



LOCAL NEWS

Legal Sea Foods' New Pot-Themed Ad Catches Criticism

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Legal Sea Foods 420-Themed Ads
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By Brit Smith, WBZ NewsRadio

BOSTON (WBZ NewsRadio) — Cannabis legalization advocates are pushing back on a new pot-themed ad campaign by Legal Sea Foods, which is set to air for the first time Monday at 4:20 p.m.

Critics say the TV commercial and several print ads are blatantly meant to target people who consume marijuana, but the company has done nothing to advocate for legalization efforts.

The ads use swirling graphics, with slow motion images of fish, to try and captivate people who might be celebrating the stereotypical smoking hour.

"The TV spots connect common marijuana terms to the descriptive adjectives used for certain menu items, while also playing off shared expressions," the restaurant-chain told WBZ NewsRadio in a statement.

The print ads have a similar vibe, with taglines like "Welcome to Legal. Where we love herb... on halibut."



Legalization leaders have said the family-owned chain is just trying to capitalize on recreational marijuana by hopping on the bus of the legalization movement without taking part in efforts to right the wrongs of the War on Drugs.

Legal Sea Foods told the [Boston Globe](#) it is aware that the trippy campaign “might seem odd for an iconic family-friendly restaurant whose roots go back to 1904.”

However, the man responsible for the campaign, Ellis Verdi, told The Globe they are “simply trying to acknowledge that legalization is out there, and that we’re welcoming all of these people who smoke to visit.”

Businesswoman and Attorney Shanel Lindsey, who also sits on the Massachusetts Cannabis Advisory Board, told The Globe that, “It’s no surprise.... people are trying to take advantage of the green rush without understanding or respecting the history and the importance of the movement behind it.”

Lindsey was referring to the millions of people across the nation who are still behind bars for cannabis related convictions; an outcome of the War on Drugs that disproportionately impacted communities of color, despite marijuana being used at similar rates across all races and neighborhoods.

Advocates have been fighting to change those laws and to expunge records for low level marijuana possession for decades, and Lindsey told The Globe the Legal Sea Foods ad campaign is just another example of “businesses shamelessly riding on the coattails of the popularity of legalization.”

Lindsey told The Globe she would be the first to call Legal Sea Foods “a haven for cannabis lovers” if the company would try to “advance the industry, instead of just benefiting from it.”

“We welcome being welcomed, but what we really want is allyship. That would really capture the heart of our community,” Lindsey told The Boston Globe.

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