



February 2023

**Re: Concerns with HF100/ SF73**

Dear Legislator:

At present, the Minnesota Psychological Association (MPA) is neither in favor of nor opposed to cannabis legalization within the state of Minnesota. However, MPA maintains several concerns and asks legislators to consider the psychological science to address the following trepidations within any proposed legislation.

In particular, MPA would like proposed legislation to include:

- Limiting access to minors.
  - Marijuana use has neurological and developmental impacts on adolescents and MPA would like to avoid risks for teens. The adolescent brain is not fully formed or finished developing until one's mid-20s. Any proposed legislation would need to restrict a minor's ability to obtain the substance to avoid stunted psychological development.
- Minimizing the use of packaging and marketing that glorifies marijuana use or appeals to minors.
  - Reducing the allure of marijuana use in media and on container wrappings will deflect young children and adolescents from wanting to explore the substance. Of note, requiring packaging to not resemble candy or sweets must be included in any legislation.
- Expunging all marijuana-related charges from criminal records
  - Marijuana possession arrests have historically been used for mass incarceration, oppression, and voter suppression in marginalized communities. Today an officer can make a traffic stop for any reason and say they smell marijuana, which then gives them the authority to search the vehicle, potentially leading to arrest for an unrelated reason. There are many individuals from marginalized communities in prison today for marijuana possession. As such, MPA would like to see any cannabis legalization legislation include expungements as a central feature. If not legalization, then legislation to progressively decriminalize possession for small amounts of marijuana may begin to tackle this historical injustice.
- Providing expanded funding for behavioral and chemical health services.
  - If cannabis is legalized, Minnesotans can expect use of the substance to increase, and with it, the number of cannabis-related use disorders. Additionally, we can anticipate other psychological and mental health issues, such as depression, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, personality disorders, and other substance use disorders to become exacerbated by marijuana use, thereby requiring more financial and healthcare support.

- Addressing public safety concerns such as driving while under the influence of cannabis.

Given these concerns, MPA implores legislators to consider these concerns and mandate that they be addressed adequately in any proposed legislation. If you have any questions, please contact our government relations attorney, Bill Amberg (651-260-9973; [Bill@amberglawoffice.com](mailto:Bill@amberglawoffice.com)).

Sincerely,

Minnesota Psychological Association