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NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION REMAINS OPPOSED TO RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA AND EXPRESSES OUTRAGE AT THE INCREASES IN THE NUMBER OF MARIJUANA IMPAIRED DRIVING CRASHES AND DEATHS

WHEREAS, the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) is fully committed to reducing the number of roadway deaths, injuries and crashes; and,

WHEREAS, the latest AAA Foundation research found that between 2008 and 2012 – the five-year period before the drug was legal – an estimated 8.8% of Washington drivers involved in fatal crashes were positive for THC and that rate rose to 18% between 2013 and 2017; and,

WHEREAS, in 2018, a Foundation survey found that nearly 70% of Americans think it's unlikely a driver will get caught by police for driving shortly after using marijuana; and,

WHEREAS, the survey also revealed that an estimated 14.8 million drivers report getting behind the wheel within one hour after using marijuana in the past 30 days; and,

WHEREAS, the survey results also suggest that legalization of recreational use of marijuana may increase the rate of THC-positive drivers involved in fatal crashes; and,

WHEREAS, marijuana use can inhibit concentration, slow reaction times and cloud judgment - its effects vary by individual - but a number of studies have concluded that marijuana use impairs the ability to drive safely and previous research suggests that users who drive high are up to twice as likely to be involved in a crash;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that NSA joins with the AAA belief that states that have legalized the drug should not rely solely on an arbitrary legal limit to determine if a driver is impaired and that they should adopt a two-pronged approach that requires a positive test for recent marijuana use and behavioral and physiological evidence of driver impairment; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NSA believes that regardless of the drug's legal status – and limits in any state – all motorists need to avoid driving while impaired; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NSA joins with AAA in opposing the legalization of marijuana for recreational use because of its inherent traffic safety risks and because of the difficulties in writing legislation that protects the public and treats drivers fairly.