



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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REPRESENTATIVE RAGHIB ALLIE-BRENNAN
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GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE
PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

March 2, 2020

Senator Winfield, Chair
Representative Stafstrom, Chair
Joint Committee on Judiciary
Legislative Office Building, Room 2500
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Support of Senate Bill 16: AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADULT USE OF CANNABIS

To the Chairs of the Judiciary Committee

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 16: AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADULT USE OF CANNABIS, the Governor's bill that sets in motion the new legal cannabis market in Connecticut, enacts expungement provisions for past convictions, fosters participation in the new industry by members of impacted communities and includes robust protections for public health and public safety provisions.

I support a legal cannabis market in Connecticut. While I do not encourage the use of marijuana, the reality is that Connecticut citizens are using cannabis today. These consumers are making purchases in Connecticut's robust illegal market that includes no product protections or quality controls, like product recalls or mandatory testing. Meanwhile, just north of the border, a legal market in Massachusetts is thriving, proving regulation can be done successfully. Given these key factors, I am convinced that the State's cannabis prohibition laws pose additional needless risk to consumer health and safety.

Recently, I hosted a Community Conversation in my district where we discussed the legalization of cannabis. The single greatest concern in my district relates to enforcing Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) laws given the lack of specific blood tests or breathalyzer tests for marijuana impairment. This is the major concern for me as well. However, I am satisfied with the bill's increased support for additional drug recognition experts in the State. Training for our public safety professionals to better recognize drivers impaired by any substance, including cannabis and prescription drugs, is an absolutely critical component of the bill in my view.

Senate Bill 16 also preserves elements of local control. Localities may prohibit adult-use cannabis businesses, limit hours of operation and regulate signage. It includes both employee and employer local protections and requires multiple agencies to work together to make recommendations for programs to increase education about the risk of cannabis addiction and effective treatment for cannabis addiction.

Finally, I am pleased with the new improvements to the bill for proactive expungements of records for cannabis convictions. The record is clear that cannabis laws have resulted in disproportionate arrests in communities of color and these arrests should not stand once cannabis is legal in Connecticut. Criminal records have devastating impacts on the ability of people to obtain employment and carry an unjust social stigma as well as economic barriers. Once cannabis is legal, an automatic expungement process will do a great service for people seeking to better their economic conditions and quality of life.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for Senate Bill 16. I look forward to the continued discussion with my legislative colleagues so that we can pass smart, equitable legal cannabis regulation legislation this year. This is the fourth year we are considering legal cannabis in Connecticut, while other states prove that the sky will not fall and that many good things can come from a regulated, legal market. I truly believe the time has come for Connecticut.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Raghib". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping tail.

Representative Raghib Allie-Brennan

2nd District