nearly \$4.3 million in penalties, attorneys' fees and costs for multiple violations of the state Consumer Protection Act by the makers of 5-Hour Energy.

The judge found the company made deceptive claims, including that doctors recommend 5-Hour Energy.

Now Ferguson is taking on Navient Corp., an offshoot of education-finance giant Sallie Mae, as part of work to protect students who take out loans for their education.

The lawsuit against Navient alleges that it has used deceptive practices, such as overstating the amount due when borrowers fall behind on payments.



It has enticed family members to co-sign loans, saying they will be released when the student has demonstrated an ability to pay. But then it applies requirements in ways students could not have foreseen, according to the attorney general.

For instance, if a student makes a loan payment a month early, Navient counts it as a skipped payment the next month when calculating whether the student has demonstrated an ability to pay, Ferguson said.

To help students, the Office of the Attorney General has published a “Student Loan Survival Guide: Navigating Student Debt from Start to Finish,” with information ranging from choosing a school to what to do if repayment is a problem. It is at [bit.ly/studentloanadvice](http://bit.ly/studentloanadvice).

He also has two proposed laws under consideration in the 2017 legislative session to help students with loans.

One would require that colleges give students their loan balance and estimated monthly payments at least annually.

When Indiana University sent annual loan statements to students, along with instituting other financial literacy programs, undergraduate borrowing dropped by about 15 percent over two years, according to Ferguson.

The second bill would establish a student loan ombudsman to receive and resolve complaints and provide education to student borrowers. Standards would be set to make sure companies handling student loans are held accountable.

More than half the students graduating from Washington’s colleges and universities in 2014 had student loans, with the average debt at \$24,000.

## **Attorney General Racine Warns Residents of Immigration Scam**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine today warned immigrant communities in the District of Columbia of a potential scam involving persons posing as federal Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents and placing bogus Search/Removal Warrants on homes. The warrants threaten the occupants with searches and potential removal, and could be part of an effort to con residents of immigrant communities into sharing important personal financial information or to coerce them into making payments to avoid further action.

The warrants purport to be signed and issued by a Judge with the United States District Court, but are not formatted correctly and contain false case captions and numbers. The fake warrants do not contain any names, phone numbers or other information identifying the persons responsible for their posting and, to date, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) is unaware of any consumers having been directly threatened or asked to make any payments.

“Scammers will often stop at nothing to take advantage of people, and particularly vulnerable groups,” Attorney General Racine said. “We are concerned that these fake warrants are part of an

attempt to exploit very real fears of deportation running rampant right now in immigrant communities. Our office will do everything we can to help educate and protect all District residents, including undocumented immigrants.”

Since the November election, immigration and consumer advocates have been concerned that they would see increasing scams targeting immigrants uncertain of their status. In September 2016, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) issued an alert warning immigrants of imposters claiming to be government or law enforcement officers and threatening deportation and demanding payments.

If you or any of your neighbors, family members or friends receive a suspicious search warrant or similar item posted on your home, receive a phone call from someone claiming to be a government agent and demanding money, or otherwise are contacted by someone that you suspect may be falsely claiming to be a government official, please call the Attorney General’s Consumer Hotline at 202-442-9828.

## **Attorney General, Municipal Leaders, Medical Community, and Others to Hold Press Conference to Announce United Efforts to Halt Legalization of Recreational Marijuana in Rhode Island**

With growing pressure by special interests to push forward with the legalization of recreational marijuana in Rhode Island, Attorney General Peter Kilmartin, along with Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM), the Ocean State Prevention Alliance, and What's the Rush Rhode Island, hosted a press conference to announce a unified opposition to the legalization of marijuana.

Speakers at the press conference included representatives from law enforcement, the prevention and recovery communities, the medical community, the business community, municipal leaders, and others who are united in their opposition to the legalization of recreational marijuana in Rhode Island.

"Many of the voices we heard today, we heard for the first time, especially from the medical community and municipal leaders. What they have to say should make every parent, every teacher, every business owner, every Rhode Islander pause to think about the many real consequences of legalization of recreational marijuana," said Attorney General Kilmartin. "This is a very complex policy decision that will have long lasting effects and unintended consequences, much of which are still unknown. This is not a decision that should be made lightly. It's important that we continue to have these discussions to better understand the full impact of legalization before we head down that a path – a path I believe is the wrong direction for the State of Rhode Island."

"Marijuana lobbyists are pouring money into New England and looking to follow in Big Tobacco's footsteps to become the next big addictive industry in Rhode Island," said SAM Executive Vice President Jeffrey Zinsmeister. "This issue isn't about moralizing or ideology, it's about public health and the communities we want to raise our children in."

During the press conference, SAM unveiled a new ad campaign asking citizens "Are We Sure?" which raises questions about the unintended consequences of legalization.

Stuart Gitlow MD MPH MBA, Immediate Past President of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), spoke at the press conference, "ASAM is opposed to any legislation that may result in an increased number of individuals with addictive disease. We are in the midst of an addiction epidemic right now. The last thing we need to do is legalize yet another addictive drug."

As the largest professional organization of pediatricians in the United States and beyond and representing the 250+ pediatricians in the State, the President of the RI Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) weighed in on the Academy's concerns about the legalization of marijuana negative impact on children's health.

In its policy, the AAP affirms its position against the legalization of marijuana, states its opposition to "medical marijuana" outside the FDA regulatory process, and presents recommendations to protect children in states that have legalized marijuana for medical or recreational purposes.

"While legalization may be inevitable, a wait and see attitude and thoughtful approach and drawing on the experience of State's like Colorado on the longitudinal impact on its population will highlight legalization is not as positive as initially thought and in many ways, may lead to higher societal costs," said Susan Duffy, MD, MPH, President, RI Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Dr. Jennifer Lowenhaupt, President of the RI Council for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (RICCAP), expressed the Council support of the AAP's policy and advocated for "thoughtful consideration of the health effects on young person of any policies and legislatures for marijuana legislation.

The RICCAP concerns that "marijuana is not benign, and adolescents are especially vulnerable to its many known adverse effects; one in six adolescent marijuana users develop cannabis use disorder; heavy use during adolescence is associated with increased incidence and worsened course of psychotic, mood, anxiety, and substance abuse disorders across the lifespan; and marijuana's deleterious effects on the adolescent brain development, cognition, and social functioning may have immediate and long term implications."

Also attending the press conference were State Representative Dennis Canario and State Senator Cindy Coyne, who have sponsored a joint resolution to establish a commission to study the impact of legalization of marijuana in Colorado and Washington State to better understand the potential impact legalization might have on Rhode Island.

"As a retired police officer, I have serious concerns over the public safety and public health consequences of legalizing recreational marijuana use," said Representative Canario (D., District 71 - Little Compton, Portsmouth, and Tiverton). "I have proposed a joint commission in the hopes that these and many other concerns are taken into account before the General Assembly makes a decision on this issue. The people deserve a comprehensive discussion instead of a rush to judgment in the hopes of finding more revenues for our state."

"Legalization could have serious public safety, public health, and societal ramifications. It is imperative that we thoughtfully consider the unintended consequences and take notice from lessons learned in Colorado and Washington. As sponsor of a joint resolution to establish a new study commission on marijuana legalization the data and analysis from these two states will be very helpful as Rhode Island considers the impact of potential legalization, both positive and negative," added Senator Coyne (D., District 32 – Barrington, Bristol, and East Providence).

North Kingstown Town Council President Richard Welch explained the concern his Council has with the proposal and why it recently passed a resolution opposing the legalization of recreational marijuana and a commercial marijuana industry.

"Our resolution is an indication that the elected officials are not happy with the lack of local control over this new industry. We do not like the lack of control over the marijuana legalization currently being handled by the DBR and limited local control. We have a Home Rule Charter that gives the elected officials control over liquor licenses that we do not have over marijuana cultivators and growers. We do not like this lack of control or the problems that our public safety people deal with daily at local taxpayer expense. The legislation gives the state all the rights and fees with no income coming to the community to cover any of the expenses," he said.

Although unable to make the press conference, Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena had strong words for efforts at legalization, "I vehemently oppose the pending legislation which supports the legalization of marijuana in the State of Rhode Island. Furthermore, as Mayor of the Town of Johnston, I am in opposition to House Bill H5555 and Senate Bill S0420, which affects a municipality's ability to effectuate zoning, especially when a city or town opts to ban retail marijuana businesses from their municipality."

Rounding out those who spoke or attended the press conference were members of the prevention community and law enforcement.

"The prevention community really doesn't believe that by legalizing recreational marijuana we will be protecting anyone except big marijuana," said Nancy DeNuccio, certified substance abuse prevention specialist and Ocean State Prevention Alliance member.

"In light of all credible, current evidence it is clear that legalization for recreational use would be societal and fiscal disaster. We can all be grateful for the leadership of General Kilmartin, Senator Coyne and Representative Canario in their efforts to protect our youth and the safety of all Rhode Islanders," said Michael Cerullo of What's the Rush, Rhode Island?

Representing the Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association at the press conference, Hopkinton Police Chief David Palmer added, "Make no mistake about it; where there are drugs and money; there are guns and violence. And realize that marijuana is a serious and well sought-after drug. I would ask that people take heed of the strong message that Colorado and Washington prosecutors send to every state: get all stakeholders involved and all regulations in place long before considering legalization of recreational marijuana. Clearly we are not close."