

Nina Bernick

SB 1138 Testimony

To the honorable members of the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee,

I write to you today to express my wholehearted support for SB 1138, which would use funds from cannabis sales to promote development in economically distressed and underserved areas. It is not enough for Connecticut to simply legalize cannabis—we must legalize with a focus on repairing the wrongs caused by the war on drugs that has raged over the past fifty years. As long as Americans have used drugs, drugs have been used to marginalize the poor and people of color. They have provided a way for law enforcement to criminalize being black or brown, as we can clearly see in the astronomical rates at which people of color are incarcerated for drug offenses versus whites, despite similar rates of use. This has wreaked havoc on communities throughout the country and in Connecticut. It is time for us to begin to rectify the wrongs that minorities and the poor have been subjected to as a result of racist drug policy by directly investing in those communities that drug policy has historically damaged. Improved education has been shown to reduce drug use, and providing economic opportunities to communities allows them to grow instead of stagnate in the poverty partially inflicted by the war on drugs. We should use funds from legal cannabis to help those we have previously used the drug to persecute, and I ask your support for SB 1138 to do just that. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Nina Bernick

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