

Office of the Governor
State House
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

July 13, 2017

Dear Governor Sununu,

As advocates for reforming marijuana policies in New Hampshire, we are very grateful for your support on bills like HB 640 (decriminalization) and HB 160 (improving the medical cannabis program). The decriminalization bill will save thousands of New Hampshire residents from the trauma and stigma of an arrest and criminal conviction, while HB 160 will allow patients with chronic pain and PTSD to find relief from medical cannabis.

Unfortunately, we feel that we must now ask for your veto on another marijuana policy bill, HB 215. This bill, which we supported in its original form — and which Rep. Cushing sponsored — would create a study commission to consider marijuana legalization and regulation.

For the following reasons, we ask that you veto HB 215:

- (1) The House version of HB 215 would have created a balanced study commission that would have included both advocates and opponents of reform. Unfortunately, the Senate amended the bill so that the commission would be stacked with opponents of marijuana regulation. The commission envisioned by the final bill includes numerous vocal opponents, such as the Association of Chiefs of Police and New Futures, but it does not include any known supporters.
- (2) The House Criminal Justice and Safety Committee has retained HB 656, a bill that would legalize and regulate marijuana for adults' use, and legislators on that committee have indicated that they intend to study the bill extensively. In light of this, we believe the HB 215 study commission would be redundant and unnecessary.
- (3) If HB 215 is signed into law, the resulting commission's credibility will be in question from the outset. If the House Speaker (who would appoint four House members) and the Senate President (who would appoint two senators) do not select open-minded legislators for the commission, advocates will have no choice but to criticize the make-up of the commission.
- (4) Nearly everybody associated with the Therapeutic Cannabis Advisory Council views that council as an unfortunate waste of time. Unfortunately, we believe the study commission envisioned by HB 215 would very likely end up being seen in the same way.

Thank you for considering this request, and for signing HB 160 and supporting HB 640.

Sincerely,

Rep. Renny Cushing, prime sponsor of HB 215

Rep. Katherine Rogers

Rep. Larry Laflamme

Rep. James McConnell

Rep. Kate Murray

Rep. Keith Ammon

Rep. Richard McNamara

Rep. Tamara Le

Rep. Michael Sylvia

Rep. Andrew Prout

Rep. Elizabeth Edwards

Rep. Caleb Dyer

Former Rep. Dan McGuire, political director, N.H. Liberty Alliance

Former Rep. Joe Lachance

Matt Simon, New England political director, Marijuana Policy Project

Devon Chaffee, executive director, ACLU-NH

Paul Twomey, attorney

Mark Sisti, attorney, NORML Legal Committee

Rick Naya, executive director, New Hampshire NORML

Richard Van Wickler, board chair, Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP)

Kelly DeFeo, advanced practice registered nurse, former member of Therapeutic Cannabis Advisory Council