

Senate Judiciary Committee

Jennifer Horgan 271-3092

HB 215, establishing a commission to study the legalization, regulation, and taxation of marijuana.

Hearing Date: April 11, 2017

Time Opened: 11:19 a.m.

Time Closed: 11:41 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Carson, Lasky, French, Gannon and Hennessey

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill establishes a commission to study the legalization, regulation, and taxation of marijuana.

Sponsors :

Rep. Cushing

Rep. John T. O'Connor

Sen. Reagan

Sen. Feltes

Who supports the bill: Representative Cushing; Representative John T O'Conner; Representative Almy; Representative Horrigan; Representative Milz; Representative Messmer; Darryl W Perry (Liberty Lobby LLC); Matt Simon (Marijuana Policy Project); Richard VanWickler (Law Enforcement Action Partnership); Ian Freeman (NH Liberty Party); Devon Chaffee (American Civil Liberties Union); Christopher Waid; Paul Somantgo; Robert Lamentagne; Dan McGuire; Bill Alleman; David Crawford; Will Anderson; Eric Golter; Eric Hatfield; Robert Reinhard; Heather Brown; Frank Sylvester; Casey Brown; Ethan Daisy; Melissa Thogode; Fehal G Bissoa; Lauren Benson; Denis Goddard; Amanda Renault

Who opposes the bill: No one

Summary of testimony presented in support :

Representative Cushing

- 20% of the US population lives in states where adult marijuana use is legal.
- Spoke of the numerous neighboring states and countries that are legalizing.
- This will have NH look at issues relating to marijuana.
- It is important to get the stakeholders to the table.
- It has a specific charge and sunset, and it is simply a study.

Representative John T O'Conner

- The processes of legalizing in Colorado and Washington State were very different.
- Colorado made a lot of mistakes and Washington looked at those mistakes and crafted a better process based off of that.
- Has been a part of looking at what has been done in these states including, the strict chain of custody, the taxation, child proofing and packaging, edibles, combinations of THC/CBD, the disappearance of drug dealers on the corner, revenue and federal laws(tribal banks), and taxes being paid in cash.

- This study would examine those issues and it is better to be ahead of the game.
- Senator Gannon asked if the commission could decide against legalization.
 - That is correct. Is personally in favor of legalization, but someone against it would have a place on the commission.
- Senator French asked if the deadline for reporting gives the commission ample time to study this issue.
 - Yes, because there are already studies out there that the commission could work off of. If they do their due diligence does not see it being an issue.

Representative Almy

- Passed this thinking that legalization will happen someday and therefore, NH better get its act together.
- Had a bill two years ago that passed the Criminal Justice committee by a large majority that would have legalized marijuana. The Ways & Means committee looked at six agencies that would be impacted.
- Those agencies needed a lot more time to prepare for something like this.
- Does not want to have marijuana legalized before a commission has time look at this.
- The commission could determine that legalization is not the way to go.
- There are already 22 members for the commission, but would personally request to add someone from the Banking Association.
- Would also recommend pushing the reporting deadline back to July 1, 2018.
- Imagines the commission would break up into subject areas and those would report back to the commission at large.

Dennis Goddard

- Understands the concern about the message the legislature could send with this.
- Shared his personal experience researching cannabis.
- Explained how he utilized cannabis and has gone on to be successful in chemical engineering and computer science.
- Most of his colleagues were also utilizing marijuana.
- The most damaging thing about his marijuana use would have been to be arrested.

Amanda Renault

- Speaking on behalf of those with PTSD.
- Shared personal experience with utilizing prescription drugs to deal with her issues.
- Now utilizes cannabis and has no lack of quality of life and no longer uses prescription drugs.

Ian Freeman (NH Liberty)

- NH absolutely needs to study this closely.
- There has been a lot of misinformation mostly from the police and legislators.
- There has been decades of propaganda on this.
- It is important to look at the truth.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition :

None

Future Action: Pending

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Date Hearing Report completed: April 14, 2017