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Marijuana Legalization in Vermont: A Green Way Forward

Cannabis Should be Taxed & Regulated as a Wellness Product

I. Sin Taxes- High tax rates will not reduce consumption, higher taxes will allow the black market to remain supported vs. legal markets that generate tax revenue.

II. Denial of Service: Banking and credit card payments must be in place to reduce cash burden by 50% or more. Banks need to accept the business and allow accounts to be open and used without fear of being frozen. Security services must be accessible to transport cash to financial institutions for those dispensing cannabis.

III. Home Growing: As was dropped from the 2013 decriminalization law, home growing must be part of a legalization law passed by the legislature. Proper rules should be in place to ensure electricity is up to code and safeguards are in place to prevent fire indoors. Outdoor rules should be established to protect cultivators and their crops.

IV. Limiting Patients: Remove limits to state medical marijuana program on limitations of conditions. This will allow patients under doctors supervision to utilize this program on a broader scale which should take into account economic needs and protect the medical program. It is vital for research and information about cannabis therapy to be ongoing. Sales tax should not be charged nor should the sin tax be in place for patients. Patients should be able to visit any dispensary they wish.

V: Limiting providers: The state limited providers with its medical marijuana program. This has led to shortages, long waits to access safe medicine, and a price structure that is higher than the black market. This needs to be resolved under legalization. The more providers, the more competition lowering prices to compete with black marketeers attempting to undercut legal markets.

VI. Criminalizing Profit: Current medical marijuana guidelines impose non-profit status on dispensaries. Businesses moving into this new legal marketplace should be allowed to make profits and compete with others doing the same. A great happy medium would be for anyone operating in this space to be a B Corporation which is already part of Vermont statutes.

VII. Land Use: Cannabis farming outdoors should be treated as agriculture and safeguards and precautions should be implemented to protect farms and crops from rogue elements. Indoor cultivation should be zoned as industrial/commercial for large scale grows outside of the limits on home grows. Processing and production should also be done in industrial/commercial/agricultural zones as appropriate.