Dear Senator Winfield, Rep. Stafstrom and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

As representatives of Connecticut's largest city, Bridgeport, we write you today to urge you to support the Governor's bill #16 to legalize cannabis. Our neighborhoods and constituents have been some of the hardest hit by the 'War on Drugs' and the harm brought on by our state's failed policy of Prohibition.

The Governor's bill to end cannabis prohibition would replace the unregulated illicit market with a taxed and regulated system with licensed cultivators, retailers, manufacturers, micro-businesses, and testing laboratories. It has a strong focus on public health, public safety, and social equity.

This change is important because our constituents in Bridgeport and families across our state have been torn apart by disproportionate enforcement and arrests. And, they currently have no meaningful public health or public safety regulation.

The Governor's bill contains strong social equity provisions, and tax revenues would be allocated to communities that have been negatively impacted by our current, failed policies. It's only fair that those who have been most adversely affected by the enforcement of the current laws should be afforded the opportunity to benefit from legalization. So far, the states that have legalized cannabis have fallen short in this regard, but this bill makes it clear that we are serious about ensuring that there will be equity in the cannabis industry here in Connecticut.

We believe it's time to stop branding people as criminals for using a substance that is safer than alcohol. Criminal records can derail dreams and separate families. Marijuana convictions make it more difficult to obtain housing, jobs, and education.

We believe it's time to make our communities safer. Removing marijuana from the criminal market would free up law enforcement resources so police officers can focus on other serious crimes.
We believe it’s time to establish control over the marijuana market. Marijuana would be sold by licensed businesses that require proof of age and would not expose consumers to other drugs, contaminants, or illegal pesticides.

We believe it’s time to save taxpayer dollars and generate revenue. In a regulated, taxed market, marijuana sales would create revenue and jobs for our communities rather than for the illicit market.

We believe this is the year, and this is the bill to support in order to bring an end to our state’s failed policy of Prohibition, to begin to right the wrongs of the past and to provide new opportunities for those most impacted.

Sincerely,

Christopher Rosario
State Representative

Antonio Felipe
State Representative