

March 15, 2021
Senate Human Services Committee
HB 1420
Sen. Judy Lee, Chair

For the record, I am Stephanie Dassinger. I am appearing on behalf of the Chiefs of Police Association of North Dakota. I am also the deputy director and attorney for the North Dakota League of Cities.

The Chiefs of Police appear today in opposition to HB 1420. The Chiefs understand the difficult position the Legislature is in due to the petition that is being circulated for constitutional legalization of marijuana and that there may be reasons to set up a legislatively controlled system for adult use marijuana. Additionally, the Chiefs would like to recognize the work of the bill sponsor and the House Human Services Committee in addressing the many issues that existed with the bill as initially submitted. Regardless, the Chiefs believe that legalization of adult use marijuana through the legislature or through a ballot measure would have negative public safety implications.

I have submitted three documents electronically on research done by the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area for 2020, by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, and by the Centennial Institute on impacts to public safety due to the legalization of marijuana in Colorado for your review.

I would just like to highlight a few statistics from those reports.

Colorado Traffic Fatalities & Impaired Driving – Page 1, Volume 1, September 2020, *The Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado: The Impact*, Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

- Since recreational marijuana was legalized in 2013, traffic deaths in which drivers tested positive for marijuana increased 135% while all Colorado traffic deaths increased 24%.
- Since recreational marijuana was legalized, traffic deaths involving drivers who tested positive for marijuana more than doubled from 55 in 2013 to 129 people killed in 2019.
 - This equates to one person killed every 3 1/2 days in 2019 compared to one person killed every 6 1/2 days in 2013.
- Since recreational marijuana was legalized, the percentage of all Colorado traffic deaths that were marijuana related increased from 15% in 2013 to 25% in 2019.

Costs Association with Legalization – Page 3, November 2018, *Economic and Social Costs of Legalized Marijuana*, Centennial Institute

- For every dollar gained in tax revenue Coloradans spend almost \$4.50 to mitigate the effects of legalization. The costs related to the healthcare system and from high school dropouts are the largest cost contributors. Costs of marijuana ranged for accidental

poisonings and traffic fatalities to increased court costs for impaired drivers, juvenile use, and employer related costs.

Other specific law enforcement costs have been identified. Police department narcotics detection dogs that are in service will likely need to be retired unless those dogs have not been trained on THC. Additionally, more Drug Recognition Experts (DRE) will need to be trained to detect impaired drivers. DREs perform what almost amounts to a physical exam to determine what classification of drug someone is under the influence of. The classroom portion of a DREs training is three weeks long. The DRE training is followed-up with a week in a large jail, like Maricopa County, Arizona, to get experience doing investigations.

Again, the Chiefs of Police recognize the difficult decision the Legislature needs to make but hopes the information provided puts into context the negative public safety implications legalization of adult-use marijuana would have in North Dakota.

Thank you for your consideration.