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**Press Contact:** Zack Kaldveer, Communications Manager, Getting it Right from the Start, 510-938-2664

**Health, Child Advocates Dismayed by Gov. Newsom's Veto of Bill to Address Child Cannabis Poisonings**  
*AB 1207 would have prohibited cannabis products and marketing mimicking candy, soda, and snacks attractive to kids*

(CA) On Sunday, to the dismay of doctors, parents, medical and public health groups, and youth advocacy organizations across the state, Governor Newsom vetoed AB 1207 (Assemblymember Irwin), a landmark bill to address the [recent surge of child poisonings and hospitalizations](#) due to the accidental ingestion of cannabis products by young children. The Cannabis Candy Child Safety Act would have implemented key measures to protect children and youth by more clearly defining and prohibiting product characteristics, packaging and labeling that are attractive to children or teens.

"Today corporate shamelessness won, kids lost. We are shocked and disappointed that the Governor opted to veto AB1207, a widely supported bill to protect children from some of the most egregious marketing practices of the cannabis industry," **said Dr. Lynn Silver, pediatrician and director of [Getting it Right from the Start](#)**. "Our state now shares responsibility with the cannabis industry for this growing toll, both for failure to enforce existing law and now, for blocking even these basic, sensible added protections endorsed by state legislators."

"The Governor's veto is heart wrenching. I've seen hundreds of children become violently ill because they made an understandable and preventable mistake of ingesting something that was attractive and familiar," **said Dr. Natalie Laub, Pediatrician and researcher at the University of California, San Diego**. "There is no excuse to allow marketing of an intoxicating drug that can kill a child as their favorite candies, snacks, or cartoons. AB 1207 was an evidence-based solution to the growing cannabis poisoning problem I have witnessed firsthand."

When Proposition 64, the California initiative that legalized recreational cannabis in the state, was passed in 2016 one of its clearly identified intentions was that *"Marijuana products shall be: Not designed to be appealing to children or easily confused with commercially sold candy or foods that do not contain marijuana."* Since that time, systemic regulatory failures and widespread cannabis commercialization has resulted in the [proliferation of hundreds of legal cannabis products](#) that resemble some of children's favorite candy, snacks, and sodas.

The result in California and elsewhere has been predictable, with [edible cannabis poisonings](#) among kids under age 6 increasing nationally by 1375% from about 207 cases in 2017 to more than 3,000 in 2021, and in 2021 alone, [California had 791 cannabis exposure calls to poison control centers](#) for children five or younger - an increase of 140% since in 2018.

“The Governor’s veto of AB 1207 represents a sad day for children’s health,” said **Jim Keddy, Executive Director of Youth Forward**. “We don't let Valium or cigarettes be sold with Smerfs on the box or looking like Nachos and neither should cannabis. This bill was a missed opportunity to honor the promise and intent of Proposition 64 and take fair and appropriate steps to prevent the rapidly growing problem of poisoning of young children.”

A [significant portion](#) of cannabis retailers and online businesses profit now come from the sale of highly psychoactive candies and snacks as well as high potency flower and concentrates, often marketed with name or images imitating candies or foods widely marketed to kids, vibrant animation, cartoon characters, fictional animals or popular children’s characters. THC-loaded Cheese Nachos, Uncle Snoop’s Onion Rings, MacFlurrys, Cocoa Pebbles, Fanta Orange look-alikes, “Purple Smerfs”, and a rainbow array of bright fruit flavored candies have all been mainstreamed and mass marketed into California homes.

AB 1207 was California’s first attempt since Proposition 64 to address this growing public health problem. Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Missouri have, for example, all put in place plain packaging practices for cannabis products. AB 1207 would have been a far more modest approach than any of their efforts.

"No one should go to jail for cannabis possession, but no young child should wind up in the emergency room because they mistakenly ate cannabis-laced gummies either, nor should a teen be drawn into vaping cannabis by cartoon characters," **concluded Dr. Silver**.

AB 1207 received support from major news outlets, including editorials by the [Los Angeles Times](#) and the [Mercury News/East Bay Times](#), as well as a [broad coalition](#) of public health and medical groups, youth advocacy organizations and more, including: the Public Health Institute, Youth Forward, The California American Academy of Pediatrics, California Society of Addiction Medicine, the American College of Emergency Physicians - California Chapter, California PTA, and the Counties of Santa Clara, Los Angeles, San Diego, Marin and Santa Barbara.



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