

Oregon House Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 3371, a bill that will regulate and tax marijuana similarly to how the state manages alcohol today. I am not "pro-marijuana" and neither is HB 3371. It is simply a common sense measure that replaces prohibition with strong regulations administered by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

As a former prosecutor in Multnomah County, I prosecuted plenty of people for violating our state's marijuana laws and as a board member of an organization dedicated to honoring retiring police officers, I empathize with the very hard, dangerous jobs our law enforcement officers are tasked with. I am not a typical supporter of marijuana law reform, but my experiences simply tell me that our state will be better off if we regulate and tax marijuana as we do alcohol.

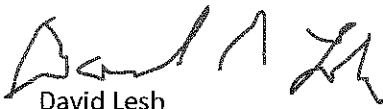
Enforcing marijuana prohibition takes law enforcement resources away from more serious and violent crimes. Every minute that an officer or prosecutor spends on enforcing marijuana laws is time taken away from working a cold case homicide; getting a young female out of the sex trade; and searching for a wanted suspect.

Not only is enforcing marijuana laws time-consuming, but enforcement is expensive. We spend countless dollars enforcing marijuana prohibition, but virtually anyone in the State of Oregon can access marijuana. Instead of spending money and resources investigating, arresting, prosecuting and jailing marijuana users, we should tax marijuana and utilize this revenue for education, public safety and substance abuse treatment programs.

Like you, I want to keep marijuana (and alcohol) out of the hands of minors. However, drug dealers don't check identification and many also sell more harmful drugs like cocaine, methamphetamine, oxycodone, and heroin. Under HB 3371, the OLCC will have the power to regulate marijuana and regulators will work to keep marijuana out of the hands of minors.

I want to reiterate that I do not support the recreational use of marijuana. I have simply come to the realization, that marijuana prohibition, like alcohol prohibition, is an ineffective policy. Please pass HB 3371 and help Oregon move forward with a new, more effective approach.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Lesh". The signature is stylized and cursive.

David Lesh