

Blaze Your Cause: From ACLU to KFC, Brands Embrace 4/20 with Special Promotions

As the cannabis holiday 4/20 approaches once again, mainstream corporations are gearing up with a new wave of marijuana-themed promotions and campaigns. This yearly event has evolved into a significant occasion for both cannabis enthusiasts and reform-minded organizations, with companies like KFC and Jimmy John's joining the fray with 4/20-coded deals. However, as cannabis becomes more normalized across nearly half of the states in the U.S. through adult-use legalization, the increased corporate embrace of the occasion has begun to grate on prohibitionists' nerves.

Pushback from Prohibitionists

Groups like Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) have taken a stand against what they perceive as the normalization of cannabis culture by mainstream brands. SAM recently launched a call-to-action, urging people to demand that companies like Jimmy John's retract promotions that seem to glorify drug use. For them, these promotions not only send the wrong message about drug consumption but also disregard the potential risks associated with high-potency cannabis products.

The Landscape of Federal Reform

This year's 4/20 festivities coincide with heightened expectations surrounding federal marijuana reform. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is currently undergoing a review of cannabis scheduling, spurred by President Joe Biden's directive in 2022. While the potential rescheduling of marijuana from Schedule I to Schedule III under the Controlled Substances Act wouldn't equate to federal legalization, it's a step many in the industry eagerly anticipate.

Advocacy Amid Celebration

Against this backdrop, advocacy groups and lawmakers are intensifying their efforts for reform. Calls for comprehensive legalization and proposals to facilitate banking for state-legal marijuana businesses are gaining momentum. Amidst these developments, various companies, organizations, and even celebrities are marking the cannabis occasion in their unique ways.

Brands and Organizations Making Waves

- **ACLU:** The civil rights organization is not only promoting cannabis-themed merchandise but also advocating for the end of marijuana criminalization and the expungement of related criminal records.
- **Ben & Jerry's:** Known for their advocacy, the ice cream company is using 4/20 to rally support for cannabis reform, urging fans to pressure state governments for clemency for those criminalized over marijuana.
- **KFC:** Launching a pop-up shop in Los Angeles, KFC is offering saucy nuggets and limited-edition merchandise, tapping into the holiday spirit without THC-infused products.

- **Jimmy John's:** Despite facing criticism from prohibitionists, the sandwich company is rolling out a 4/20-themed promotion, inviting customers to enjoy a “Deliciously Dope Dime Bag” deal.
- **Popeyes, &pizza, Rockstar Games, Pizza Pizza, Zippo, and Morgenstern's Finest Ice Cream:** These diverse brands are also getting in on the action with special offers, collaborations, and promotions, reflecting the growing integration of cannabis culture into mainstream consumer spaces.

As the cannabis holiday approaches, it serves as a reminder of the evolving landscape of cannabis acceptance and reform, where cultural celebrations intersect with advocacy for broader societal change. Whether through promotions, campaigns, or collaborations, 4/20 continues to be a focal point for both celebration and progress in the ongoing journey toward cannabis normalization and legalization.

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