

Prof. testifies pot impairs growth, development

By Tam Lee

Marijuana impairs growth and development in adolescents and young adults because the drug accumulates in the brain, a medical physics and physiology professor testified at a legislative judiciary committee hearing Tuesday.

Hardin Jones, who teaches at the University of California-Berkeley, spoke in support of a resolution introduced by Omaha senator Patrick Venditte to study the feasibility of stiffening the penalties for marijuana use and sale.

Jones said marijuana use is more readily accepted by the public recently because of dissemination of false information that marijuana is not harmful. But these studies are based on the short-term rather than long-term effects of marijuana, he said.

The active ingredient in marijuana, cannabinoids, accumulates in cell membranes in the part of the brain which controls feeling, pleasure, self-activation, memory and sexual functions, Jones said.

Genetic damage

Genetic damage has been found in laboratory test animals exposed to marijuana, Jones said. Monkeys exposed to the drug have a higher risk of having deformed offspring than those which are not, he said.

The risk of deformity in monkeys born to parents in which only the father has been exposed to the drug is the same as when both parents have been exposed, he said.

There has been an increase in deformities in human births in the United States between 1973 and 1975, which may be caused by the increase in marijuana smokers in those years, he said.

In addition to birth defects, and brain damage, marijuana causes a reduction in the male sex hormone, testosterone, and reduces sperm production, sometimes causing sterility or impotence, he said.

In women, marijuana stimulates the effects of estrogen, the female sex hormone, he said, and causes women to become "hyperactive sexually".

Brain damage

Brain damage appears earlier in heavy marijuana users than in heavy drinkers, Jones said.

"All cases of brain damage from alcohol use are found in middle age (30-40)," he said, "but cases of brain damage in marijuana users have been found in people under 30."

Marijuana is more harmful than tobacco, he said, because marijuana causes personality change, where as cigarette smoking does not.

Testifying against Venditte's resolution, Barbara Gaitner, Executive Director of the Nebraska Civil Liberties Union, read a prepared statement by Dr. Hardy Jones, philosophy professor at UNL opposing a clause in the resolution seeking to make illegal the sale or distribution of marijuana or other possibly harmful substances.

The statement said that virtually all substances possibly are harmful and many legal substances definitely are harmful for some people.

DeCamp opposes

Also testifying in opposition to the resolution was Neligh Sen. John DeCamp, who sponsored a bill in the last session of the Legislature which, if passed, would decrease the penalties for possession of small amounts of marijuana.

DeCamp is opposed to a section of the resolution seeking to make illegal the "dissemination of false information about the effects of marijuana." He said this assumes that someone has all the facts, and no new facts could be introduced.

The Legislature's executive board turned down a request by Venditte to finance Jones's trip to Nebraska to testify. Venditte said he is looking for private donations to pay his expenses.



daily nebraskan

wednesday, september 14, 1977 vol.101 no. 8 lincoln, nebraska

Two Lincoln employment agencies face punitive action pending decision

By Rex Henderson

Two Lincoln employment agencies face possible loss of their licenses for violations of the Nebraska Labor laws.

Labor Commissioner Gerald Chizek will rule on charges made by Labor Commission investigators against Republic Personnel Service System and Interchange Personnel at a hearing Tuesday.

Both agencies are owned by Dennis H. Penner of Lincoln.

Labor Dept. charges say the legal requirement that employment agency licensees be of "good moral character" is no longer being met.

Charges against Penner include the use of "blatantly discriminatory language" against the character and employment potential of Gerald David Shellner, former counselor at one of Penner's employment agencies.

Code system

The labor dept. also charges that Interchange personnel used a code system to alert job counselors that certain employers would not accept women, racial minorities and older applicants.

Job orders were marked with the instructions "See Lana" or "See Jan" indicating to counselors that the minorities, women and the elderly were not acceptable for the position, the charges say.

The Penner-owned firms also are charged with placing deceptive advertising in newspapers, referring job appli-

cants to firms which had not placed job orders, failing to pay employees the minimum wage and instructing job counselors to falsify time cards to cover up the low wages.

The charges cite five examples of misleading advertising placed by Interchange Personnel.

One asked for "airport help—\$8 hr." and promised an insurance plan and paid vacation, but it failed to mention that the job required Federal Aviation Administration certification for flight instruction and was only a part-time job.

False advertising

Another advertisement read, "Mech. Engineer—to \$12,000, fee pd., no exp. ness." The Labor Dept. says the company did not pay the employment agency fee, and the position required experience.

Numerous advertisements mentioned "good salary" or "great salary" when the job paid \$2.30 an hour, the Labor Department charges.

Both agencies used a "10 to 15 call rule" a practice which violates the Nebraska labor laws, the Labor Department says.

Job counselors were required to make 10 to 15 calls to other firms before providing an applicant with information on the advertisement the applicant had answered.

Jim Doyle, a Labor Dept. investigator, said several former job counselors at the Penner employment agencies have agreed to testify against their former employer. Penner could not be reached to respond to the charges.

Proposal revises staff ticket policy

By Gail Stork

A UNL Faculty Senate motion outlining a revision of the UNL staff ticket purchasing policy already is on its way to the administration after Tuesday's senate meeting.

The proposal states that full-time employees are entitled to two tickets, whether at reduced price with current restrictions or two tickets at regular price without restrictions or any combination thereof.

The current ticket policy which allows married staff members two reduced price tickets and single members only one ticket at reduced price was determined discriminatory.

The ruling was made in light of the new legislation prohibiting such discrimination on a marital basis, said William Sesow, chairman of the Senate's inter-collegiate athletics committee.

He said his committee interpreted the new law to mean, "only an employee of the university should enjoy the privileges of the university."

Student ticket policy will not change accordingly, since they are not considered employees of the state, Sesow said.

However, he said his committee did give much consideration to the new policy's effect on both student and general public ticket policies.

A conflict of interest report from Lloyd Fischer, chairman of the employee benefits committee, prompted a motion calling for the resignation of Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance Miles Tommeraaen from the Security Mutual Insurance Co. board.

The motion, made by senator Michael Steinman, also stipulated that no administrator should be involved in private concerns touching on his university functions.

The committee's report said a check of administrators on insurance company boards which provides insurance for university employees identified Tommeraaen, but said the committee "is not in a position to judge the validity of such a charge."

The senate decided to table the motion until its October meeting.

Parking and a study on the size of the campus police force were mentioned by Sylvia Wiegand, past chairman of the UNL campus police committee, in addition to the general report. Wiegand said the committee found generally that "everyone on campus is quite happy with the police except for the parking problem."

Commencement and the Role and Mission Statement were also discussed by the senate.

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Photo by Ted Kirk

Steel-drivin' man

Work begins on repairs to those awful tracks on Vine Street.