



ASSEMBLY MEMBER  
**Jacqui Irwin**  
ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 42



**Getting it Right**  
from the Start

Advancing Public Health & Equity in Cannabis Policy

California State

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**Youth Forward**

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**Assemblymember Irwin, Physicians, Public Health, Education, and Youth Advocacy Groups Gather in Support of CA Bill to Address Exploding Number of Child Cannabis Poisonings**

*The Cannabis Candy Child Safety Act (AB 1207) would prohibit cannabis products clearly mimicking candy, soda, and snacks attractive to kids*

**Video:** [AB 1207 Conference Recording \(Two-Minute Cannabis "candy-like" products video\)](#)

(CA) Today, pediatricians, parents, public health, education, and youth advocacy groups joined California Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin for a virtual press conference in support of a landmark piece of legislation that addresses the recent explosion of poisonings and hospitalizations of young children due to accidental ingestion of cannabis products. Since passage of Proposition 64, California has seen the proliferation of hundreds of legal cannabis products [with characteristics of candies and foods known to attract children and youth](#), as well as fruity high potency cannabis vapes mimicking now banned fruit-flavored Juuls well known to attract teen initiation.

"The outrageous marketing and packaging of cannabis products so that they are intentionally attractive to children is one of the leading causes of pediatric cannabis exposures," **said Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, author of AB 1207.** "AB 1207 will end this practice of packaging cannabis products with vibrant features and animations that lead to children poisoning themselves with cannabis they find in their home."

[The Cannabis Candy Child Safety Act](#) (AB 1207 - Jacqui Irwin) would honor the promise and intent of Prop 64 by implementing key measures to protect children and youth, more clearly define and prohibit products, packaging and marketing that is attractive to children or teens, and prohibit flavored inhaled cannabis products known to hook kids, just as flavored Juul e-cigarettes did.

"I have seen hundreds of young children become ill, many critically ill, after accidentally eating cannabis that looks like candy," **said Dr. Natalie Laub, Pediatrician and researcher at the University of California, San Diego.** "With every child I see, I ask the same question...why does a drug that could kill a child have to look like a gummy bear? The answer is it doesn't! AB 1207 would help keep cannabis products that look like candy out of the hands and bodies of our young children."

When Prop 64 was passed 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." Yet, regulations weakened, rather than enforced, these protections, failing to put in place systems to assess and prevent products from being attractive to children or to resemble conventional candy or food typically marketed to kids. These systemic California regulatory failures, and widespread cannabis commercialization **has led to:**

- [Annual cannabis exposures](#) reported to California Poison Control increased from below 200 in 2010 to over 1600 by 2020; 50% involved children, half below age 12. There were only 16 total reported gummy exposures between 2010 and 2015 vs. 409 in 2020 alone.
- [Cannabis-related emergency department visits](#) in California increased by 75% between 2016 and 2020, mainly involving the consumption of plant material, followed by edibles, concentrates and vaping products, demonstrating that the problem extends beyond just edibles.
- [At Rady Children’s Hospital in San Diego](#), children under age 10 testing positive for THC quadrupled since 2016, mostly from edibles, of which three quarters were from candies or gummies. Half led to hospitalization and one in ten to intensive care, costing over \$15 million dollars just at one hospital.

“No parent should experience their teen getting addicted to a high potency apple banana vape that studies show are far more damaging to a developing brain than your mama's marijuana ever was,” said **Dr. Lynn Silver, pediatrician and Director of Getting it Right from the Start, at the Public Health Institute**. “The cannabis industry has taken a page straight out of Big Tobacco’s playbook by marketing colorful vapes in tasty flavors known to attract teens - just as Juul did before it. We know this game; our State stopped it last year for tobacco and AB 1207 will put an end to kid flavored inhaled cannabis products for good.”

“No one should go to jail for cannabis possession, but no young child should be hauled from school in an ambulance because they mistakenly ate cannabis laced gummies or edibles either,” said **Adwoa Akyianu, Policy Advocate at Youth Forward**. “The rapid growth of child and youth consumption was all too predictable considering the sophisticated marketing techniques that target our youth using cannabis products that mimic candies, chips, and well-known sugary treats such as McFlurry's, Cocoa Pebbles, and Fanta look-alikes. The cannabis industry can flourish without marketing products that are clearly attractive and harmful to children.”

"Marketing cannabis to our children is unacceptable. Elementary school students should never get sick because they mistakenly ingested cannabis that looked like their favorite candy, soda, or snacks. And teens should not be lured into thinking strawberry or bubblegum vaping products are safe and harmless," said **Carol Green, California State PTA President**. "California state PTA supports AB 1207 because it helps to protect children from deceptive marketing of the cannabis industry."

AB 1207 passed the Assembly Business and Professions Committee by a vote of 13 AYE to 0 NAY on April 18th, 2023, and currently sits in the **Assembly Committee on Appropriations awaiting a May 18th decision** on whether it will move forward to an Assembly Floor vote.

[The bill is supported by dozens](#) of organizations and individuals representing pediatricians, parents, emergency physicians, public health, youth, and substance use prevention professionals, including: The California American Academy of Pediatrics, California, California Society of Addiction Medicine, the American College of Emergency Physicians - California Chapter, California PTA, The County of Santa Clara, Public Health Institute, Public Health Advocates, and Youth Forward.

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