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Testimony of Joseph P LaChance Re: SB 016, An Act Concerning the Legalization of Adult Use of Cannabis

Members of the CT State Judiciary Committee:

I am writing this testimony in support of the legalization of Adult Use of Cannabis and opposed to SB 016- AS WRITTEN, for the following reasons:

The gap between legalization of Cannabis (July 1, 2020) and actual retail availability (2022 or 2023) of 2-3 years is much too long of a time without access to legally available cannabis products. Allowing larger possession limits with little to no penalties will create a great demand with no supply, leaving an opportunity for the Black Market and the State of Massachusetts to gain even more illegal profits from the residents of CT. The best solution to this would be to allow limited Home Cultivation for interested Cannabis consumers and regulated through a registration system. This approach has proven successful in every state which has legalized adult use Cannabis including Maine which still has not established a retail system after 4 years of legalization and Vermont which has implemented a “Home Cultivation only” approach. The only states without Home Cultivation implemented retail sales quickly by converting their Medical Marijuana program to Adult Use, thereby eliminating patients access to affordable medicine. We do not want that approach in CT as our Medical Marijuana program is one of the best in the country.

In conclusion, SB 016 seems more like a “Will” than a “Bill”. While in concept, SB 016 includes every aspect of responsible Cannabis regulation such as equity, expungement, delivery, employee protections, home cultivation and on-site consumption, the specific details of such “will” be recommended by various TBD committees and discussed by Legislators for at least two years, without any guarantees of implementation. The only specifics covered are DUI and possession penalties, public consumption and taxation. This “Kick the Can Down the Road” approach does not serve the State of Connecticut’s or its consumers best interests and is designed to protect Legislators seeking re-election. Connecticut’s road to Adult use legalization is not a race to the finish line. Legalizing cannabis without including home cultivation and consumer access to legal products would empower the black market and strengthen the economy of neighboring legal states. That is not the road to follow, I do not support this bill without the above-mentioned charges.

Thank You,

Joe LaChance,

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