

Melissa Podruchny

6400 Country Road 12 w

Minot (District 40)

HB 1596

I strongly favor this bill.

Reducing the criminal penalties for marijuana possession would benefit North Dakota as a whole.

It would save significant tax dollars each year. The cost of arresting, booking, prosecuting, and jailing these individuals is enormous. Issuing citations instead of making arrests would save hours of police time and tax payers dollars.

It would make our communities safer. Decriminalizing marijuana possession would free up police time so police officers can focus on violent crimes, property crimes, and people who drive under the influence of alcohol.

It would allow people to continue their lives. Every year we saddle people with a criminal record, which can have lifelong, disproportionate consequences, including preventing people from getting a job, student loans, a professional license, and housing. And even a short stint in jail can also be devastating. In addition to trauma, the disruption to one's schedule can result in the loss of a job, educational opportunities, and housing.

I urge you to vote yes on HB 1596