March 2, 2020

Re: In Support of SB-16: An Act Concerning the Adult Use of Cannabis

Dear Chairman Winfield, Chairman Stafstrom, and members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary,

I am a Connecticut resident and support SB-16, An Act Concerning the Adult Use of Cannabis, with the condition that allowing small plant quantities for personal home cultivation be explicitly added.

In 2018, a poll conducted by the Hartford Courant and Sacred Hart University found 59% of Connecticut residents support legalizing recreational cannabis.¹ A poll conducted by Pew Research found that two-thirds of the country support legalizing. This is no longer a controversial opinion but is now a mainstream philosophy among the majority of people.

My support for SB-16 is on condition of one amendment: personal home cultivation of cannabis must be included. In its present form, SB-16 does not actually legalize cannabis. Currently, anyone caught cultivating cannabis would be committing a felony and subject to a 7 year prison sentence and/or $25,000 fine.

If Connecticut legalizes cannabis, the state should follow Massachusetts and establish similar rules and regulations regarding personal cultivation. I believe an appropriate plant limit would be 4-6 plants per adult, which is similar to Massachusetts.² Please note that nearly all states that have legalized cannabis have permitted personal home cultivation.

An alternative approach would be following the Vermont Model,³ where sales are disallowed, but adults 21 and older can grow up to 2 mature plants.

Opponents of personal cultivation greatly overexaggerate the quantity of people in legal states that cultivate cannabis for personal use. It actually takes time, money, expertise, and resources to grow medicinal-grade cannabis, and I believe most people inevitably will not pursue personal home cultivation. The following comparison can be applied: Although anyone can grow tomatoes in their garden, most consumers purchase tomatoes from the grocery store. The state will not lose tax revenue, as evidenced by Connecticut’s flourishing micro-brewery market. I.e., we allow home brew, yet residents continue to purchase beer from local package stores.

I believe Connecticut should allow personal home cultivation for these reasons:

• Prevent out-of-state, “big marijuana” corporations from retaining exclusive privileges on cultivation, many of whom leverage dangerous growing techniques and utilize unsafe chemicals; additionally, these out-of-state companies will not be investing profits in our local economy and do not have Connecticut’s best interest at heart.

• Create and grow local businesses; two examples in my district are “CT Home Grown Hydroponics,” and “Harts Greenhouses,” both located in Canterbury and will benefit from the state legalizing personal cannabis cultivation.

• Respect for an individual’s personal liberty and freedom; no one should ever go to jail for simply growing a plan.

• Provide required assistance for patients enrolled in Connecticut’s Medical Marijuana Program (MMJ); patients have attempted to pass legislation, but this has not progressed; please note dispensary purchased cannabis is extremely expensive, cash only, and insurance does not cover.

• We allow “home brew” for beer, residents should be allowed to “home grow” cannabis.

I believe legalizing cannabis will benefit Connecticut in several ways, to include:

• Create large numbers of new jobs in many industries; examples include cannabis dispensaries and cultivation centers, construction, electrical, plumbing, and much more.

• Utilize as a tool to combat the opioid crisis.

• Free up law enforcement to focus on violent crime and reduce costs.

• Provide a new, alternative tax revenue stream; however, I do not believe this revenue will be as high as some predict and should not be legalized solely for tax revenue.

• Protecting our children and making it more difficult for people under the age of 21 to obtain by regulating cannabis; for example, alcohol is far more difficult to obtain as it is regulated by the state compared to black market cannabis, as drug dealers do not check IDs.

• Provide lab testing to ensure cannabis is safe for consumers.

• Protect consumers from dangerous chemical additives, other illicit drugs, and synthetic cannabis.

Sincerely,

David Bullock
Scotland, CT

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4 https://www.marijuanamomment.net/marijuana-companies-urged-governor-to-ban-cannabis-home-cultivation-document-shows/
5 https://nypost.com/2016/12/16/legal-weed-grower-temporarily-shut-down-over-pesticides/
6 https://cthomegrowhydroponics.com
7 https://www.hartsgreenhouseflorist.com
8 https://portal.ct.gov/DCP/Medical-Marijuana-Program/Medical-Marijuana-Program
10 https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/access-to-medical-marijuana-reduces-opioid-prescriptions-2018050914509