

Thank you Mr. Chair & Committee,

Hello. My name is Sharolyn Hagen. I am a resident and small business owner in Minneapolis. I'm here today in support of HF600.

The list of reasons why I believe MN should join the momentum surrounding us & be the next state to legalize adult-use cannabis is far too long for these two minutes, but my main focus is that we right the wrongs of outdated drug policies, with unattainable goals, and the harms done by them. We are well aware of the disproportionate effects on our Black & Brown neighbors from the War on Drugs, and we're long overdue to put an end to it. This bill is a step in the right direction. Not only would legalization add income to our state, but it also would save money through lower costs in enforcement, court cases, and incarceration.

This new industry would also provide much-needed jobs for our struggling workforce. Numerous jobs would be created in farms, nurseries, and dispensaries. As someone who has worked two jobs for most my life, and having both those industries wiped out from the pandemic, I would gladly take a job in this industry. Many secondary businesses, such as construction, tech, and investing would see growth as well.

Public perception of cannabis has changed, as we learn from the 15 states that have fully legalized ahead of us. Data now debunks myths. Research does not support that cannabis usage leads to harmful or more addictive drugs. Marijuana legalization is actually linked to lowering rates of opioid-related overdoses and deaths.

We now know that legalization does not decrease road safety, nor increase violent & non-violent crimes. Revenue allocation can positively affect those that need it most.

The uniqueness of the cannabis plant has many promising features for the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

-Sharolyn Hagen  
Lifelong Minnesotan