
Public Hearing

before

SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

The public hearing will be held in accordance with Article IX, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution and Rule 24:3 of the New Jersey Senate on the following Senate Concurrent Resolution:

Senate Concurrent Resolution 183

“Proposes constitutional amendment to legalize cannabis for personal, non-medical use by adults who are age 21 years or older, subject to regulation by Cannabis Regulatory Commission”

LOCATION: Committee Room 6
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: December 12, 2019
1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator Nellie Pou, Chair
Senator Joseph P. Cryan, Vice Chair
Senator Nicholas P. Scutari
Senator Gerald Cardinale
Senator Thomas H. Kean, Jr.



ALSO PRESENT:

Todd W. Moore
*Office of Legislative Services
Committee Aide*

Kate Millsaps
*Senate Majority
Committee Aide*

Laurine Purola
*Senate Republican
Committee Aide*

***Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey***



NELLIE POU
Chair

JOSEPH CRYAN
Vice-Chair

NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI
GERALD CARDINALE
THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

TODD W. MOORE
*Office of Legislative Services
Committee Aide*
(609) 847-3845
(609) 777-2998 fax

New Jersey State Legislature
SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE
STATE HOUSE ANNEX
PO BOX 068
TRENTON NJ 08625-0068

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Senate Commerce Committee will hold a public hearing on Thursday, December 12, 2019 at 1:30 PM in Committee Room 6, First Floor, State House Annex, Trenton, New Jersey.

The public may address comments and questions to Todd W. Moore, Committee Aide, or make bill status and scheduling inquiries to Joanne W. Gillespie, Secretary, at (609)847-3845, fax (609)777-2998, or e-mail: OLSAideSCM@njleg.org. Written and electronic comments, questions and testimony submitted to the committee by the public, as well as recordings and transcripts, if any, of oral testimony, are government records and will be available to the public upon request.

The public hearing will be held in accordance with Article IX, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution and Rule 24:3 of the New Jersey Senate on the following Senate Concurrent Resolution:

SCR-183
Scutari/Sweeney

Proposes constitutional amendment to legalize cannabis for personal, non-medical use by adults who are age 21 years or older, subject to regulation by Cannabis Regulatory Commission.

Those individuals presenting written testimony are asked to provide 15 copies to the committee aide prior to the start of the hearing.

Issued 12/5/19

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**SENATE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION No. 183**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 18, 2019

Sponsored by:

Senator NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI

District 22 (Middlesex, Somerset and Union)

Senator STEPHEN M. SWEENEY

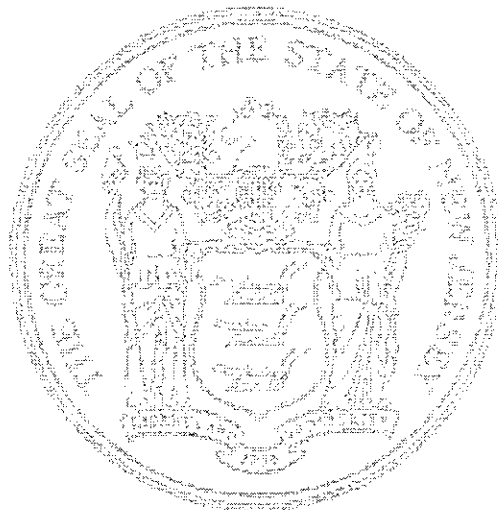
District 3 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)

SYNOPSIS

Proposes constitutional amendment to legalize cannabis for personal, non-medical use by adults who are age 21 years or older, subject to regulation by Cannabis Regulatory Commission.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION proposing to amend Article IV,
2 Section VII of the New Jersey Constitution by adding a new
3 paragraph.

4
5 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the State of New Jersey (the
6 General Assembly concurring):

7
8 1. The following proposed amendment to the Constitution of
9 the State of New Jersey is agreed to:

10
11 PROPOSED AMENDMENT

12
13 Amend Article IV, Section VII by adding a new paragraph 13 to
14 read as follows:

15 13. The growth, cultivation, processing, manufacturing,
16 preparing, packaging, transferring, and retail purchasing and
17 consumption of cannabis, or products created from or which include
18 cannabis, by persons 21 years of age or older, and not by persons
19 under 21 years of age, shall be lawful and subject to regulation by
20 the Cannabis Regulatory Commission created by P.L.2019, c.153
21 (C.24:6I-5.1 et al.), or any successor to that commission.

22 (1) The commission's or successor's regulatory authority
23 concerning legalized cannabis shall be authorized by law enacted by
24 the Legislature.

25 (2) The receipts from retail purchases of cannabis or products
26 created from or which include cannabis shall only be subject to the
27 tax imposed under the "Sales and Use Tax Act," P.L.1966, c.30
28 (C.54:32B-1 et. seq.), as amended and supplemented, or any other
29 subsequent law of similar effect; provided, however, that a
30 municipality, subject to authorization by law enacted by the
31 Legislature, may adopt an ordinance to impose an additional
32 municipal tax on the sale, or any other form of transfer, of cannabis
33 or products created from or which include cannabis by an
34 authorized party located in a municipality. The municipal tax rate
35 shall not exceed two percent of the receipts from each sale of
36 cannabis or products created from or which include cannabis by an
37 authorized party or the equivalent value from any other form of
38 transfer by an authorized party.

39 As used in this paragraph:

40 "Cannabis" means all parts of the plant Genus Cannabis L.,
41 whether growing or not, the seeds thereof, and every compound,
42 manufacture, salt, derivative, mixture, or preparation of the plant or
43 its seeds. "Cannabis" does not include: cannabis dispensed and
44 consumed for medical purposes pursuant to any law enacted by the
45 Legislature; hemp or hemp products subject to regulation under the
46 "New Jersey Hemp Farming Act," P.L.2019, c.238 (C.4:28-6 et al.),
47 or any successor enactment thereto; or unregulated cannabis.

SCR183 SCUTARI, SWEENEY

3

1 referred to as marijuana, and products created from or which
2 include marijuana.

3

4 2. When this proposed amendment to the Constitution is finally
5 agreed to pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 1 of the Constitution, it
6 shall be submitted to the people at the next general election
7 occurring more than three months after the final agreement and
8 shall be published at least once in at least one newspaper of each
9 county designated by the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the
10 General Assembly and the Secretary of State, not less than three
11 months prior to the general election.

12

13 3. This proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be
14 submitted to the people at that election in the following manner and
15 form:

16 There shall be printed on each official ballot to be used at the
17 general election, the following:

18 a. In every municipality in which voting machines are not used,
19 a legend which shall immediately precede the question as follows:

20 If you favor the proposition printed below make a cross (X), plus
21 (+), or check (✓) in the square opposite the word "Yes." If you are
22 opposed thereto make a cross (X), plus (+) or check (✓) in the
23 square opposite the word "No."

24 b. In every municipality the following question:

	YES	<p>CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO LEGALIZE MARIJUANA</p> <p>Do you approve amending the Constitution to legalize a controlled form of marijuana called “cannabis”?</p> <p>Only adults at least 21 years of age could use cannabis. The State commission created to oversee the State’s medical cannabis program would also oversee the new, personal use cannabis market.</p> <p>Cannabis products would be subject to the State sales tax. If authorized by the Legislature, a municipality may pass a local ordinance to charge a local tax on cannabis products.</p>
	NO	<p>INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT</p> <p>This amendment would legalize a controlled form of marijuana called “cannabis.” Only persons at least 21 years of age could use cannabis products legally.</p> <p>The Cannabis Regulatory Commission would oversee the new adult cannabis market. This commission was created in 2019 to oversee the State’s medical cannabis program. The scope of the commission’s new authority would be detailed in laws enacted by the Legislature.</p> <p>All retail sales of cannabis products in the new adult cannabis market would be subject to the State’s sales tax. If authorized by the Legislature, a municipality may pass a local ordinance to charge a local tax on cannabis products.</p>

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SCHEDULE

This constitutional amendment shall take effect on January 1 next following the general election at which it was approved, and the Legislature may take such anticipatory legislative action as may be necessary to effectuate the provisions of the amendment.

STATEMENT

This concurrent resolution proposes a constitutional amendment to legalize cannabis for personal, non-medical use by adults who are 21 years of age or older. The Cannabis Regulatory Commission,

1 created by P.L.2019, c.153 (C.24:61-5.1 et al.) to oversee the State's
2 medical cannabis program, primarily set forth in the "Jake Honig
3 Compassionate Use Medical Cannabis Act," P.L.2009, c.307
4 (C.24:61-1 et al.) (or any successor to that commission), would also
5 oversee the new personal use market. The scope of the
6 commission's regulatory authority would be established in law by
7 the Legislature.

8 As set forth in the proposed amendment, the term "cannabis"
9 would not include: "cannabis dispensed and consumed for medical
10 purposes pursuant to any law enacted by the Legislature; hemp or
11 hemp products subject to regulation under the 'New Jersey Hemp
12 Farming Act,' P.L.2019, c.238 (C.4:28-6 et al.), or any successor
13 enactment thereto; or unregulated cannabis, referred to as
14 marijuana, and products created from or which include marijuana."
15 Passage of the amendment would not affect the State's regulation of
16 medical cannabis and hemp, and unregulated marijuana would
17 remain illegal under the State's laws.

18 The amendment provides that all receipts from the retail
19 purchases of cannabis or products created from or which include
20 cannabis would only be subject to the tax imposed under the "Sales
21 and Use Tax Act," P.L.1966, c.30 (C.54:32B-1 et seq.) (or a
22 subsequent enactment of similar effect); provided, however, that a
23 municipality, subject to authorization by law enacted by the
24 Legislature, may adopt an ordinance to impose an additional
25 municipal tax on the sale, or any other form of transfer, of cannabis
26 or products created from or which include cannabis by an
27 authorized party located in a municipality. The municipal tax rate
28 could not exceed two percent of the receipts from each sale of
29 cannabis or products created from or which include cannabis by an
30 authorized party or the equivalent value from any other form of
31 transfer by an authorized party.

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SENATOR NELLIE POU (Chair): Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome, once again, to the Senate Commerce Committee.

I am going to ask Mr. Moore to take the roll call at this time.

MR. MOORE (Committee Aide): Senator Kean.

SENATOR KEAN: Here.

MR. MOORE: Senator Cardinale.

SENATOR CARDINALE: Here.

MR. MOORE: Senator Scutari is present.

Senator Cryan.

SENATOR JOSEPH P. CRYAN (Vice Chair): Here.

MR. MOORE: Senator Pou.

SENATOR POU: Here.

I know that Senator Scutari will be joining us very shortly, and he will have-- He's one of the prime sponsors of this particular Bill.

But in the meantime, we will begin.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, this is a public hearing; so the process -- this hearing is--

I'm just going to ask for a little bit of quiet in the room, please.

Thank you; thank you very much.

Today this public hearing will be to discuss the process for amending the Constitution, which requires that a public hearing be held in either house prior to a vote; which is what we will be doing today on SCR-183, which proposes a constitutional amendment to legalize cannabis for personal, non-medical use by individuals who are age 21 years or older.

Accordingly, we will not be voting on the Resolution today, but we will be hearing testimony from the public.

The Concurrent Resolution sets forth a structure for the legalization of cannabis, the Cannabis Regulatory Commission, created by the Jake Honig Compassionate Use Medical Cannabis Act, or any successor to that Commission which oversees the new personal use market.

The scope of the Commission's regulatory authority would be established in law by the Legislature. Passage of the amendment would not affect the State's regulation of medical cannabis and hemp, and unregulated marijuana would remain illegal under the State's law.

In order for a constitutional amendment to be submitted to the public for a vote, it must be voted out of the Legislature by a simple majority in consecutive years, or a supermajority in one year. The goal is to get the amendment on the ballot for the November 2020 election.

That concludes my statement, ladies and gentlemen.

At this time, I'm going to recognize the sponsor of the Bill, Senator Scutari, who will provide us with some opening remarks; and then, immediately after that, I will be recognizing Senator Cardinale, who also wished to make some remarks as he needs to attend another hearing.

Thank you very much, Senator Scutari.

Please.

SENATOR SCUTARI: Thank you, Madam Chair.

And I think that this is an important enough piece of legislation that I'd like to come forward and address the Committee from this angle, because I don't think that-- And we have a lot of very important bills that are being discussed right now, and throughout my entire career; but I can't

say that anything is more important than this. We have an amazing opportunity to allow the voters, at this point in time, to consider the legalization of cannabis in New Jersey.

When I first talked about this topic years ago, I thought New Jersey would be a leader in this; and I still think we have an opportunity to be a leader on the East Coast. But as we've seen, other states have already gotten ahead of us, and we see the national trend moving in this direction. And I think it is time that we give the voters an opportunity to weigh in on this. And if polling numbers are accurate -- and not to suggest that they always are -- but I look forward to this passing in November. But we will see what the voters say about this experiment here in New Jersey.

I've been told, and I've heard in the past, that insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. And that's what we've been doing here for close to 100 years, not just in New Jersey, but in this nation, where we've criminalized the personal use of marijuana, also known as *cannabis*. Sometimes people suggest it's for the right reasons; I can tell you that my historical research on it seems as though that it was done, really, for inappropriate and sometimes racist reasons when it was even criminalized close to 100 years ago.

And what it has done is filled our jails, it has taken away voting rights from individuals, it has created criminals, and it has created profiteers, and more and more nonviolent and violent crime through drug dealers and drug cartels being embedded in the fabric of our communities. There's an entire underground economy going on when it comes to marijuana. Let's be clear: We can't continue to put our head in the sand and think this is not going on. It's time for us to wipe the slate clean; to allow for this substance

to be ingested in a safe, regulated manner; and government should play an important role in doing that. We should do that by ensuring that our citizens have a safe product to ingest, safe from arrest, and continuing to be law-abiding citizens in every other aspect of their lives; not then being under the threat of arrest and prosecution simply because their drug of choice is cannabis and, perhaps, not alcohol. And I can tell you that every study and in every scientific manner, alcohol is a far more dangerous substance to ingest, certainly in large quantities, than marijuana has ever been. There is plenty of documentation of deaths related to alcohol, and not one -- not one in the history of this planet -- of an overdose or a death related to cannabis.

So it's time for us to move forward with this topic. Of course, my preference would have been to have it legalized and legislatively done by our respective caucuses. That appears to not be the avenue that we can go in, so I think this is the next best way that we can do it. Let the voters have their say; and assuming -- that's a big word to use, *assumption* -- that it's legalized, perhaps next year we'll be able to get this and start regulating it.

But let us have the voters have their say; I think it's time for us to do that.

And I'll take any questions, or I can sit back.

SENATOR POU: Thank you, Senator.

I think what I'd like to do right now, given that this is the opening of our public hearing, I'm going to ask that you come back and join us up here so that we can hear from all of the members that are in the audience who wish to provide us with their testimony.

We thank you, Senator Scutari, for your comments and your leadership in this regard. We know how hard you have worked on this, and

how you have attempted to bring everyone up to par with the information, and educate everyone from your perspective.

With that being said, again, thank you for your comments.

I'm going to, at this time, recognize Senator Cardinale, for your remarks, sir.

SENATOR CARDINALE: Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to speak; and I will be brief.

I oppose the effort to legalize marijuana in New Jersey. I have a number of concerns that have never been fully addressed. There are many peer-reviewed medical studies which indicate that cancer, mental illness, suicides, bullying, and workplace accidents all will increase if we legalize recreational use of marijuana.

I have reviewed the data from other states that have already gone down the path of legalization. Their experiences should not be ignored.

I'm concerned that there is not a breathalyzer-like test that would allow law enforcement to make an instant and scientifically sound determination when someone is suspected of driving under the influence of marijuana. Without such a test, few people who drive under the influence of marijuana are charged with DUI, and even fewer are convicted. Those who use cannabis in states where it is legal are well aware of that fact. That's why Colorado and Washington state saw an immediate spike in marijuana-related traffic fatalities, post-legalization. It's now, at this point, a 100 percent increase.

Here in New Jersey we have approximately 40 to 50 deaths each year attributable to marijuana-related DUI. If the trends in New Jersey follow those of other states -- and we have no reason to believe they won't -- we also

will see marijuana-related driving deaths double. That's another 40 to 50 lives that will be lost on New Jersey roads and highways each year.

If not for any other reason, the additional death toll that marijuana legalization will lead to on our roads should be enough for the members of this Committee to vote "no" on SCR-183.

I will not mince words. Anyone who supports legalization of marijuana will have blood on their hands year, after year, after year.

I thank you for your indulgence, and I would hope that someone takes heed of the great amount of data that is available. We have compiled that data; we have submitted that compilation to each and every member of the Legislature, and to the Governor, and to the Trenton press corps. I wonder if anyone has bothered to read it. I have, and I am convinced that we are on the wrong path.

Thank you.

SENATOR POU: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR CARDINALE: I must leave, Madam Chair, for another hearing.

SENATOR POU: Yes; thank you very much.

Thank you for your comments. You did share that information with me; thank you very much.

At this time, I'm going to-- We have a number of folks who have signed up to testify and to provide us with testimony with regards to this particular question -- ballot question. So I'm going to-- As I announce your name-- Some of you who have filled out one of the forms did not indicate whether or not you wish to testify. I'm going to ask you, if it's not clearly stated, if you could please come forward as your name is being called.

So the first one that I have in front of me is Michael Brennan, from the Coalition of Medical Marijuana of New Jersey.

Michael Brennan? Okay.

Sir, did you wish to testify? Okay, I see you coming up; very good. Yes, please come forward if you wish to provide us with testimony.

Please come forward and take a seat.

I'm going to ask -- those of you who I do call up, if you could please take a seat in one of the two center chairs that are in front of you, in front of the microphones -- thank you very much -- so that we can properly record your statement.

Yes, sir; thank you, again.

And the next speaker is going to-- And I'm going to ask you to please also come to the front. As we're getting prepared, I will have two folks come up at the same time.

Mr. William Eames.

Okay, Mr. Brennan; please provide--

Good afternoon, sir.

M I C H A E L B R E N N A N: Good afternoon, and definitely thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I am very grateful.

My name is Michael Brennan. I'm a 61-year-old proud dad of three young men, born and raised in South Jersey, in Moorestown. And with that, I've also been grateful to be a therapeutic cannabis patient in New Jersey's medical marijuana program.

I was fortunate enough to have a neurologist who suggested that I look into studies regarding my comorbidities and the treatment of therapeutic cannabis several years ago; as a matter of fact, 13.

But getting to the point of why I'm here today.

My experience has been-- I'm here as a Trustee for the Coalition of Medical Marijuana of New Jersey, out of Trenton. I'm also a Board Member of Garden State NORML, as well as also a Patient Advisor for Green Thumb Industries in New Jersey, in Paterson.

My background studying the American Safe Access Patient Focused Certifications, as a patient caregiver advocate; and serving on the Patient Advisory Board has given me much satisfaction, giving back to what's helped me and my family out so much.

My advocacy began, as I said, 13 years ago through my neurologist's suggestion, after treating the chronic myelopathy and the chronic pain that I experienced. As I said, I was fortunate enough, in June of 2009, to testify for *Kumka* (phonetic), or *Kumma* (phonetic) back then.

To get to the point here today, legalization, as I've experienced it, is a public health issue, as well as the start of atonement for the Jim Crow drug war that's been going on. The classicism among these people who are being arrested, at 94 a day-- You know, we get to a point where legalization is just the start of being able to not only give the social justice part of it, but to provide solutions for-- Well, in my experiences, my hard thing here is being a patient. I'm disabled and I'm limited to my Social Security Disability income. Like many patients in the program, in New Jersey, we experience the most expensive therapy cannabis in the country, you know?

So I hope that through supply and demand with legalization, the ATCs have some more competition and can definitely pass that on to the patients; plus, the additional work that comes in with the income to the State can be applied to patients' cost.

Going there-- Also the Safe Act, federally -- we can't control that here, but hopefully banking will be able to work with that, too, with the business end of that.

My medicine is something that has done amazing things for me. For 12 years, I could not ambulate without those strong crutches (indicates) for both arms. The paralysis had gotten very bad; I had a rod and 10 screws holding my neck together here. But it's amazing that I'm able to be here today because of this medicine. However, like the recent AARP ad that's running around right now, the greatest medicine in the world cannot help if you can't afford it.

So with that, we've got some things that legalization can help with here, as far as the unaffordable costs. If you look at the average income for Social Security Disability, you're talking about \$1,209 a month. If you're looking at an average patient, with 2 to 3 ounces being recommended, New Jersey's ATC costs are anywhere from \$1,200 to \$1,500 for that per month. Obviously, you can see the math isn't working out very well for the patient or his family's financial security.

So that's something that definitely needs to be resolved, and the legalization does have something that can reduce that cost, if you can.

The inaccessibility of cultivars to the ATC system, through ATC competition, again brings up things where patients can get a specific cultivar that deals with that limited comorbidity that you suffer from. That's something that can be done again; and can even be added to, if Kumka was added restored back to the original home grow that was originally included with the Act. Having that available for patients is not only just therapy -- cannabis horticultural therapy, but to be able to grow your medicine is

something that makes it a positive thing for the patient -- growing. But also having access, which is limited when you're dealing with a commercial ATC. There are over 61,000 patients and only 7 ATCs right now.

So with that, I can look at decriminalization as something that we looked at. The black market is still there, you know; the black market demands prohibition. From that we've had, recently, vape lung injuries of over 2,100 people, and 42 deaths. The black market is something that -- the illicit carts that are out there are something that is not just unfortunate, but can be further dealt with -- a regulated, safe, product that New Jersey's 600,000 cannabis consumers -- from New Jersey's numbers, 600,000 people have been here. For prosecutors-- Sorry Mr. Cardinale had to leave -- but the people are still consuming cannabis, through the black market or through legalization. Through a regulated market, a cannabis consumer should be able to go right into a store, like a CVS, and buy this over the counter. It's safer than alcohol. We look at this thing -- that de-scheduling can also increase research so we can get those answers. Tests are available now that can tell whether cannabis has been consumed within -- recently, within several hours. Unfortunately, we do not have an intoxication test. DREs that are available -- the drug experts -- much of that is based on (indiscernible) to science. But again, a lot of research is out there, and there's a lot of work that has already been done internationally.

So with that, I'd like to thank you again for allowing me to be here.

SENATOR POU: Thank you; thank you very much.

Mr. Eames.

WILLIAM EAMES: Thank you.

I'm William Eames; I'm from Whippany, New Jersey.

I have a different take on it. I am not in favor of legalization of recreational marijuana. I'm deeply concerned that this legislation will make this drug much more tempting, lend the state's imprimatur, and boost experimentation, particularly in the teenage years, which are critically threatening to young people, particularly before the age of 25.

Science, medical experts, and the common sense just argue against saying that this is the best thing since sliced bread. It's not. For certain people who need medical marijuana, we do have medical marijuana.

Today's concentrations, particularly out on the street, are much higher than they have ever been before. That's true, also, with the grown marijuana. Of course, out on the street, as we talk about it, there are other drugs being added, including fentanyl, which do result in deaths. But Weedman was here, and testified a few months ago. And he said that the legalization of recreational marijuana will vastly boost his illegal black market, and he will be a very rich man. So I don't think legalization is going to solve the problem of the black market.

I don't agree with claims that marijuana, and its use in our legal system, has been discriminatory. The use of marijuana has always been discretionary by the user. Users made choice to use it; if they got arrested, they got arrested. The numbers speak for themselves as to who used.

Experience in other states -- incidents already reported here, and a former Governor who promotes that he will be selling edibles for profit -- all speak to the danger of trying to promote this, advertise this, and just plaster the airways, and the TV sets, and the cereal boxes with marijuana advertising.

We don't see a net financial gain to the State and the other states that have been out there, particularly when you consider social costs. Lots of financial gain, however, to certain people, including a number of legislators who have not taken a pledge not to accept money in their campaigns.

We think putting it to the ballot, especially when it was not able to pass in the Legislature, is an abandonment of responsibility of the Legislature. Normally, that's a very odd position for me to take, because I'm all for the people making decisions. But here we have a problem of the incredible disparity of advertising dollars that will be spent with misleading and untrue information. And so people who do not follow the issue will be widely misled; a very dangerous thing.

Decriminalization and adjusting criminal statutes are a totally separate issue from the issue of just legalizing marijuana across the board, and so I oppose the issue. I think it's interesting that we say that the laws against marijuana have made people criminals, but we don't apply that same standard to the ownership of guns.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SENATOR POU: Thank you both, gentlemen; thank you very much.

Okay, our next speakers will be Monica Taing, Dr. Monica Taing.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: She had to leave; I'm sorry.

SENATOR POU: Okay; so she is registered as in favor of the Bill.

Forgive me if I'm not pronouncing it correctly -- is it Charlana McKeithen (indicating pronunciation)?

CHARLANA McKEITHEN: (off mike) Charlana McKeithen.

SENATOR POU: Okay, please come forward; from the Garden State NORML, also in favor of the Bill.

I'm going to also ask Reverend Alexander Sharp, if he is here -- oh, okay; thank you -- representing the Clergy for a New Drug Policy, also in favor of the Bill.

Thank you very much.

Ms. McKeithen, if you can please start with your testimony.

Thank you.

MS. McKEITHEN: Good afternoon.

My name is Charlana McKeithen; I'm a New Jersey resident, and the Executive Director of Garden State NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws here in New Jersey.

I'm a medical patient who volunteers my time to fight for all the rights of cannabis consumers in New Jersey.

I wish to thank the members of this Committee for the opportunity to testify on behalf of cannabis legalization. The legislative action seeks to regulate and control the adult-use cannabis market, and we hope it will expand and protect the rights of consumers and our families.

NORML is the oldest marijuana consumer advocacy group in the country, with almost 50 years of experience fighting to protect responsible cannabis consumers in the U.S. and abroad. Here in New Jersey, 94 people are arrested for cannabis-related offenses every day, for minor cannabis possession charges. This must end. We need to stop arrests now. We need

to restore the rights and clear the records of hundreds of thousands of residents in New Jersey; and we need to create a truly equitable market, one that gives back to communities deeply affected by prohibition, a market that puts small businesses in New Jersey and New Jersey locals first.

That's why we would like to see the first two sentences of the ballot language in SCR-183 changed. Please consider the following language.

“Do you approve amending the Constitution to end marijuana prohibition? All criminal penalties for personal possession, cultivation, and use will be eliminated. Only adults, at least 21 years of age, could purchase regulated products, with a tax.”

We at Garden State NORML are ready to go to the polls and do our part. Tens of thousands of people will likely vote for the first time, just to support marijuana reform.

Now we ask you to do your jobs here in the Legislature. Let's deliver some real justice together.

It is time for New Jersey to become a leader in sensible cannabis policy. Public sentiment and common sense demand that lawmakers move forward to enact necessary and long overdue changes in State-level marijuana policies to achieve the repeal of marijuana prohibition so that the responsible adult use of cannabis is no longer subject to arrests and criminal penalty.

In conclusion, Garden State NORML supports the ballot referendum, only if legalization, via the State Legislature, be unachievable next year. In the meantime, we encourage the New Jersey State Legislature to stop arresting and incarcerating our New Jersey residents, many of whom are people of color, and work to regrade cannabis for all ages.

Thank you.

SENATOR CRYAN: Thank you very much.

Reverend.

REVEREND ALEXANDER E. SHARP: Members of the Committee, and Madam Chair and Vice Chair, I am the Reverend Alexander Sharp. I'm Executive Director of Clergy for a New Drug Policy. We -- our mission is to mobilize clergy nationally to end the war on drugs and to seek a health, not punishment, response to drug use.

I'm based in Chicago, but over the past several years I've traveled to at least 10 states on the education and efforts to educate clergy on the war on drugs, and on the need to legalize marijuana, which really is at the front end of the war on drugs. Now, we're not going to get into a lot of the deeper issues in the war on drugs until we first legalize marijuana.

To me, the fundamental concept is the notion of regulation and taxation as the real way to understand legalization. I talk to my clergy colleagues and I say, "Legalization really isn't the best name for this. The best name is *regulation and taxation*, combined with sound, honest, open education programs," which is not necessarily what you get under prohibition.

To illustrate what we really mean by the importance of regulation, I'd like to pick up on something I hear so much. I heard it this morning, I heard it again this afternoon in prior testimony -- the idea is that the pot that our parents smoked, and what we have today, is much more dangerous. It can cause much more harm than what our parents used. Well, if that's true -- and I'm quite prepared to accept that it is true; I'm not a big smoker of marijuana, but I'm prepared to accept that -- then the answer isn't prohibition, pushing it, keeping it back in the illicit market -- it's to regulate

it so that any person of common sense, who knows that this may be true, will at least know -- but wants to use marijuana -- will know how to get marijuana that keeps them safe against the threats that you just heard.

Why clergy on this? Certainly our concern, along with the rest of us, but certainly clergy, especially, are concerned about the health and safety of our youth. And here's where regulation matters. We know that cigarettes are legal, and yet smoking has declined by 50 percent over the past 25 years. We know that alcohol is legal, and yet-- And I can speak as a fairly elderly gentleman, as someone who has experienced the change in public attitude on attitudes towards driving under the influence. Those are legal drugs, and we see those changes. Marijuana is illegal, and use has not gone down. So all that illegal status doesn't accomplish what we say that we want to accomplish.

We know that youth have developing brains; we're concerned about that. But again, regulation is the response to that, not just a retreat into the netherworld of prohibition. If you have a clear age of 21, and you have regulation which is enforced, you're going to, again, maximize the chance that use will not increase, or really happen in the same degree under regulation as you do under prohibition.

And this is just an empirical fact; I want to present data. In virtually all of the 11 states that have legalized -- where we have a record -- teen use has not increased. That's a great fear, but it has not happened. The governors of Colorado and Washington are pleased with what they saw as an experiment, because they were the first states in legalization. And teen use, which one is concerned about, has not increased.

Now, I've talked about regulation and legalization. But there's another aspect, which is the social equity, the social justice part of legalization. And if I would say if there's any one thing that brings clergy to this issue, it is the notion of social justice and social equity. I would argue that legalization will move in the right direction, even though you weren't able to pass legislation that would do this; a ballot initiative for legalization will move us in the right direction. The folks who were opposing legalization, simply because they don't like legalization -- forget about social equity -- will no longer have a voice because the legalization will be in place. And the folks who are arguing for social equity as part of whatever happens under legalization will have the wind at their back with the national movement, both in Washington and at the state level, towards social equity programs as part of the legalization.

So I offer support for the ballot initiative, for both the reasons of regulation as the most effective response to drug use, and to devout interest in social equity, given the damage the war on drugs has done in the last 50 years.

Thank you.

SENATOR POU: Thank you very much.

Thank you.

Our next speakers will be Reverend Rob Gregson and Reverend Erich Kussman.

REVEREND SHARP: He was not able get -- I'm speaking for clergy, to the extent that I know -- he was not able to get back in the building. He spoke this morning in front of the Assembly, but he didn't get--

SENATOR POU: Okay; are you speaking about Reverend Erich Kussman?

REVEREND SHARP: Yes, Erich Kussman.

SENATOR POU: Okay; Kussman.

Okay, thank you.

Barbara Eames.

I just want to make sure to indicate that Reverend Erich Kussman is in favor of the ballot initiative.

REVEREND SHARP: (off mike) Yes, he is in favor of it; yes, he is.

SENATOR POU: Okay, I'm going to ask if you would please just-- I need you to occupy the two chair seats in front of the microphone, please.

Thank you so very much.

Thank you, Reverend.

REVEREND ROB GREGSON: Thank you, Chair Pou and members of the Senate Commerce Committee.

I apologize for the cold that my daughter must have given to me earlier this week. So hopefully you can understand me.

I'm Reverend Rob Gregson; I am Executive Director of Unitarian Universalist FaithAction New Jersey. That's the public policy group that represents all of our congregations across New Jersey, and only New Jersey.

Since 2015, when my predecessor, Reverend Craig Hirshberg, sat before these Committees at some of the initial hearings on possible legalization of marijuana, and gave what we believed to be the first denominational testimony in favor of that legalization, we have consistently

supported the safe, the regulated, and especially the socially just legalization position.

While Unitarian Universalists, in general, and certainly our organization in particular, would have been happier with a legislative solution rather than a ballot question, on balance we are here to say that we agree that from an ethical and justice perspective -- and I want to be very clear on that. there's a Libertarian argument to be made; that's not the one that we make. But instead, from an ethical and justice perspective, it is better that we have ballot legalization, if the voters so choose -- than continue with the current system -- which largely allows people who look a lot like me, and live in suburban neighborhoods like the one I live in, in South Orange, to escape being caught up in our criminal justice system if they choose to smoke illegal marijuana; rather than people from largely black and brown neighborhoods, and certainly poor, urban neighborhoods, which tend to be over-policed in New Jersey -- as across the rest of the country -- who don't have that same luxury.

The one comment I would like to leave you with is a future-oriented one. I know this is the beginning of a long process, and we've moved from the Legislature, now, to the ballot. The broadly compelling reason that any faith body, like our own, might decide to take a stand for marijuana legalization -- when we could very easily have just backed away from it, not wanting to court controversy among our membership or among our communities -- is because it would end the ill-conceived and horribly racially biased war on drugs that began when I was in high school, and has had some of the detrimental effects that you've already heard about today.

Looking forward, then, what I want to leave you with is a hope that you will support future legislation -- much like the criminal expungement legislation moving through both houses -- that I hope will be voted on next week. It attempts to make some small reparations -- and I use that word advisedly and deliberately, knowing it is quite loaded in American culture today -- aimed to address the grossly unethical place we may find ourselves in, in New Jersey; if and when the ballot is successful. And that place would be where well-heeled, largely white businessmen and women begin making money hand over fist, only weeks after others might have been fined or even imprisoned for much the same exact act. That is a very unethical position for New Jersey to be in, and I hope that you will seriously consider, --whether you support this measure or not, frankly -- you will seriously consider those legislative pieces, that we will certainly be supporting, as they come forward to try to replace or at least reduce some of the harms that have come about through a, perhaps, well-conceived attempt to bring drug use down in the United States; but one that's had terrible repercussions across this state or across this country.

Thank you very much for your time.

SENATOR POU: Thank you, Reverend.

Ms. Eames.

BARBARA EAMES: Good afternoon.

Thanks for being able to-- I'm glad to be able to be here.

Some of the points I have, have been addressed by previous speakers; so I just kind of would like to go to slightly different places, but not without just affirming the concerns that Senator Cardinale expressed. I completely do agree with it.

And it's interesting -- I sat through the Assembly hearing this morning -- how we disagree about the facts. I mean, the very same facts out of Colorado, which I would cite one way, other people cite the other way. Some people believe the book that is out recently, called *Tell Your Children* -- which is by Alex Berenson; he is a *New York Times* writer -- about how marijuana contributes to mental illness and violence -- someone this morning absolutely disputed.

So even though we can't agree on the facts, we're going to push this through anyway. Dispensaries wind up in urban and minority areas -- if we're concerned about that -- and to me, that's a concern. As a white person, I'm concerned that that's where they seem to wind up. But those are the reasons against it.

I'd like to go to the process; the process didn't result in it being able to pass this Legislature. And, you know, I hear out of -- we all hear in the national news, all the time, "Well, our democracy--" We are not a democracy; we are a republic. A republic protects the rights of minorities. It did not pass this Legislature because many of the urban representatives -- including Senator Rice, for one, and I think it was Senator Turner -- wouldn't vote for it.

So now we're going to do an end run around the legislative process, around the democratic process -- but we are a republic; we elect you folks to make these decisions -- and we're going to put it to a ballot. Now, it's interesting that this Committee, nor did the Assembly this morning, need to vote. So anybody who is opposed doesn't get to vote, and those who might be in a difficult position don't have to vote either.

And yet, as was testified this morning, this leaves so many things open-ended -- questions, which are going to be dealt with through a regulation. Well, so those issues won't be in the process of bills, where you folks, who we elect, get to consider them; they'll be part of the administrative regulation process, such as-- This still violates Federal law. How do we resolve those conflicts for businesses, for restaurants? Can we smoke pot in restaurants? We can't smoke cigarettes. How about employers? How about medical employees? We don't have a test for who's on -- whether you have it in your system. How about a medical employee who is doing a test on you? Maybe they were smoking, maybe they're high.

How about construction? Senator Sweeney is in the construction industry. I mean, there are so many questions and issues. Tests for driving; we don't even have that -- a definitive test. Well, I was told this morning, "Well, that's coming." Well, maybe we ought to make sure that those processes are in place before we just go and legalize this.

I sat in on this process when it came before Senator Scutari's Committee; I think it was in the spring. And I would note that the President of the Sheriff and Police Associations were both opposed to it. And I note, Senator Cryan, that you work for the Union County Sheriff's Department, so I'd be curious as to what your vote is. Your statewide Association is opposed to legalizing recreational marijuana.

So, to me, the issues of regulation -- and we can fix it through regulation-- How has that generally worked out for us in America anymore? Just call me a skeptic.

So lastly -- my last point I would like to make is that the *Star-Ledger* said, oh, a year ago, let's not be fooled about this in New Jersey, about

the question of legalizing recreational marijuana. It's about the money; the *Star-Ledger* said that. And Governor Florio was at the hearing, Senator Scutari's hearing in the spring, because he sits on the Board of a company that makes edible products. So how many folks are going to benefit from this? People either on committees or corporations have corporate interests in this, or stand to make money through donations to their campaigns. I'm not paid to be here; I'm a citizen. But there are lots of folks who have testified at all these hearings from all these associations who are going to make money off this.

I contend that this is not about the people, it's not about keeping people safe; and I don't think opening our society to more drugs is good for anybody, adults and especially not our children. This is not about what's good for our people. And we can talk about how we discourage it; we did that with big tobacco years ago. I'm all for discouraging with public policy; you know, campaigns, whatever. But that's not what this is about. This is about the politicians who will make money off of all those special interests that are funded to get marijuana legalized recreationally.

So I guess I would close by asking members of this Committee -- will you, Senator Pou, Senator Cryan, Senator Scutari -- who is not even here right now -- Senator Kean, would you take a personal pledge not to take money for your political campaign funds from the marijuana industry? If you'd like to answer those questions in a way of a discussion, that would complete my remarks.

SENATOR POU: Thank you for your remarks.

Thank you Reverend; thank you, Ms. Eames.

MS. EAMES: So nobody chooses to answer my question?

SENATOR POU: We're taking testimony from the public.

MS. EAMES: Okay, I'll assume that's a "no" that you're not willing to make a statement.

Thank you.

SENATOR POU: Okay, our next speakers are Karen O'Keefe, representing the Marijuana Policy Project; and Jon-Henry Barr, from the Law Enforcement Action Partnership.

KAREN O'KEEFE, Esq.: Good afternoon.

SENATOR POU: Good afternoon.

MS. O'KEEFE: I'm Karen O'Keefe; I'm the Director of State Policies at the Marijuana Policy Project. We're a nationwide nonprofit that believes that marijuana prohibition has been a spectacular failure; and that sensible, thoughtful, and equitable regulation is a far better approach.

By driving marijuana sales underground we're endangering communities, workers, the environment, and consumers. All of those entities are not protected; it's impossible to control something that is illegal.

So you have untested products. You have workers who are susceptible to exploitation, who can be subject to armed robbery, and who otherwise can be victimized, and, of course, go to prison. Once marijuana is legal, you can have control and regulation.

I wanted to take some time to address some of the concerns that opponents have raised. Senator Cardinale said that we would have blood on our hands if this measure was approved. I've worked for 15 years to make marijuana legal because I believe it's sound, sensible, humane public policy, quite the opposite of something that would endanger people.

The data on driving under the influence in Colorado and in Washington is easy to mislead, intentionally or otherwise. There was very bad baseline data; there was not a lot of data collection before marijuana was legal. In both states, once it became legal, there is starting to be more robust data collection. So, for example, if you have someone who goes fishing one day with a fishing rod, and the next day they use a net, if they get more fish it doesn't mean that there's more fish in the pond, it means their methods have changed. In both states, if you look at the methodology, the number and frequency of which people were tested for marijuana after accidents increased. For example, if they had alcohol impairment, they didn't used to test for marijuana pre-legalization; but they wanted more robust data after.

In addition, these supposed marijuana-related fatalities aren't actually fatalities where marijuana is the cause. All it means is someone tested positive for marijuana under that more robust methodology after legalization. Marijuana can stay in one's system very, very long after a person stops being impaired by it. So in these cases, it does not mean that the person was impaired by marijuana; it does not mean that the driver was even at fault. So if you dig into the studies a little bit more, it's clear that it doesn't actually say that more people are dying because of marijuana on the roads in Colorado or Washington.

Also of note, figures from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System show that four of the eight states with legalization -- those four that had the before-and-after data -- have had decreases in the total rates of fatal car crashes, and the other four had had increases. So as a whole, it's about even.

I'd also like to address the claim that we will see more illegal sales after marijuana is legal. The price of marijuana, according to *priceofweed.com*, in New Jersey, is \$342 for high-quality marijuana. In Colorado, it's \$186 for an ounce. Once marijuana is legal, you have the economies of scale, and for other reasons prices go down. In Colorado, it has taken some time to transition; a few years after legalization, regulators reported about 65 to 75 percent of the intrastate demand was being met by the legal market. Very recently, a report came out and said that all of the intrastate demand is being met by the legal market. So, in time, if you have a good regulatory system, it will be expected to transition almost entirely to the legal market.

Of course, there are still 40 states with prohibition, and their demand is going to be met somewhere. So I live in California; there's still a lot of marijuana being grown in the national parks that's been exported to other states where it's legal, and it's also still in a transition state because it was only legalized recently, and medical cannabis was kind of an unregulated mess there, which is a long story.

So, in sum, MPP strongly supports the ballot measure referral. We would have preferred the statute, but we understand the votes aren't there. We do think this should just be one piece of the puzzle. It's very important it also be accompanied by immediate decriminalization to stop the arrests; by expungement, by implementing legislation that has means for equity and inclusion in the industry; and ideally, having tax revenue go, in large part, to those communities most hard hit by the war on marijuana.

Thank you.

SENATOR POU: Thank you.

Mr. Barr.

J O N - H E N R Y B A R R, Esq.: Good afternoon, Madam Chairman.

I appreciate the opportunity to address you and the Committee, and I thank you for that opportunity this afternoon.

I am a member of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership, known as *LEAP*. I am also a Steering Committee member of New Jersey United for Marijuana Reform.

My name is Jon-Henry Barr, and my law enforcement background is, basically, that I have been a Municipal Prosecutor in the Township of Clark since 2001. In addition to that, I have been a Municipal Prosecutor for the Borough of Kenilworth, from 2008 to 2014. So it is a special honor for me to be addressing my home County Senators at this time.

I was the President of the New Jersey State Municipal Prosecutors Association, from 2008 to 2015; and under my tenure, our State Association actually passed a resolution to support the legalization and regulation of marijuana.

In addition to my law enforcement background, I do want to share my political background with the Committee. When I was in law school I got elected to my Town Council, in 1993, as a Republican Town Councilman in the Township of Clark.

I'm Currently a republican County Committee Member; and, in addition to that, I am a certified Emergency Medical Technician, certified by the New Jersey Department of Health, since 2003; and a volunteer and life member of the Clark County Emergency Squad since that time.

My testimony today is to convey to this Committee that the prohibition of marijuana in the State of New Jersey is a policy disaster. It is not merely inefficient -- although it is; it is not merely unfair -- although it is;

it is a disaster. Arrests are not going down and, as a Prosecutor, in order to effectively and properly prosecute a defendant charged with marijuana possession, I need a laboratory report confirming that the substance on that person when they were tested was, in fact, marijuana. The backlog of samples at our State crime labs is stunning. I'm not getting a report a week, or a month, or even two months later. I'm waiting three, four, five, six months, or longer; and our Constitution, both at the Federal level and State level, say that defendants are entitled to a speedy trial. They're not getting their speedy trials. As a municipal prosecutor, I'm very frustrated, the municipal judges are also very frustrated.

While I am personally uncomfortable with amending the State Constitution on an issue such as this, I can say that we do need action, and we do need it now. And it is for that reason that I'm supporting this referendum for the State.

I want to close my remarks by relaying a confession of sorts. Back in 2014, when I first came out in favor of legalizing marijuana-- And I can assure you, if you had told me seven years ago I was going to be testifying before the New Jersey Legislature in favor of legalizing pot, I would have told you, you were crazy -- but I say that today, thinking that I'm doing the right thing. But I did have a fear; I had a suspicion of fear in my gut that maybe the legalization of marijuana was not going to be a good idea; maybe in Colorado, and Washington, and Oregon. There were going to be just too many masses of stoned people roaming the streets. Maybe there were going to be car crashes up the wazoo, and it was going to end up being a policy disaster that all the legalized states will have regretted.

But that just didn't happen. There is no movement in any of the states that have legalized to go back to prohibition. What has happened is more states are supporting legalization, and our country neighbor to the north of us, Canada, has also legalized.

I not only have no regrets about coming out in favor of legalization, I've actually doubled down on taking this route as a better policy option for our state and of our country.

We need to do something about the unfair, ineffective, and inefficient prosecutions for people charged with marijuana. We need to take a different approach.

I thank the Committee for its time, I thank you Madam Chairman, and I would be happy to entertain any questions.

SENATOR POU: Thank you both; thank you very much for your testimony.

Okay, our next speakers will be Sarah Fajardo and Scott Rudder, from the New Jersey CannaBusiness Association.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: Scott had to step out.

SENATOR POU: He stepped out? Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: Excuse me; Scott had to leave to get his children after school.

SENATOR POU: Okay.

Let the record reflect that Mr. Rudder is in favor of the constitutional amendment -- or the ballot initiative.

Ms. Fajardo.

SARAH FAJARDO: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Chairwoman Pou, and Vice Chair Cryan, and the members of the Senate Commerce Committee, for the opportunity to testify at this important hearing.

My name is Sarah Fajardo, and I'm the Policy Director of the ACLU of New Jersey. We are a founding member of the New Jersey United for Marijuana Reform coalition, many of whom our members, have spoken already today, and have been working in partnership with the New Jersey Legislature for years to ensure that racial and social justice provisions are included in legislation to legalize cannabis for adult use.

This advocacy, most recently, has resulted in our support for the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory and Expungement Aid Modernization Act.

The ACLU of New Jersey joined the fight to legalize cannabis to end the rising arrest rates of cannabis-related offenses and to advance racial, social, and economic justice in a newly created industry.

In 2017 alone, close to 38,000 arrests were made for cannabis-related offenses, averaging about one arrest made every 14 minutes. In addition to these alarming arrest rates, data reveals entrenched racial disparity rates and arrests.

The ACLU strongly believes that the best path forward for cannabis legalization is through the passage of legislation, which provides for a negotiated and intentional policy change. However, we do acknowledge the efforts made by the Legislature today to advance legalization through this constitutional amendment. We do support this effort, as it appears that this is the pathway being pursued, rather than legislation.

We do have concerns about this pathway -- that it will delay justice, and leverage New Jersey's constitutional amendment process for policy change that should be made legislatively.

New Jersey rarely makes changes through amending the Constitution. The amendment process and ballot question process will delay a decision until November 2020; and if voters do, as we hope, approve a change to the Constitution, both Chambers would still have to pass enabling legislation at a later date.

If the Legislature votes to move forward with this constitutional amendment process, the ACLU NJ believes that it is imperative that a robust decriminalization bill be passed as an interim measure to partially address the Civil Rights crisis of cannabis criminalization. Decriminalization is not a comprehensive solution to the Civil Rights crisis; however, arrests cannot continue to break families apart and lives apart while the constitutional amendment is being finalized over the coming years.

The ACLU would support the passage of S-3801 as an interim step, which would decriminalize personal possession of small amounts of cannabis. We do recommend that the Legislature can consider enacting this Bill with the following amendments: to remove all civil penalties, to explicitly decriminalize paraphernalia, to explicitly state that personal possession of cannabis is a non-arrestable offense, to raise the amount allowed for personal possession to 100 grams, to extend legal protections to people committing civil violations, to provide additional non-discrimination protections for prior offenses, and to bar the categorization of cannabis possession and positive drug testing violations as parole, probation, or pretrial release violations.

We would warmly welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the Legislature on the advancement of a decriminalization bill as a stopgap, as a constitutional amendment is advanced.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and thank you for your leadership.

SENATOR POU: Thank you Sarah; thank you very much for your testimony.

Thank you.

Okay, our next speaker will be Shawn Hyland, from the Family Policy Alliance of New Jersey.

UNIDENTIFIED MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: (off mike) He is testifying over in the (indiscernible); I apologize.

SENATOR POU: Okay; thank you very much for that.

I will register -- according to his slip, he is registered, and I would like the record to reflect that he's in opposition to the ballot initiative.

Okay, the names that I am going to call out are individuals who have filled out a slip and have indicated their position, but also indicated "no need to testify."

If I call out anyone whose name I have, and should you wish to testify, please let me know and you're welcome to come forward.

In that regard, I have Debra Koss, from the New Jersey Psychiatric Association, in opposition to the ballot initiative, no need to testify.

I have Lorna O'Hara, the Executive Director of New Jersey Marijuana Retailers Association, in favor of the ballot initiative, no need to testify.

John Tomicki, from the League of American Families, in opposition, also no need to testify.

And we have Marlene Kalayilparampil, from the Medical Society of New Jersey, in opposition, also no need to testify, but has provided us with written testimony and it's been submitted to all the members.

And lastly, we have Edward Tobias, in favor of the ballot initiative, no need to testify.

That indicates all the slips that I have with the names of those individuals who have indicated that they wished to identify their position.

Is there anyone in the room who I did not call, who still wishes to testify? And if so, please let yourself be known. (no response)

Seeing none, thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

That concludes our public hearing. I really appreciate the time that you've taken to come and provide us with your comments and your testimony.

That concludes our hearing; have a good day.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)