



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 1, 2011

Marijuana-themed Candy Upsets Community Leaders

A candy wholesaler is targeting kids with a new product line: lollipops, gummy sours, and ring pops shaped like marijuana leaves. While the manufacturer says the candy, aptly named Potheads, is selling well so far, the trend has some community leaders upset.

“We spot trends that are in the marketplace and we make products to capitalize on those trends,” the candy’s distributor, Andrew Kalan was quoted by [CBN News](#) as saying. He said that although the target market for Potheads is obviously children, he isn’t overly worried that the candy will lead kids to actually start smoking pot. He added that whatever the case, he is well within his rights to sell the product. “I don’t personally view candy as a gateway drug,” he said. “They’re expressing a political position and it’s a First Amendment right.”



CBN reported that in Buffalo, N.Y., business leaders were outraged by the appearance of Potheads in local stores. “To make a product like that appealing to young adults, knowing the consequences just boggles the mind,” said Fred Merukeb of the Arab-American Business Association.

In fact, some community leaders have begun a campaign to pressure stores to stop carrying the candy. “People need to know that any store that we learn of this disrespect and immorality, will be dealt with swiftly by whatever measures necessary, warned one Buffalo community activist, Charley Fisher III.

“We’re already dealing with a high amount of drug abuse and drug activity and trying to raise children so they don’t think using illegal substances is acceptable,” Buffalo City Councilmember Darius Pridgen told the [Associated Press](#). “So to have a licensed store sell candy to kids that depicts an illegal substance is just ignorant and irresponsible.”

Kalan, who said the candy has been on the market for the past six months and is available in around a thousand stores around the country, said he was surprised he has not had more complaints. “This is the first complaint I’ve heard,” he claimed of the outrage in Buffalo, “and people are usually not shy. I’m actually surprised this is the first.”

Jodie Altman, a supervisor at a Buffalo area drug treatment center, agreed that it was irresponsible for stores to carry the candy. “It’s the whole idea that it promotes drugs and the idea that, here, you’ll look cool if you use this — which is what gets these kids in trouble in the very first place,” said Altman.

In Miami, Florida, Miami-Dade Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution condemning the sale of Potheads candy at local stores. According to the [Miami Herald](#), the resolution, sponsored by Commissioner Jose Diaz, urged retailers, “with the exception of adult novelty stores,” to take the candy



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off their shelves.

“Although the product itself has no cannabis or illegal substances, the fact remains that Potheads candy sends the wrong message to children,” said Diaz. “The manufacturer is glamorizing marijuana and is obviously targeting minors with the cartoon depictions on the packaging.”

Potheads is not the first candy to be targeted for its appeal to the drug culture. In 2008, reported AP, “the Hershey Co. stopped making Ice Breakers Pacs in response to criticism that the mints looked too much like dope. Police in Philadelphia complained that the packets, nickel-sized dissolvable pouches with a powdered sweetener inside, closely resembled tiny heat-sealed bags used to sell powdered street drugs.”

Kaplan said his company has capitalized on the national movement to legalize marijuana, offering several products with packaging that bears a marijuana leaf along with the “legalize” message. He admitted it’s all part of making a buck. “We don’t advocate for a political position,” he told AP. “We just look at what the marketplace wants and respond to it. It’s just candy ... It’s sour apple flavor, it doesn’t claim to be pot in disguise or anything like that.”



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