



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLY CHEESEMAN
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MEMBER
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ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT
COMMITTEE

March 19, 2018 * 10:00am * 2C

Dear Chairmen Doyle, Kissel, Tong, Ranking Member Rebimbas and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee.

I strongly oppose rSB 487, **AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEGALIZATION, TAXATION AND REGULATION OF THE RETAIL SALE AND RECREATIONAL USE OF MARIJUANA...**

To attempt to solve the state's revenue problems in this way is unacceptable. Approximately 10-15% of the population is prone to addictive disorders (<http://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab/guide/addiction-statistics/>) and of these, "approximately 4.2 million Americans (over the age of 11) battled a marijuana use disorder in 2014...marijuana abuse disorders accounted for the third highest number of treatment admissions (18%) to substance abuse programs in 2010." (www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/2010_Treatment_Episode_Data_Set_National/2010Treatment_Episode_Data_Set_National.html).

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the ill effects. The American Academy of Pediatrics continues to oppose the legalization of recreational marijuana. "The adverse effects of marijuana have been well documented. Numerous published studies have shown the potential negative consequences of short- and long-term use of recreational marijuana in adolescents.⁸ These consequences include impaired short-term memory and decreased concentration, attention span, and problem-solving skills, all of which interfere with learning. Alterations in motor control, coordination, judgment, reaction time, and tracking ability have also been documented. These effects may contribute to unintentional deaths and injuries among adolescents, especially those who drive after using marijuana. Negative health effects on lung function associated with smoking marijuana also have been documented²; in addition, longitudinal studies linking marijuana use with higher rates of mental health disorders, such as depression and psychosis, recently have been published, raising concerns about longer-term psychiatric effects.^{8,10}

Secondhand marijuana smoke can also be detected in adults who are passively exposed, and new data also suggest that secondhand marijuana smoke may be harmful to children.¹¹ A recent study found that in an inpatient sample of infants admitted for respiratory compromise, 1 in 6 had detectable traces of marijuana in their systems.¹²...." As harmful as the documented physical adverse effects are, the danger to the developing brain is even more pronounced. Long-term use can cause irreparable damage to the

pre-frontal cortex and significantly increases the risk of drug dependence and addiction in later life. Changes in the legal status of marijuana, even if only among adults, increase the risk of use by adolescents by lessening the perception of harm.

(<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2017/02/23/peds.2016-4069>)

Some have given the decisions of surrounding states to legalize the recreational use of marijuana as a reason to follow suit in Connecticut. I strongly disagree. Simply grasping for additional revenue, however desperately needed, does not justify risking the health and well-being of our citizens. Indeed, as recent history has shown, moves that were meant to bring permanent order to the state's finances through new and increased revenue streams have failed. State government needs to cure **its** addiction to spending, not treat it by creating more addictions in our residents.

Therefore I respectfully urge committee members to join me in opposing **rSB 487**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Holly", written in black ink.

Holly Cheeseman
State Representative, 37th District
East Lyme, Niantic, Salem