

Feb. 13, 2023, Dear Human Services Policy Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about the important issue of Cannabis/THC/marijuana.

First, it needs to be said that legalizing and commercializing THC will give the impression to people that this is a SAFE “product” when it is not. No amount of regulation will make it safe.

Second, the population which experiments with drugs the most is 14 – 25-year-old adolescents and young adults. The proposed law includes a prohibition for individuals under 21 years old. Where will they obtain this addictive drug since they are underage? – most likely through the illicit market. Therefore, legalization will only increase the illegal market through increased demand by those who see it as normalized and safe. I hope you will reconsider the logical fallacy of this premise. Having a goal of the Office of Cannabis Management to eliminate the illegal market will be an impossible task.

Third, Re: Art 1, Sec 4, E & F – I think it is great that there will be studies and reports but there seems to be something missing in preparation to guarantee the availability of treatment slots, hospital beds. Will they just be conducting a human experiment? For example: will they report how many individuals needed treatment but were turned down due to lack of beds or treatment slots? Is there the capacity to provide the help which will be needed at a time when health care resources are stretched?

Fourth, re: Art 6, Sec 6 – Education: It’s shocking how unaware people are of today’s marijuana, especially considering the massive amount of scientific research and data from 10 years of legalization which prove it is an addictive substance, much more potent today and consumed in larger amounts; that it can have a negative impact on the developing brain including mental health troubles, schizophrenia, and suicide.

I was surprised to see how late in the process that education is recommended to start – July of 2024. Public education should be first, right now: public service announcement campaigns, billboards. A minimum one-year moratorium before commercialization. And starting immediately in the schools not waiting until 2026-27.

My recommendation for what the billboard will say is: "Making THC legal doesn't make it SAFE". Please think about that.

Unfortunately, this bill seems to only support an addiction culture and an addiction industry ushering in the next "BIG TOBACCO" AKA Big Pot.

I urge you to vote no on marijuana legalization.

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