

March 30 House Tax Committee – HF100

Thank you for considering my testimony today. I am a concerned citizen trying to make sense of the effort to commercialize a schedule 1 drug, one that is classified with other dangerous drugs like Heroin.

People need to be **warned** about today's marijuana. Over the last 50 years growers have been genetically modifying it to be stronger, more potent than in the 1960s and 70s. **Proponents of legalization oversell the benefits and downplay the proven harms and risks.**

The main risk being the **psychoactive component THC that is highly addictive especially when used daily.** It is also toxic to preschool aged kids. Since edible THC products became legal the calls to poison control services have increased over 1300% AND some kids have died. Even newborns have been injured when mothers used during pregnancy (one baby died).

Teens and young adults are prone to addiction, sometimes resulting in psychological problems like schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. This is because the brain is not done developing until age 26. Youth have died as a result. (This is not an exhaustive list of possible effects.)

Even for adults and seniors, extreme caution is advised. It is not an FDA approved drug, nor has it gone through clinical trials to prove effectiveness. It can interact with medications and have side effects like dizziness, sleepiness, nausea, foggy thinking and falling. One should not drive while drugged with THC. It can also reduce intelligence and shrink the brain's memory bank.

The **only** public health advantage of commercializing retail sales would be to provide a place to get unadulterated cannabis drugs as opposed to purchasing on the illegal market. Illegal products can be laced with life threatening hard drugs like Fentanyl and Meth.

Commercialized THC products, marijuana and cannabis would still contain synthetic and genetically enhanced high potency THC which is a dangerous drug on its own.

The harms outweigh the benefits for the State and for public health. I urge the Legislature to reconsider this path and engage in a measured, more thoughtful approach. For instance, to reduce the addictive draw of high potency products, I suggest taxing products with greater THC content at a higher rate like increased taxation of cigarettes reduced smoking. Why encourage addiction? Thank you, Linda Stanton