

Dear Members of the General Law Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to understand the use of Industrial Hemp and the value to the CT economy.

The use of Industrial Hemp is one of our most ancient and important fibers for ourselves and our planet. While the Congressional Research Service estimates the value of Industrial Hemp at approximately \$580 million retail business in the United States that MUST be imported from foreign markets.

The truth is that this number is vastly underestimated. China, the global leader of Industrial Hemp textiles can export Industrial Hemp without the need to label products as Industrial Hemp. Terms such as Linen, vegetable fibers/vegetable materials are commonly used for Harmonized Tariff Schedules used to Import products into the United States. Cotton is always EXCLUDED from the terms vegetable fibers/materials which leaves a few options like Industrial Hemp, Jute and Ramie (used for carpeting) and Abaca.

In fact, the term "canvas" is derived from the Latin term "cannapaceus" which means "made of hemp".

On February 5th the United States Department of Commerce, Office of Textiles and Apparel reported that \$1 billion dollars of canvas and rubber footwear was imported into the United States from China in 2014. This is canvas on Footwear ALONE!!

Industrial Hemp seeds can be compared to a poppy seed. It would be impossible to go to your local deli and scrape off the poppy seed to grow and produce opium or heroin.

Similarly, the industrial hemp seeds that we purchase on Amazon.com that we are forced import from Canada or China cannot be used to produce marijuana. If that were true, Hemp seeds would be banned by the FDA and the DEA and we could not walk into Whole Foods and ask to put it in our smoothies.

Connecticut and America should have the right to produce our own Industrial Hemp, create jobs and support our own economy. I hope you agree.

Gratefully,

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