

HB 1420 - Adult Use Cannabis  
Senate Human Services - Judy Lee, Chair

I'm Jonah Lantto, a Minot business owner.

The results of prohibition are a failure. Our current position regarding marijuana is a detriment to North Dakota prosperity, opportunity, and gainful citizenship. There is no evidence prohibition has benefited the people of North Dakota. There is however, plenty of evidence to show prohibition has stood in the way of success. It has created criminals out of otherwise good people. I ask this chamber: Would you call the cops on your kids or grandchildren if you discovered them with marijuana? I don't imagine you would, the idea is incredulous. Of course you wouldn't turn in someone you love because they use or possess marijuana so why support the status quo against them or anyone else? By regulating drug use rather than criminalizing it, per capita recreational drug use in the United States would be the same or even lower than it currently is, safer for consumers, and far less costly to society in terms of socioeconomic harm

This isn't about being pro marijuana, this is about being anti-prohibition. This is about being pro business. It's about being pro North Dakota citizen. The economic opportunities associated with regulating marijuana are vast. Ending prohibition in North Dakota would release a great burden on our judicial system while simultaneously preventing our citizens from being penalized for the use of a plant. When we arrest our own people we're unnecessarily complicating their lives, ruining their potential for jobs, loans, and general advancement in their lives. Meanwhile - in other free states jobs are being created while we imprison and fine our people. It doesn't make sense.

All around us recreational cannabis is happening: Montana and South Dakota voters have approved it, Minnesota legislators are anticipated to pass legislation as well. If we don't act now, as an elected body of leadership, to enable our citizens, our investors, our business leaders to sensibly prosper from cannabis then we risk losing those investments to our neighboring states. Border towns in other legal states have shown it.

I'd prefer to give our citizens a job in a developing industry full of opportunity and upward mobility. Right now we're upset at the idea of lazy stoners, occupying basements, eating munchies, and not contributing to society, but the reality is - Prohibition is what creates that: because of the record that comes with getting arrested with a pipe or some weed. The fact is: more revenue is generated by people who don't have criminal records for pot possession. While we may not raise the billions of dollars that states like Colorado get - at least we can keep what's ours. At least we can keep this money in our state, with our investors - small and large.

Right now, in the United States, there are more than 240,000 full time jobs in the marijuana industry - there's no reason we shouldn't be adding a few thousand more in North Dakota. Prohibition is a roadblock to freedom and opportunity. Let's stand together against ruining people's lives and join forces in creating laws for the future prosperity of North Dakota and our citizens...that would really BE LEGENDARY.

Thank you.

Sources:

Jobs:

<https://internationalcbc.com/how-many-people-work-in-the-legal-u-s-cannabis-industry/>

Prohibition is a failure:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1870355016300039>

Access to cannabis reduces opioid use:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/08/190807092350.htm>

Economic benefits of legalizing cannabis:

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/insights/110916/economic-benefits-legalizing-weed.asp>

Prohibition creates criminals:

<https://observer.com/2017/06/drug-prohibition-violent-crime-rates/>