

Prop 19 just a pipe dream

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A proposition that seemed so promising in the polls is now losing advocacy leading up to Election Day. Polls showed popular support for Proposition 19 has recently dropped from what looked like a neck-and-neck race. According to a Los Angeles Times/USC survey of likely voters published Oct. 22, only 39 percent supported the proposition to legalize marijuana.

To put it another way, it's not likely that the open freedom to light up on the way to the Caf will be legal at Pepperdine any time soon.

The proposition states that under California law, an individual age 21 or older would be permitted to carry up to one ounce of marijuana and consume it in a non-public place, or an establishment licensed for marijuana consumption. As well, if legalized, adults in that age bracket could grow up to 25 square feet of cannabis in their private residences.

The initial allure for Prop. 19 to boost California's economy through the taxation of marijuana and the creation of up to 110,000 new jobs, seems to be fading as more people are considering other arguments such as that, even if passed, changes to public consumption laws are not likely to remain as "open" as they seem. For example, the prop, officially titled the "Regulate, Control and Tax Cannabis Act of 2010," would allow local governments to make up their own minds about how to regulate the substance.

Trying to help avert the passing of Prop. 19, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger recently signed SB 1449 on Oct. 1, making the possession of less than one ounce of marijuana a civil infraction as opposed to a criminal misdemeanor. U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder stepped in as well, asserting that even if Prop. 19 were to pass, a federal law prohibiting marijuana would be "vigorously enforced" by the federal government, according to an article in the Los Angeles Times on Oct. 15.

As to be expected, Pepperdine's plans to stray from their strict no-drug, no-alcohol policy will not be

changed if Prop. 19 is passed. Dean of Students Mark Davis wrote in an e-mail that Pepperdine will enforce the same policies regardless of the possible expansion of medical marijuana to recreational use. As the Student Handbook currently states, students are prohibited from using medicinal marijuana on or off campus.

"I'm not concerned about the law presenting a challenge to our Christian mission," Davis wrote. "Our policy supports creating a safe learning environment, and our Christian values combined with academic excellence is what attracts most students to Pepperdine."

University Chaplain David Lemley also believes that the Christian mission of Pepperdine is not going to stray if Prop. 19 passes. Lemley speculates that it would cause students and faculty to further investigate their faith.

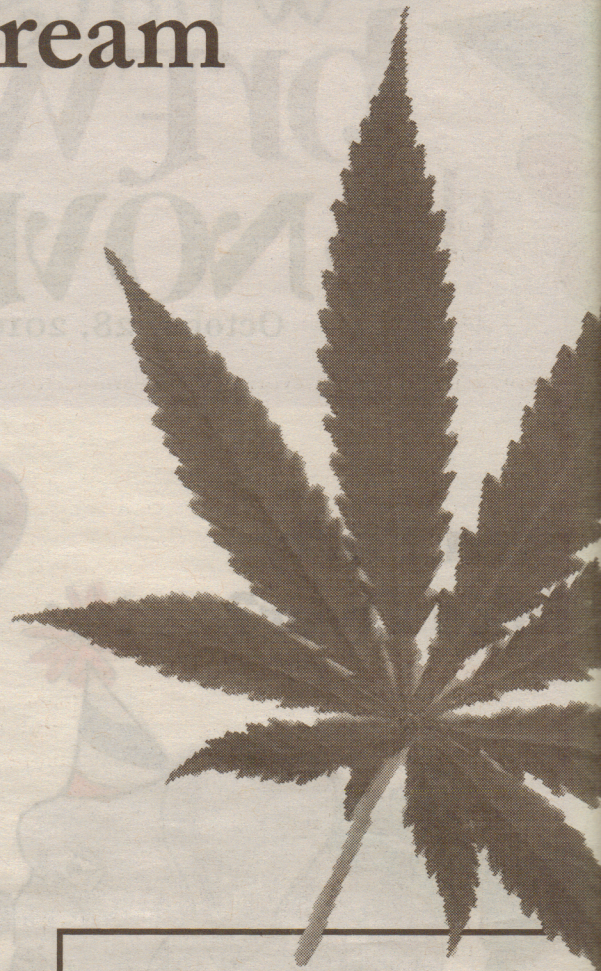
"I imagine it would create new conversations, and that students would face new decisions that would call for discerning faith communities," Lemley wrote. "I expect many pastors, ministries, and Christian thinkers in this community would quickly enter the dialogue."

From a treatment provider perspective, Robert Scholz, assistant director of the Counseling Center and Alcohol and Drug Program coordinator, said legalizing marijuana would just hinder students' abilities to perform well academically.

He explained that because many students have taken advantage of obtaining a medical marijuana card for personal use, it has caused them to suffer in their studies.

"Part of our job here is to help students succeed academically," Scholz said. "The effects that marijuana use has on academic performance is pretty consistently that it has a negative impact because of its effect on motivation and memory," Scholz said.

Despite faculty opposition, support still exists among some students. Opinions seemed to range from strong support to apathy.



Prop 19

April 20 by SurveyU

56% YE

May 9-16, 2010 by

49% YE

August 31 by Survey

47% YE

October 2-4 by Reut

43% YE

October 10-17 by PF

44% YE

October 13-20 by G

39% YE

Remaining