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Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2016 10:12 PM

To: Maxine Grad; Willem Jewett; Tom Burditt; Chip Conquest; bill@repbillfrank.com; Martin LaLonde; Marcia Martel; Betty Nuovo; Barbara Rachelson; Vicki Strong; Gary Viens

Subject: Bill S.241 - please pass this bill

Dear Representatives on the Judicial Committee,

Please move bill S.241 on to a vote, and vote to regulate marijuana like alcohol and tobacco. It's the right thing to do. It's time to start putting an end to the harm caused by decades of marijuana prohibition to individuals and society.

Even if you personally feel that it's wrong for adults to use any alcohol or marijuana, remember that many many people do not share those beliefs and use one or both substances in moderation and responsibly. Also, think of what it would be like if alcohol and tobacco was made illegal... increased crime, increased lack of trust in law enforcement and the government, and decreased ability to keep these drugs out of the hands of kids. Marijuana should be legalized in VT for many reasons. These are some of the most important...

1. I see this as primarily an issue of justice. The laws and penalties for using, possessing and producing marijuana are **by far** its greatest risk, not its mind altering effects or addiction.

With decriminalization people still need to be "criminals" or do business with or receive gifts from "criminals" if they want to get marijuana. They still have a lot to lose if they get caught, especially if they are minorities or not wealthy or well connected.

2. I have not seen any evidence that convinces me that marijuana is anywhere near as addictive or dangerous as alcohol, tobacco or many prescription and over the counter drugs.

3. Vermont's medical marijuana laws are far too restrictive. Instead of using marijuana for pain relief and other reasons, if the person happens to be lucky to go to a dr who would prescribe they first have to try a whole slew of legal medications and treatments that are often less effective, are more addictive, and have more dangerous side effects. Also many legal drugs fog up your head worse and longer than marijuana. Treatments like cortisone shots in the spine can require missing work. And yes, people should be at least as worried about people driving while sleepy or under the influence of antihistamines, pain relievers and other legal drugs as they are about marijuana. No one's calling for a ban on all those medications because we don't currently have a good breathalyzer test for them.

4. I think it is just as acceptable for **adults** to use marijuana **responsibly** as it is to have a beer or other alcohol beverage. I think adults modelling **responsible** use of alcohol and marijuana in the home can be more beneficial to kids than any anti-drug program and even an atmosphere of total abstinence in the home.

5. Continuing Prohibition or making the new laws too restrictive makes education efforts about marijuana's risks more confusing and difficult. Many people see that it's effects and risks have been blown out of proportion (including kids) and it decreases the credibility of the groups trying to help with the truly threatening drug issues.

Please vote to legalize marijuana and regulate it like alcohol and tobacco, and please be sure to include legislation that will help keep production local and out of the hands of large corporations.

Thank-you.

Sara Gebo

Essex Junction, VT