

**From:** Dawn Poitras  
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**Subject:** [External] written testimony

## **Written Testimony for Bill H.612**

First thank you for the opportunity to provide my insight and passion for prevention for our youth, families and communities.

When I heard about **Bill H.612** I could not believe that this was a topic of discussion. Lifting limits on cannabis edibles and flowers. So when I hear things like this, I look for research and best practices to back up the information that is being provided. As of today, I have not found best practice or strong research to support the statements being made to suggest that lifting of limits would benefit the health and well being of youth, adults, and families. I may not have looked in the right places for this information, but I usually am able to find something to support the thoughts behind a bill. I do know that states such as Connecticut have written potency caps for solid concentrates, Colorado has authorized systematic review of the scientific research to the negative health impacts of high potency of concentrates. But we need true data to support a change in policy

Although, marijuana for adults is legal. Youth are accessing these products, via parents, community members, and peers that are old enough to purchase. For example, from my work as an SAP for the past 24 years within the Barre Communities. I provide prevention education, intervention and crisis work related to substance misuse. I have witnessed students K-12th grade with edibles. A 1st grader brought in "cookies" from home for a snack; a 9th grader brought in gummies that were a known edible that she got from a friend, and a 12th grader brought in gummies she got from a cannabis shop in the community she lived in. This is my real Prevention work in a school community that I experienced within the last year. **Who is accountable for this? You are the legislators who make bills to guide our communities.**

Lifting potency cap limits only **increases** the harm to our youth. Youth may not know the difference between real cookies and cannabis cookies, or may want to "give it a try" because it is being sold "safely", without the education about the risks and harms. These examples are what I call unintentional consequences of children and youth who do not know the harms. In some cases, adults may ingest more than the recommended amount in a serving because it is only edibles. These are the real truths.

The world of "prevention" should not fear potency caps currently in place to ensure children, youth and families are free from harm. By lifting these caps you increase the risk of "self harm", such as mental health issues like psychosis, development issues (since adolescent brains are risk of not fully developed until the age of 26, poison control center calls for children seen through increased overdoses of edibles youth and adults in Vermont emergency rooms. All this data is collected to help guide the work in our communities.

I ask you to table Bill H.612 until more research and data is collected to protect our children, youth, families and communities. The message I fear you will be sending, is “it is all safe and you will be safe using these products”. I would like this committee to look at services that are being offered for youth that are needed for substance use/abuse residential treatment that they need. In the state of Vermont, at this time, in Central Vermont we do not have this service, we have to send our youth out of state to help them become clean, healthy, and safe.

If you would like to connect more on this topic with me, please contact me at [dpoitbce@buusd.org](mailto:dpoitbce@buusd.org) and/or 802-476-4811 ext 1203.

I wish you the best, stay safe.

Dawn E. Poitras, LADC, CPS  
Student Assistance Professional

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