

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am very disturbed by the decision to rewrite S.241 into a decriminalization bill.

S.241 as passed by the Senate should be voted on based on its merits and the input of the public. If you do not have the votes to pass this, you should vote it down. Surely, your constituents will appreciate knowing where you stand on the original bill the house was given.

- Rewriting the bill wholesale and then voting on it a day later without public input on the rewrite is wrong. The same public time and attention should be given to the new language of the bill as was given to the original S.241.

- Decriminalization does nothing to eliminate the black market OR the stigma attached to thousands of everyday users of a safe drug. Decriminalization is a tacit admission that marijuana should be a legally regulated substance. We don't tell our children to go out and do whatever they want as long as they don't get caught, yet this is what is implied with this rewrite. This should be voted on as a legal or illegal substance plain and simple.

- Polydrug limit is arbitrary and unscientific for a drug that is detectable in people's systems for up to 30 days with no psychoactive effects. I do not believe that the police and courts are ready to process thousands of drivers who test positive for DUI even though they are not at all intoxicated in the least.

- There is growing awareness of doctor prescribed opioids causing an estimated 17,000 deaths annually and the total annual opioid death toll reaching the hundreds of thousands per year. People do not die from using marijuana. We should be pushing forward with legalizing marijuana as a safe alternative to opioid pain killers as well as a harm reduction strategy for people suffering from deadly addiction.

- Marijuana vs Alcohol regulation is a case study in hypocrisy. Alcohol is an unscheduled, legally regulated substance with nightmarish public health outcomes. It is against logic that you would craft a bill that does not legalize marijuana, a drug that has relatively minor downsides, and well-known its life-changing medical benefits. I have not known or heard of anyone beaten, abused, raped or killed by users of marijuana. Cultural taboos are not good enough reasons to continue bad policy.

I know that the clock is running on the legislative session and you have other work to attend to, but this bill has come a long way and should be voted on in its original form if not amended to include home cultivation.

Lets put this era of fear behind us.

Sincerely,

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