

Marijuana Report

Report of the Special Senate Committee on Marijuana

Summary

- 1 In February 2015, the Massachusetts Senate created the Special Senate Committee on Marijuana. The purpose of the Committee was to research and make policy recommendations in the event that Massachusetts were to legalize the adult recreational use and sale of marijuana.
- 2 In the report, the Committee recommended actions to address numerous policy issues that would arise if marijuana were to be legalized. The Committee remained neutral on the legalization question, and its report made only neutral policy recommendations.
- 3 After completing the extensive review of marijuana policy, the Committee members issued their report to share their overall perspective on this important issue with the Legislature and the public.



Special Senate Committee on Marijuana Members



Senator Jason M. Lewis (D-Winchester)
Chair of Special Committee on Marijuana
@SenJasonLewis



Senator Michael O. Moore (D-Millbury)
Vice-Chair of Special Committee on Marijuana
@SenMikeMoore



Senator Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester)
Senate Majority Leader
@Sen_Chandler



Senator Viriato M. deMacedo (R-Plymouth)
Ranking Minority, Senate Ways and Means
@VinydeMacedo



Senator Linda Dorcena Forry (D-Dorchester)
Chair, Joint Committee on Housing
@ldForry



Senator John F. Keenan (D-Quincy)
Chair, Senate Committee on Bonding,
Capital Expenditures and State Assets
@JohnFKeenan



Senator Michael J. Rodrigues (D-Westport)
Chair, Joint Committee on Revenue
@SenRodrigues



Senator Richard J. Ross (R-Wrentham)
Special Senate Committee to Improve
Government
@SenRichardJRoss



Senator James T. Welch (D-West Springfield)
Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care
Financing

Executive Summary

Massachusetts Ballot Question

In November 2016, Massachusetts voters will consider an initiative petition to approve the recreational use and sale of marijuana in the Commonwealth.

Current Marijuana Use in Massachusetts

An estimated 885,000 Massachusetts residents used marijuana in the past year, including almost 400,000 children and young adults under the age of 25. They consumed an estimated 85 metric tons of marijuana. Approximately 1 in 4 high school students used marijuana in the past year.

Health Impacts on Marijuana Use

Recreational marijuana use can cause short-term impacts that may include increased heart rate and blood pressure, delayed reaction time, reduced motor control, and impaired decision making. Longer-term impacts of adult marijuana use are less well understood.

Public Safety and Criminal Justice Impacts of Marijuana Use

The legalization of marijuana creates some different public safety concerns. State health officials have to assume responsibility for ensuring that products do not contain unsafe levels of pesticides, mold, or other contaminants. Businesses and law enforcement have to deal with security issues, including theft of product and the industry's high use of cash for many transactions.

Policy Goals when Considering Marijuana Legalization

- Prevent marijuana use by youth under 21 years old
- Minimize abuse misuse and addiction
- Minimize black market and criminal activity
- Ensure a well-regulated marketplace that minimizes commercialization
- Generate sufficient tax revenue to meet necessary public costs

Policy Choices when Implementing a Regulatory Framework for Legalized Marijuana

Even with as much careful preparation and planning as possible, it will still be necessary to build in flexibility since changes in laws and regulations governing marijuana will almost certainly be necessary as the market develops and new issues are identified.