Testimony of

Ronald Petronella, Secretary Treasurer
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), Local 371

Judiciary Committee
March 2, 2020

SB 16 An Act Concerning the Adult Use of Cannabis

Thank you, Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom and members of the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to speak on SB 16 An Act Concerning the Adult Use of Cannabis. My name is Ronald Petronella and I am the Secretary-Treasurer of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 371. The UFCW supports the legalization of recreational cannabis in Connecticut only with the addition of labor peace agreements as a condition of licensure and renewal.

Labor peace agreements are an agreement between an employer and a union where the union agrees not to strike, picket, boycott, or otherwise disturb an employer’s business. In exchange, the employer agrees to allow its workers to decide whether or not to join a union free from intimidation or interference.

The cannabis industry has the potential to be a big job generator and source of income for Connecticut. The cannabis industry employs between 125,000 to 160,000 full-time workers. Market projections show 340,000 full-time cannabis jobs will be created by 2022, reflecting an estimated growth of 21 percent per year. Current U.S. demand for cannabis is estimated to be $52.5 billion. Historically, cannabis workers have been paid under the minimum wage or in product. Labor peace agreements ensure that these jobs will be well paid, safe, and family-sustaining jobs.

The Connecticut cannabis industry promises to be an opportunity to grow jobs in our state, while raising valuable revenue. Adding a labor peace provision to the bill will ensure that these new jobs are good jobs, and jobs that provide opportunities for our residents to provide for their families and their communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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1 https://mjbizdaily.com/chart-cannabis-industry-supports-over-125000-full-time-jobs/
2 https://www.fool.com/investing/2018/05/13/7-jaw-dropping-marijuana-statistics-you-have-to-se.aspx
3 Vox, 10/14/2019