



**Testimony of Becky Straus, Legislative Director  
In Support of HB 3371  
House Committee on Judiciary  
April 2, 2013**

Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

HB 3371 – the “Control, Regulation and Taxation of Cannabis Act” – directs the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) to oversee the licensure, regulation and taxation of marijuana producers, processors and retailers. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of the bill.

In November 2012, Colorado and Washington became the first states to legalize marijuana for adults 21 and older, while Massachusetts became the 18th state, along with the District of Columbia, to legalize medical marijuana. Meanwhile, other states, including Connecticut and Rhode Island, have recently decriminalized possession of small amounts of marijuana.

In short, the tide is turning on this issue in this country. Now is the time for Oregon to think about how we can move forward in a way that is safe and fair for all Oregonians. We commend members of the House Committee on Revenue for introducing a proposal this session.

Consistent with the work and goals of the Governor’s Commission on Public Safety, HB 3371 takes a smart approach to criminal justice that will not only save money but set up a structure for the state to reinvest existing resources and new revenue into the services that desperately need stable funding – education, public safety, mental health treatment. The bill provides a safe alternative to marijuana prohibition. It advances individual liberty and will eliminate unreasonable arrests, which have often targeted disproportionately people of color. And the revenue it generates will also help increase public health efforts to stem drug abuse.

It is time for Oregon to engage in the conversation that has already begun nationally. HB 3371 is a great start and we look forward to working with you and other members of the legislature as this concept is heard in subsequent committees.

Thank you for your consideration.