

Dear Representatives:

Initially I was opposed to the legalization of marijuana in Vermont and wrote letters to senators to persuade them to stop the bill. Right now I am less opposed to the idea because I am beginning to understand the proponents' arguments. However, I doubt if you want to read about my evolution. What I hope you will do is read the few concerns I have. These concerns have not gone away. These are concerns I have heard others voice, so if the bill goes forward I hope there will be answers to these questions.

It is safe to say that taxation is one of the major driving forces behind this legislation. A huge factor for the drug's legalization is the taxes it will generate. I was surprised that the suggested tax on marijuana was 25%. I know it is in line with other states, but those other states have different economies than Vermont. Is 25% too high? Setting a tax rate is problematic to say the least. It can't be too high or too low, but it has to be set just right. If it is set too high the price of pot will be too high and the intended outcome of wiping out the illegal market will fail because legal marijuana will be too expensive. Then people will continue to buy the drug illegally. Will the police ask a user to see the sales receipt to determine if it was purchased legally?

On the other hand, if revenues don't meet expectations you won't have the money you anticipated getting. Then how will you pay for the "educational" component of this bill and for the necessary drug counseling? Young kids are using now, but I suspect more kids will get their hands on it.

Also, how will you pay for the increased legal enforcement that will be needed? You can not just shift these costs to the towns and cities of Vermont. In fact I heard on the news recently something to the effect that Burlington was discussing asking for state money to help implement the bill. It just seems that Government is not able to get things right, and I am very afraid that the estimates calculated will fall far short of what is needed so everyone is safe.

One last point, how will you patrol the roads so everyone is Safe? The legal system still lets repeat drunk drivers back on the road. Now you will have more marijuana users because it will be legal and more drivers driving under the influence. How are you going to support the police who will have more work? Will the Vermont State House support additional police enforcement? Finally, is there an acceptable detection method that will stand up in court or will our court system be clogged with cases that will need to be thrown out.

I hope there is a clear plan for these different scenarios. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carol Lyle

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