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# Ron Bateman: New law could be used to keep you high all day

Ron Bateman

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Sheriff Ron Bateman says Maryland's medical marijuana law will let users stay high all day.

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**A**s a 35-year law enforcement officer and former narcotics detective, here is my major concern about the medical marijuana law as it stands today.

First, let me make this perfectly clear: If a medical doctor prescribes this drug to eliminate someone's pain, then I am all for it. I am a huge fan of living pain-free for those who suffer from legitimate illnesses, but not for those looking for a legal out to get high.

I think most would agree that few parents would advocate their 11-year-old child who suffers from violent seizures smoke marijuana. The same would apply to a patient suffering from lung cancer. Perhaps this same unfortunate child or cancer patient could find relief in the many other forms that medical marijuana is dispensed.

My real problem is with the amount of smokable marijuana people can legally have in their possession for a 30-day period. That amount is 120 grams— which is way too much! That is nearly a quarter-pound of pot a month.

*Article continues below* ↓

During my days as an undercover narcotics detective, I would have charged someone with possession with intent to distribute if I caught them with that much dope. If you were wondering, that charge still carries a penalty of up to five years in prison and a \$15,000 fine. What are we doing here?

Under the current law here's what I worry that a typical smokable medical marijuana patient's day may look like:

Wake up at 8 a.m., have a cup of coffee. Now it's 9 a.m. and it's time for the breakfast of

champions to start and you have your first joint of the day. Ahhhh ...

Two hours later, it's 11 a.m. — time to fire up another one. The pain is subsiding. The munchies made for a great lunch and wow, it's now 1 p.m., already time for another one. Oh look, it's midday, it's 3p.m., where's my lighter? Dinnertime ... it's 5 p.m., roll another one and fire up. Feeling good!

Wow, had a great dinner, sure was hungry. Look, it's 7 p.m., nothing like a good joint while watching the O's. It's 9p.m., time to watch a movie ... wow, I think I'll have another one. What a day — time to hit the sack, it's 11 p.m. I'll have my last joint of the evening and head to bed.

Are you kidding me?

That, folks, is what can happen every day for 30 days with the amount of smokable marijuana one can legally possess in Maryland. Seem too much to you? It is no wonder the patient won't be in pain — because he or she will be high all day!

Let's hope during that busy day that our medical marijuana patient didn't have to drive to the store for Bugles and put people's lives in danger.

And is there a job involved? I hope it doesn't require operating heavy machinery, or thinking. Give me a break. Let's hope the patient's basement apartment isn't invaded by some drug dealers looking for an easy score.

What worries me is, how securely will the patient keep their dope? Can they account for the entire quarter-pound? Will it say "Keep Out of Reach of Children" on it? We surely don't want a person not in pain but just looking for a buzz to get into the patient's stash. Not good.

I've got an idea — how about this: Have our legislators consult with experts in the law enforcement field and modify the law for the 30-day period. Construct it so those in legitimate need can live comfortably and not use it as a crutch to be stoned all day.

Let's have a doctor prescribe 120 packs of medical marijuana ointment, salve or suppositories to help alleviate a patient's pain, as opposed to 120 grams of weed. I'm good with that. That would be a better solution.

*Ron Bateman was elected to a third term as Anne Arundel County sheriff in 2014. Contact him at [shbate00@aacounty.org](mailto:shbate00@aacounty.org).*

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